MIKAILALSYS
Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences

e-ISSN : 2987-2286
p-ISSN : 2987-3924
Index: Harvard, Boston, Sydney, Copernicus, Sinta 4, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/mikailalsys.v4i3.12201

An Analysis of Basic Football Techniques among U18 Players at SSB Talagoray

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Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Aug 15, 2026	Sep 12, 2026	Sep 24, 2026	Sep 29, 2026

Abstract

Profiles of passing, dribbling, and shooting skills among players in local youth football schools can help coaches identify training priorities. This study assessed these techniques among U18 players at SSB Talagoray. A quantitative descriptive survey included all 20 active players through census sampling. Performance was measured using the short-pass test, zigzag dribbling test, and shooting-at-the-ball test, then summarized using frequencies and percentages. Passing was classified as good for 55% of players, moderate for 35%, and poor for 10%. Dribbling had the strongest profile: 40% were classified as very good, 40% as good, and 20% as moderate. Shooting had the weakest profile, with 50% classified as poor and 50% as very poor. These findings show uneven development across the three techniques and identify shooting as the clearest priority for structured, progressive practice, while passing and dribbling performance should be maintained.

Keywords: Youth Football; U18 Players; Passing; Dribbling; Shooting

INTRODUCTION

Sport occupies an important place in human life, not only as a means of maintaining physical fitness and health but also as a setting in which discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and achievement can be developed. In Indonesia, sport is also positioned as part of national human development (Hoffmann, 2022; Sharma et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022) . Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2022 on Sports emphasizes that

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sport should contribute to health and fitness, achievement, human quality, sportsmanship, discipline, national unity, and the dignity of the nation (Republic of Indonesia, 2022). This policy orientation places sporting achievement within a broader developmental process rather than treating competition as an isolated outcome. Achievement is therefore closely related to systematic coaching, regular training, and the continuous development of athletes' capacities according to the characteristics of each sport.

Football is one of the sports in which successful performance depends on the interaction of physical, technical, tactical, and psychological abilities. The game requires players to work collectively while making repeated individual actions with the ball under changing situations. Indonesian football development guidelines place technical actions such as passing, receiving and controlling the ball, dribbling, and shooting as important components of player development because these actions allow players to maintain possession, create attacking opportunities, and respond effectively to opponents (Danurwindo et al., 2014). Emral (2018) similarly explains that mastery of basic techniques provides players with the capacity to execute football actions effectively and efficiently. Technical ability therefore cannot be treated merely as an introductory component of training; it remains relevant as players progress toward more competitive levels, where the speed and pressure of the game demand increasingly consistent execution.

Youth football development gives particular attention to technical proficiency because skills acquired and refined during developmental stages influence how players respond to increasingly complex match situations. Bozkurt et al. (2020) showed that structured technical training can support the development and transfer of football skills, including dribbling and passing or shooting actions. Research on grassroots football has also demonstrated that performance in passing, dribbling, and shooting is associated with players' broader movement competence and their perception of their own abilities (Duncan et al., 2022). Objective technical assessment is equally important in youth development because coaches need reliable information about what a player can perform consistently rather than relying solely on impressions formed during training or competition. Padrón-Cabo et al. (2019) highlighted the value of reliable football-specific tests for assessing skills such as dribbling, passing, and shooting among young players. These findings suggest that technical development should be accompanied by systematic evaluation so that training decisions reflect players' actual needs.

Evidence from recent international research also shows that passing, dribbling, and shooting should not be viewed as isolated movements. Passing performance is influenced by interacting technical, physical, perceptual, and task-related demands, making accurate ball distribution an important indicator of a player's ability to function within the flow of the game (Wang et al., 2024). Dribbling involves not only controlling the ball while moving but also recognizing space, responding to opponents, and deciding when to maintain or release possession. Iuliano et al. (2023) found that dribbling effectiveness in young players was closely related to the quality of subsequent actions and coaches' evaluations of technical ability. Training studies further indicate that technical learning is shaped by the way practice is designed. Esposito et al. (2024) reported differences in technical development according to the learning approach used, while Sørensen et al. (2024) showed that training involving ball mastery, one-on-one situations, and small-sided games can contribute to improvements in passing and dribbling performance. More recent evidence among elite youth players also demonstrates meaningful relationships among dribbling, agility, and passing ability, reinforcing the integrated nature of technical development in football (Canüzmez et al., 2026).

Indonesian studies reveal a similar concern regarding the technical readiness of developing football players. Erianti et al. (2020), in a study of football participants in Padang, assessed passing, dribbling, shooting, and heading and found that a substantial proportion of participants still demonstrated low levels of basic technical skill. Research involving SSB Padang United also identified variations in players' passing and control, dribbling, shooting, and heading abilities, suggesting that technical mastery remains an important concern in football schools (Irfan et al., 2020). Naldi & Irawan (2020) further reported that motor ability contributed to basic football technical performance among players at SSB Balai Baru, Padang. Similar concerns were reported by NST & Adnan (2019), who noted difficulties in shooting, dribbling, passing, long passing, and maintaining possession among adolescent players at Garuda FC in Pasaman. Taken together, these studies indicate that the presence of regular training does not automatically guarantee an even level of technical proficiency among developing players.

Previous research has approached the issue of football technique from different perspectives, yet the characteristics of the populations and research purposes vary considerably. Sulistio et al. (2019) analyzed passing, dribbling, and shooting among SSB Talagoray U-18 football players, whereas Fajri (2024) examined basic football techniques

among SSB Talagoray U-18 players at SSB Tirta Soccer School in Padang. Other studies have focused on training interventions rather than describing the existing technical profile of a particular age group. Yusuf & Zainuddin (2023) , for example, examined variations in passing-control training and reported improvement in players' passing-control performance following the training program. International studies have similarly concentrated on technical interventions, learning approaches, or factors associated with individual skill performance (Adams et al., 2017)(Esposito et al., 2024)(Sørensen et al., 2024). These studies provide useful evidence for coaching practice, but their findings cannot simply be assumed to represent every football school, age category, or developmental environment because players train under different coaching systems, competitive demands, and levels of experience.

SSB Talagoray represents a local football development environment in Agam Regency, West Sumatra, that accommodates players across several age categories and has participated in various youth competitions. The U18 group had previously shown encouraging competitive performance, yet its achievements have declined during the last two years, as reflected in the team's inability to achieve the expected results in several competitions. Preliminary observations conducted during training sessions and matches indicated several recurring technical problems. Short passes were not always directed accurately toward teammates, players frequently lost control of the ball while dribbling, and shooting actions were sometimes performed with inadequate technical execution. These observations do not necessarily mean that all players experience the same difficulties; rather, they indicate the need for a structured assessment capable of showing the actual distribution of technical ability within the team. Such information is important because coaches require more than competition results to understand where technical improvement is needed.

The research gap lies in the limited evidence describing the combined profile of passing, dribbling, and shooting among U18 players at a local football school such as SSB Talagoray. Earlier Indonesian studies have predominantly involved younger age groups, school-based participants, other football academies, or interventions designed to improve a particular skill (Erianti et al., 2020)(Fajri, 2024)(Sulistio et al., 2019)(Yusuf & Zainuddin, 2023). The present study differs by focusing on late-adolescent players and examining three central technical abilities within the same group rather than evaluating a single training treatment. Objective skill profiling is particularly relevant because passing, dribbling, and shooting can be assessed through performance indicators that distinguish levels of technical proficiency (Russell et al., 2010). Reliable assessment of football-specific skills can also

provide coaches with a more defensible basis for planning training and monitoring player development (Padrón-Cabo et al., 2019). The contribution of this study therefore lies in providing context-specific evidence that may help coaches identify technical strengths and weaknesses while viewing each player as a developing athlete whose training needs may differ from those of teammates.

This study aims to analyze the basic football techniques of U18 players at SSB Talagoray, with particular attention to their passing, dribbling, and shooting abilities. The study is expected to provide an empirical description of the players' current technical level and to offer practical information for coaches when determining training priorities. A clearer technical profile may also serve as a reference for subsequent evaluation, allowing player development to be followed more systematically rather than being judged only from match outcomes or overall team achievement.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design to obtain an objective profile of the basic football techniques of U18 players at SSB Talagoray. A descriptive quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study was intended to describe the players' current technical performance numerically without manipulating training conditions or providing an experimental treatment. Narbuko & Achmadi (2015) explains that descriptive research focuses on presenting, analyzing, and interpreting existing conditions based on empirical data. The research was conducted at the SSB Talagoray training ground at Batagak in July 2026. The population comprised all 20 registered and actively training U18 players at SSB Talagoray, and all members of the population were included as research participants. Accordingly, a census sampling technique was applied. Sugiyono (2012) defines census sampling as a sampling procedure in which every member of the population is included in the sample. This approach was suitable for the present study because the population was relatively small and the researchers sought to obtain a complete description of the technical characteristics of the U18 squad.

Data were collected through direct tests and measurements of three basic football techniques: passing, dribbling, and shooting. The test procedures followed the football skill assessment protocols described by (Arsil & Antoni, 2025). Passing ability was assessed using the *short-pass test*, which measured the players' ability to deliver the ball quickly and accurately

toward predetermined targets. Dribbling ability was assessed through a timed zigzag dribbling test in which players controlled the ball while moving through a series of obstacles as quickly as possible. Shooting ability was measured using the *shooting-at-the-ball test*, which assessed shooting accuracy toward designated target areas of the goal. During the shooting test, each participant performed six attempts consisting of two shots with the right foot, two with the left foot, and two with the preferred foot. The performances obtained from these tests were subsequently converted into T-scores and interpreted according to the normative classifications provided for each test. The use of standardized procedures and scoring norms helped maintain consistency across participants during data collection.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics because the purpose of the study was to determine the distribution of players' technical ability rather than to test causal relationships between variables. Each player's performance in passing, dribbling, and shooting was grouped according to the relevant assessment category, and the number of players in each category was then calculated using frequency distributions and percentages. Percentage values were determined using the formula (P = (F/N) \times 100%), where *P* represents the percentage, *F* the frequency within a particular category, and *N* the total number of participants (Asril, 2018). The resulting distributions were used to describe the overall profile of passing, dribbling, and shooting abilities among U18 players at SSB Talagoray.

RESULTS

The assessment of basic football techniques involved 20 U18 players from SSB Talagoray and focused on three technical components: passing, dribbling, and shooting. The results were analyzed descriptively using measures of central tendency and variability, followed by classification according to the assessment norms used for each technical test.

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the three technical components.

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Passing	20	2.65	3.00	2 and 3	0.93	1.00	4.00	3.00
Dribbling (seconds)	20	6.07	6.02	Multimodal	1.12	4.34	7.88	3.54
Shooting	20	29.30	31.00	24	9.59	10.00	43.00	33.00

The results in Table 1 show different performance patterns across the three technical components. Passing scores ranged from 1 to 4, with a mean of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 0.93. Dribbling performance produced a mean completion time of 6.07 seconds, with the

fastest recorded time being 4.34 seconds and the slowest 7.88 seconds. Shooting scores showed the widest variation among the three skills, ranging from 10 to 43, with a mean score of 29.30 and a standard deviation of 9.59. These descriptive findings were subsequently interpreted using the normative performance categories for each test.

1. Passing Performance

The passing test measured the players' ability to direct the ball accurately toward predetermined targets within the required test procedure. The classification results indicate that more than half of the players demonstrated a good level of passing performance. Of the 20 players assessed, 11 players (55.0%) were classified in the good category, seven players (35.0%) were in the moderate category, and two players (10.0%) were classified as poor. No player was categorized as either very good or very poor.

Table 2. Distribution of Passing Performance among SSB Talagoray U18 Players

No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good	0	0.0%
2	Good	11	55.0%
3	Moderate	7	35.0%
4	Poor	2	10.0%
5	Very Poor	0	0.0%
Total		20	100.0%

Table 2 demonstrates that passing performance was concentrated primarily in the good and moderate categories, accounting for 90% of the players. The absence of players in the very good category suggests that although passing ability was generally adequate, there remained room for improvement in accuracy, consistency, and execution. The two players classified as poor also indicate individual differences in technical proficiency within the team.

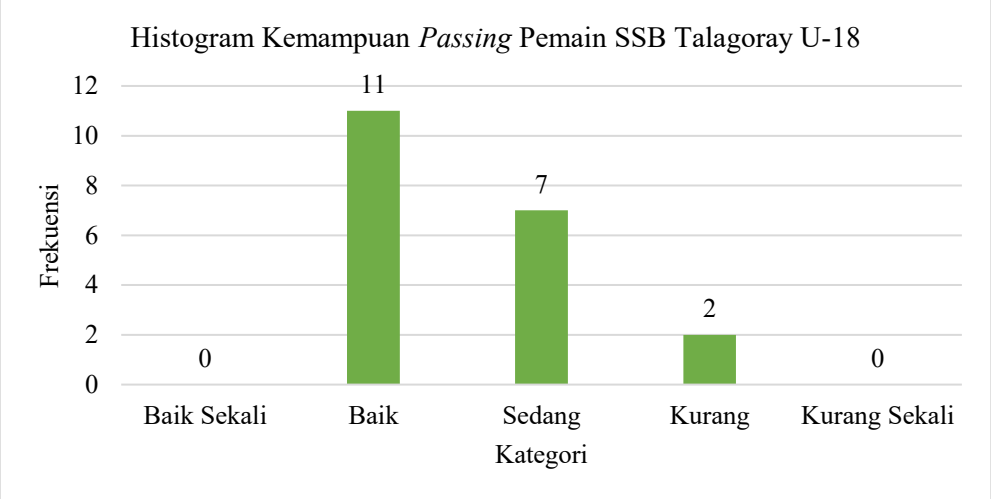

Figure 1. Distribution of Passing Performance among SSB Talagoray U18 Players

Figure 1 visually illustrates the distribution of passing ability. The highest proportion is found in the good category, followed by the moderate and poor categories. This distribution confirms that the overall passing ability of SSB Talagoray U18 players tended to be at a good level**,** although the absence of players in the very good category indicates that passing remains an area that can be further developed.

2. Dribbling Performance

The dribbling test assessed the players' ability to maintain control of the ball while moving through a predetermined zigzag course as quickly as possible. The players recorded an average completion time of 6.07 seconds, with performances ranging from 4.34 to 7.88 seconds. Since the test was based on completion time, a shorter time reflected more efficient dribbling performance.

The categorical distribution showed relatively strong dribbling ability among the players. Eight players (40.0%) were classified as very good, another eight players (40.0%) were categorized as good, and four players (20.0%) were in the moderate category. None of the players were classified as poor or very poor.

Table 3. Distribution of Dribbling Performance among SSB Talagoray U18 Players

No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good	8	40.0%
2	Good	8	40.0%
3	Moderate	4	20.0%
4	Poor	0	0.0%
5	Very Poor	0	0.0%
Total		20	100.0%

As presented in Table 3, 80% of the players were distributed across the very good and good categories. Only four players remained in the moderate category, while no player was found in either of the two lowest classifications. Compared with the other technical components assessed in this study, dribbling demonstrated the most favorable distribution of performance.

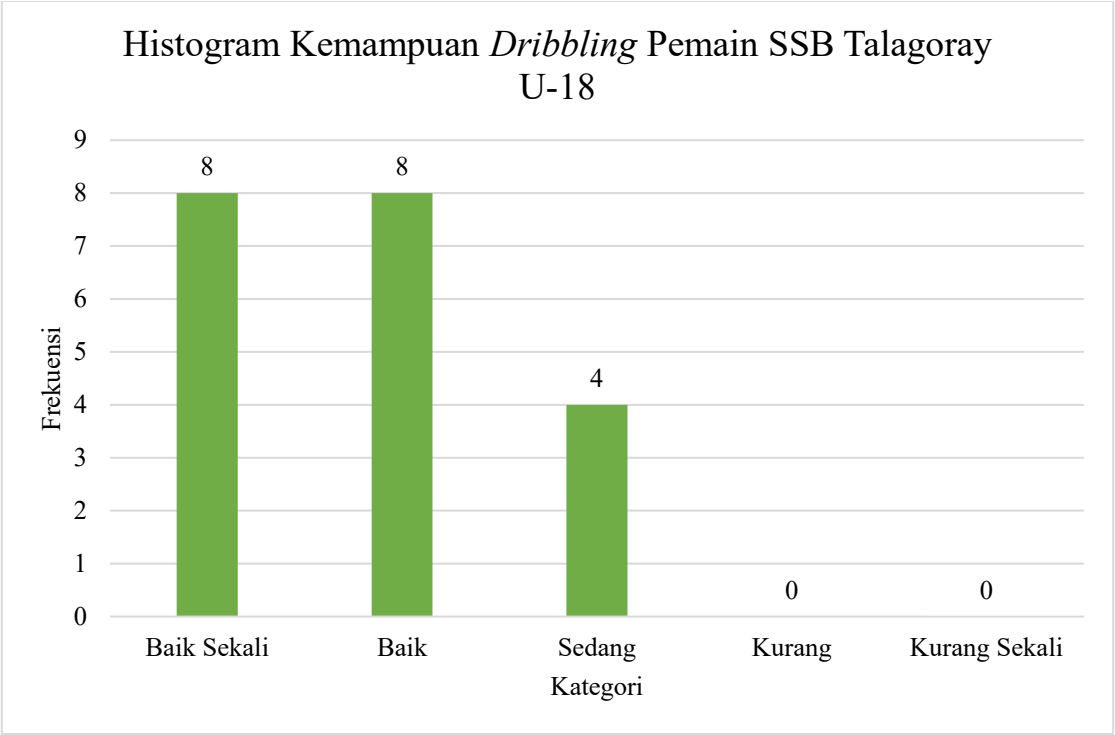

Figure 2. Distribution of Dribbling Performance among SSB Talagoray U18 Players

Figure 2 shows an equal proportion of players in the very good and good categories, each representing 40% of the sample. The remaining 20% were classified as moderate. The distribution indicates that ball control while moving through the test course was generally well developed among the U18 players.

3. Shooting Performance

The shooting test measured the players' ability to direct shots accurately toward designated target areas of the goal. The scores varied considerably, ranging from 10 to 43, with a mean of 29.30, a median of 31.00, and a standard deviation of 9.59. The relatively wide range of 33 points indicates notable variation in shooting performance among individual players.

The categorical results reveal a different pattern from those observed for passing and dribbling. Ten players (50.0%) were categorized as poor, while the remaining ten players (50.0%) were classified as very poor. None of the players reached the moderate, good, or very good categories.

Table 4. Distribution of Shooting Performance among SSB Talagoray U18 Players

No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good	0	0.0%
2	Good	0	0.0%
3	Moderate	0	0.0%
4	Poor	10	50.0%
5	Very Poor	10	50.0%
Total		20	100.0%

Table 4 shows that all players were distributed between the two lowest performance categories. This finding identifies shooting as the weakest of the three basic football techniques assessed in this group. The result is particularly important because shooting requires players to combine technical execution with accuracy when directing the ball toward a target.

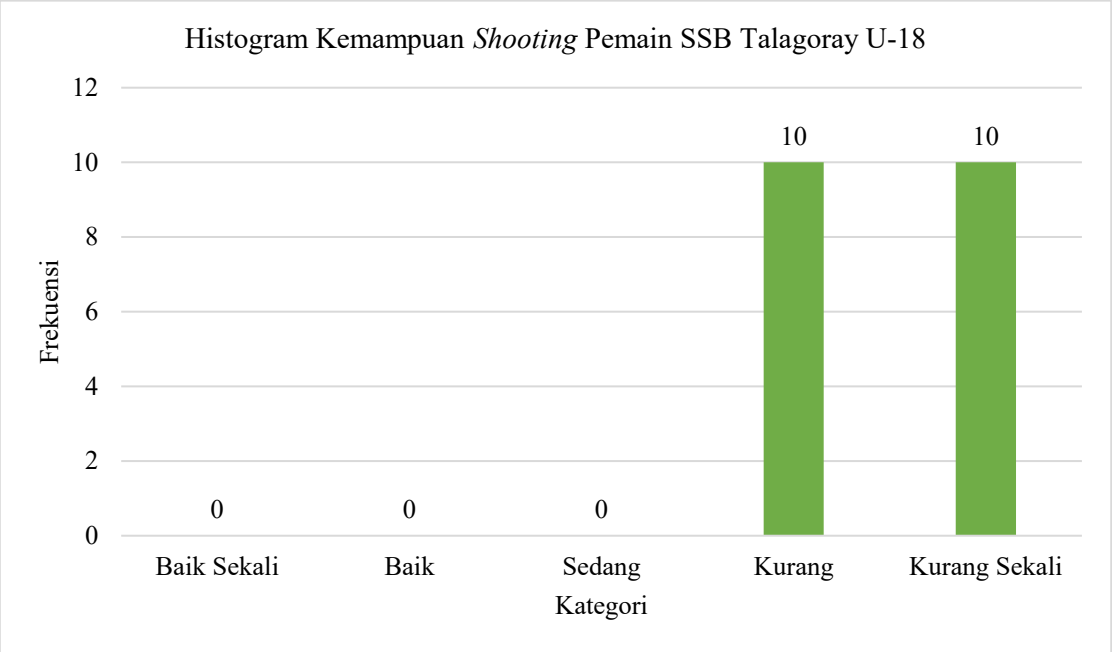

Figure 3. Distribution of Shooting Performance among SSB Talagoray U18 Players

Figure 3 presents an equal distribution between the poor and very poor categories. The absence of players in the moderate, good, and very good categories highlights a clear limitation in shooting performance across the group rather than an issue affecting only a small number of players.

4. Overall Profile of Basic Football Techniques

Taken together, the findings reveal an uneven technical profile among the U18 players at SSB Talagoray. Dribbling emerged as the strongest technical component, with 80%

of the players classified as either very good or good. Passing performance was also relatively positive, with 55% of players in the good category and a further 35% in the moderate category. Shooting showed a markedly different pattern, as all players were classified as either poor or very poor.

The overall results therefore indicate that the players demonstrated comparatively stronger ability in maintaining ball control while dribbling and in executing short passes than in directing shots accurately toward goal. The findings provide a clear descriptive profile of the team's current technical condition and identify shooting as the aspect requiring the greatest attention in subsequent training and technical evaluation.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a distinct technical profile among the U18 players at SSB Talagoray. Passing and dribbling were generally performed at satisfactory levels, whereas shooting emerged as the most evident area of difficulty. This pattern suggests that the players were more capable of maintaining possession and moving the ball than of completing attacking actions through accurate shots on goal. Such differences are important because basic football techniques do not develop uniformly; each skill involves different combinations of coordination, timing, body control, decision making, and repeated technical practice. The present findings therefore provide more than a general description of technical ability. They identify specific areas in which the players appear relatively secure and areas that require greater attention during training.

Passing performance was predominantly positive, with 55% of the players classified in the good category, 35% in the moderate category, and only 10% in the poor category. This finding indicates that most players were able to perform short passing with a reasonable level of accuracy under the conditions of the test. Repeated exposure to passing exercises during regular football training may have contributed to this pattern, although the present descriptive design did not directly examine the factors responsible for individual performance. The result is broadly consistent with Sulistio et al. (2019), who reported that 83.3% of SSB Talagoray U-18 Putra in Kaur Regency demonstrated good passing ability. It also supports the importance of structured passing practice identified by (Yusuf & Zainuddin (2023), whose study showed an improvement in passing-control performance following a variation-based passing-control training program. These comparisons suggest that passing

ability can respond positively to systematic and repeated technical practice, particularly when exercises require players to regulate the direction and force of the ball.

The passing results should nevertheless be interpreted with some caution. No player reached the very good category, while two players remained in the poor category. The distribution indicates that passing competence within the team was not entirely uniform. Players may differ in their ability to coordinate visual information with foot movement, regulate kicking force, position the supporting foot, and maintain consistency when directing the ball toward a target. Naldi & Irawan (2020) found that motor ability was related to the basic football techniques of SSB players and assessed passing-control, dribbling, and shooting as part of the technical performance profile. Their findings provide a useful perspective for understanding why players exposed to a similar training environment may still demonstrate different levels of technical execution. The practical implication for SSB Talagoray is that passing practice should not be limited to team-wide drills; players who remain below the expected category may benefit from more individualized repetitions involving short- and medium-distance passing, target accuracy, first touch, and control under progressively greater pressure.

Dribbling produced the strongest performance profile in this study. Eight players (40%) were classified as very good, another eight (40%) as good, and four (20%) as moderate, with no players appearing in the poor or very poor categories. This distribution indicates that most players were able to control the ball effectively while navigating changes of direction within the test course. Dribbling requires close interaction between ball control, balance, speed, coordination, and the ability to adjust body movement while maintaining possession. The relatively favorable results may reflect the players' familiarity with ball-carrying activities during training and match situations. Bozkurt et al. (2020) demonstrated that systematic football technical training produced improvements in dribbling and passing/shooting-related skills, reinforcing the value of repeated and structured technical exposure. The present result also appears stronger than that reported by Sulistio et al. (2019), whose study found that most U10–U12 players were in the moderate category for dribbling. Differences in age, training experience, assessment conditions, and player development may partly explain the contrasting distributions between the two studies.

The 20% of players who remained in the moderate dribbling category are still meaningful from a coaching perspective. Although the team's overall dribbling profile was

positive, technical development should not be interpreted only through the majority category. Players who take longer to negotiate changes of direction may require additional work on close ball control, body balance, acceleration, deceleration, and movement with the ball. This interpretation is also relevant to the findings of Naldi & Irawan (2020), who linked motor abilities with basic football technical performance among SSB players in Padang. Dribbling development may therefore benefit from training that combines ball mastery with agility and directional changes rather than treating the skill purely as running with the ball. Such an approach may help reduce the performance gap between players while preserving the strengths already demonstrated by the group.

Shooting presented a markedly different pattern. All 20 players were positioned in the two lowest categories: 50% were classified as poor and 50% as very poor. No player reached the moderate, good, or very good classifications. This finding identifies shooting accuracy as the clearest technical weakness among the SSB Talagoray U18 players. A similar pattern was reported by Sulistio et al. (2019) , who found that 94.4% of the U10–U12 players examined were in the very poor category for shooting and only 5.6% were categorized as poor. The similarity is noteworthy because it suggests that shooting may remain a challenging technical component even across different football-school contexts and age groups. Erianti et al. (2020) likewise reported that many participants in their study had not yet achieved satisfactory overall basic football technique, highlighting the continuing need for structured technical development among developing players.

The poor shooting profile should not be interpreted as evidence of a single deficiency. Accurate shooting requires coordinated execution involving approach, supporting-foot placement, contact with the ball, body position, force regulation, and direction toward the target. The present study did not measure leg strength, biomechanical variables, decision making, or the amount of shooting practice received by each player; therefore, these factors cannot be identified as direct causes of the observed results. The findings do, however, provide a strong practical basis for giving shooting greater emphasis in future training. Coaches could progressively incorporate stationary shooting, target-based accuracy exercises, shooting with both feet, finishing after ball control, and shooting following movement or combination play. Bozkurt et al. (2020) showed that football-specific technical practice can improve shooting-related performance, while the findings of this study indicate that such attention is particularly relevant for SSB Talagoray.

The contrast between relatively strong dribbling, adequate passing, and weak shooting has an important practical implication for player development. Technical coaching should not assume that competence in one ball skill will automatically transfer to another. A player who can carry the ball effectively or pass accurately may still experience difficulty when required to convert an attacking opportunity into an accurate shot. Training programs for the U18 group should therefore be based on the technical profile of the players rather than applying equal training volume to all skills. Passing and dribbling should continue to be maintained and refined, while shooting should receive a more deliberate progression of practice. This approach is consistent with the broader principle that technical training must respond to the actual performance needs of the athletes rather than relying solely on routine exercises.

The findings also contribute to the existing literature by providing a specific technical profile of late-adolescent players in a local football-school context in Agam Regency. Previous descriptive studies have examined basic football techniques among younger SSB players or students and have reported considerable variation across passing, dribbling, and shooting performance (Erianti et al., 2020)(Irfan et al., 2020)(Sulistio et al., 2019). The present study extends this descriptive evidence to U18 players and shows that technical imbalance can remain evident at a later stage of youth development. For coaches, the results offer a practical basis for setting training priorities. For football development research, they reinforce the importance of examining individual technical components rather than relying on an overall judgment of a player's ability.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The study involved only 20 U18 players from one football school, which limits the extent to which the results can be generalized to other academies, regions, or competitive levels. The descriptive design also did not examine physical, psychological, tactical, biomechanical, or training-related variables that may be associated with technical performance. Passing, dribbling, and shooting were assessed through standardized field tests rather than during actual match situations, where players must perform under pressure from opponents and make rapid decisions. Future studies could involve larger and more diverse samples, combine technical testing with match-performance analysis, and examine factors such as motor ability, physical condition, training history, or specific intervention programs. Such research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how technical skills develop and how training can be tailored to the needs of youth football players.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and the discussion, the basic football techniques of U18 players at SSB Talagoray showed different levels of performance across passing, dribbling, and shooting. Passing ability was generally classified as good, with 11 players (55%) in the good category, seven players (35%) in the moderate category, and two players (10%) in the poor category. Dribbling demonstrated the strongest overall performance, as eight players (40%) were classified as very good, another eight players (40%) as good, and four players (20%) as moderate. These findings indicate that most players had developed an adequate level of ball distribution and ball-control ability, although individual differences were still evident within the group.

Shooting performance, however, remained the weakest technical component. Ten players (50%) were classified as poor and the other ten players (50%) as very poor, with no player reaching the moderate, good, or very good categories. This pattern shows that shooting requires greater attention within the technical training program of SSB Talagoray U18. The findings may serve as a practical reference for coaches in setting training priorities, particularly by maintaining the existing strengths in passing and dribbling while providing more structured and progressive shooting practice. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, include players from different football schools or age groups, and examine physical, motor, tactical, or training-related factors that may be associated with technical performance.

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