

# How to Balance the Foreign Players and Local Players to Develop Chinese Soccer

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**Abstract:** Foreign athletes are a common phenomenon in all kinds of leagues around the world. It not only contributes effectively to the improvement in performance but also leads to an active football market. But in the Chinese soccer league, a low-level soccer league, how to utilize these international super players to improve the skills and tactics of local players is significant to change the current situation in the Chinese soccer environment. This research could be conducted through observation, SWOT analysis, and literature review methods to analyze how international players drive the development of local players and improve the development of Chinese soccer. The result shows that to improve the youth football training system, the CFA should make thorough policies or rules, expand the number of teams, improve the management system of football agents and clubs should establish a sound system for the management and introduction of foreign players.

**Keywords:** *Chinese soccer, Foreign athletes, Development*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The sports organization I selected for this project is the Chinese Football Association Super League(CSL), which is the professional Chinese soccer league. The CSL began in 2004, and its predecessor was the Chinese Football A-1 league established in 1989. The CSL was organized by the Chinese Football Association and operated by the Chinese Super League LLC, as well as it is one of the most competitive football leagues in Asia with the highest average attendance. CSL is an open league, there are 16 teams in this league and the last two teams of CLS would be relegated while two teams would be promoted from the lower league.

And the issue I selected is how to balance the foreign players and local players to develop Chinese soccer. In recent years, some Chinese soccer clubs signed famous international soccer players, which improved the performance and level of these teams as well as increased the appreciation of games, but it did not pose some positive effects on the Chinese National Soccer Team and Chinese

football players.

### 1.2 Literature Review

According to Gong Bo, how revitalizing Chinese football must have the perspective and the process of modernization. This paper, through the AHP, tried to analyze the characteristics and connotations of China's football modernization. The result shows that China football takes the first modernization(industrialization, urbanization, democratization) as the important characteristic. This is the basic path of the modernization of world football and is the dual modernization of democratization and knowledge. It shows a microcosm of the Chinese history process and is involved in overall China's social transformation[1]. John Connell thought football has rapidly acquired global cultural, commercial, and also political prominence. China recently and belatedly has sought to acquire international recognition in sports and participate in global development by linking soft power, national status, and football. Market principles have been adopted, football clubs are owned by wealthy

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corporations, partly directed by the government, and expensive coaches and players have been transferred from Europe. Conversely, Chinese corporations have invested in European football clubs. State plans are oriented to success in the World Cup and the adoption of the 'world game' throughout the nation, but cannot easily be implemented from above in a team sport with weak 'grassroots'. Successfully developing the 'people's game' in the People's Republic has proved difficult. In this sporting arena, soft power has been limited because of domestic and international failings[2]. According to Chao Huang, the development of the globalization of football, football culture, and football from country to country business management mode blend mutually, providing the development of China's series of opportunities and challenges. The Chinese athletes in series specific research analyze the main Chinese athletes at an average age, average height, and average weight, then compare the international evaluation standard, put forward China's hasn't been an international star potential, the performance in China's technology and the strain capacity remains to be further improved. For Chinese coaches factors including age, experience, and teaching time, it is concluded that: football coaches, coaches in China number is more, less foreign senior coaches, suggesting that the introduction of more foreign senior coaches, such ability is conducive to the further development of Chinese football, and finally by logistic curve data table[3]. Yue Li and Yu-hua Wu focused on the problems encountered in the development of Chinese football, this paper researches the systematic environment of Chinese football, as well as the various internal and external influence factors. It uses AHP to determine the weight coefficients of various influencing factors, which provide scientific reference for the study of the Chinese football environment system, to distinguish the priorities of various governance activities, and to manage effectively[4]. Shaobin Duan and Juan Chen, in their paper, researched the relationship analysis of football business strategies and football innovation development. Through the past ten years of reform and development, Chinese football has obtained valuable experience and formed primarily a developing theory possessing Chinese characteristics. However, it is significant how to conduct further analysis and research to solve the problems confronted by Chinese football during its course of reform and development by exercising the theory of sustainable development. Due to the developing model of the planned economy carried out for a long, the sports functional departments are on the point of transition in the course of the national economic system transiting to the market economy. The five forces analysis also indicates the internal competitive factor at the micro level within the industry including horizontal and vertical competition[5]. Rollin Wang reviewed China's development of football talent cultivation mode and analyze the status of football reserve personnel training, respectively, from the culture of football teenagers back-up personnel to learn the status quo, resource allocation problems one by one analysis found that

the Football Talents contribution rate is not high, for this reason, the main problem is to train the model, environmental issues, training system, and basic issues. Asked the Football Talents Training System reform measures, establish long-term personnel training objectives, improve China's youth football training system, improve the construction of coaches, vigorously develop the school football, establish a wide range of training channels, and improve the athletes' social security and so on[6]. Li Wei and Lu Zuosheng started with the influence of "Evergrande Mode" on the Chinese Super League competition balancing mechanism, the authors believed that the impact of "Evergrande Mode" on league competition balance was embodied in the unbalance of input funds, the monopoly of excellent player resources, the decrease of game "uncertainty", and the intensification of competition unbalance and cost increase. Based on competition balance theory and practice, the authors put forward the following ideas for establishing a Chinese professional football league competition balancing mechanism: regulate club input funds; prevent rich clubs from buying other clubs' players at an extremely attractive price; restrain the soaring of league player salary; lower club investment cost; establish a rational player transfer mechanism; ensure a competition capacity balance between various teams[7]. Yang Shuo and Leng Tangyun conducted an economic analysis of the quota system for foreign players in professional sports, this paper analyzes its influence on player salaries, the competitive balance of the league, as well as national team performance. Also, there is an international comparative study in the UK, Germany, Spain, and other countries around the world. Based on the research above, as well as the history and current situation of Chinese football, we propose that professional football managers and officials should conduct certain institutional adjustments to gradually increase the foreign player quota in Chinese football. The quality of matches in the Chinese Football League, as well as its international competitiveness, could be improved. Domestic players will be forced to participate in the competition of the global football player market, which could enhance the talent supply of China's football and the performance of its national team[8]. You Maolin analyzed the course of development and current conditions of the organizational structures of professional football clubs in China as well as their differences from the organizational structure designs of foreign professional football clubs and found that the organizational structure designs of professional football clubs in China were developed constantly, provided with such a distinct organizational structure design characteristic as basing the core on performances but had neglected business development and public relation management. The author suggested that professional football clubs in China adopt a flattened organizational structure design, rely on parent company resources, perfect business department setup, and study to fundamentally put forward a new organizational structure design model[9]. Tang Yucheng and Zeng

Xiaosong made a comparative study on the age, height, weight, and Quetelet index of domestic players and foreign players between the Chinese Football Super League and European five football leagues by the methods of literature review and mathematical statistics. The conclusions are as follows. In these leagues, the average weight and Quetelet index of domestic players in the Chinese league ranked the last, there are some disadvantages in terms of physical confrontation. Chinese league paid much attention to bringing in foreign players with larger weight and Quetelet index, but at an old age. All leagues had inclined to bring in foreign players with larger weights and Quetelet index, which indicated that larger weights and Quetelet index have a certain impact on team performance. The ratio of foreign players in the Chinese league is much less than the five European leagues, and the proportion of each position's foreign players is not reasonable for the balanced development of each position's players. It suggested that the Chinese league should consider the average age and body shape data of European leagues[10].

## **2. Problem Statement**

Foreign athletes are a common phenomenon in all kinds of leagues around the world. It not only contributes effectively to the improvement in performance but also leads to an active football market. But in the Chinese soccer league, a low-level soccer league, how to utilize these international super players to improve the skills and tactics of local players is significant to change the current situation in the Chinese soccer environment. In the Chinese Football Association Super League(CSL), there is a large number of superstars, such as Oscar, Hulk, Tevez, Paulo, and so on, from Brazil, Argentina, and Europe. With the help of these superstars, some Chinese soccer clubs have achieved a good award in CSL and got many times Asian Football Confederation Champions. Especially in some teams, relied on these foreign players too much and ignored cultivating their local players, which is a palliative measure and cannot solve the essential issues of Chinese soccer. Therefore, the performance of the Chinese National Soccer Team was not as good as the clubs, they had a poor performance in the 2019 Asian Cup and always let the Chinese soccer fans down.

Therefore, I decided to analyze how can international players drive the development of local players and improve the development of Chinese soccer. And how to balance the international and local players and utilize the ability and ideas of international players in all perspectives of players, teams, managers and the Chinese Soccer Association are important in terms of sports governance and administration.

## **3. Methodology**

The research could be conducted through observation,

logical analysis, and the literature review method. There are many policies, news, articles, rules, and regulations about this issue. So these materials could be used to do my research and find a better way to promote solving this issue. The policies, rules, and regulations established by the Chinese Soccer Association are the most important materials for looking for solutions. And, according to the research on the above policies, articles, and news, SWOT analysis could be used to analyze the influence of foreign players in the Chinese football league.

## **4. Results**

Strength: 1. The foreign football superstars could increase the profile and reputation of the Chinese Super League(CLS). According to the latest data, the ranking of CLS increased from 70 to 34 in the international football league ranking, which aroused worldwide attention among the world. Specifically, more than 96 countries have a franchise of CLS and this data is continuing to increase. Among that, Sky Sport began to broadcast the games of CLS as well as Brazil, Italy, Germany, and Portland also bought the broadcast right of CLS, which made CLS increasingly popular in the global football market. 2. The foreign football superstars brought new blood to Chinese football and activated the fans' enthusiasm for Chinese football games. According to the data, the attendance of CLS increased from 18986 to 24159 between 2014 and 2016, which ranks fifth in the world and 1st in Asia. More and more people change their perspectives and shown their interest in football, as well as more and more parents encourage their children to play football. It is obvious a good start for the Chinese football future. 3. The foreign football superstars to a great extent improved the performance of Chinese football clubs. Specifically, with the help of these foreign players, Guangzhou Evergrande Football Club has been awarded 7 times Champion of CSL and twice Champion of the Asian Champion League, which created a record in Asian football history. 4. The foreign football superstars also could bring some new ideas to clubs and they also could be a model for those local players both in training and games. Their professional quality and spirit are a good example for some local players, which made local players improve themselves according to the performance of foreign players.

Weakness: 1. Increasingly foreign players would hinder the development of Chinese youth training. Because clubs have a fixed budget, if they spend more on signing foreign players, they would spend less on the youth training system. According to data, many Chinese clubs spent more than 2/3 budget on foreign players and coaches, which is very dangerous for the sustainable development of a football league. Meanwhile, the foreign players would take up more game time, which leads local players to have fewer opportunities and time to play in the games. 2. Foreign football superstars play a very important role in a game and to a great extent decide the result of a game. So teams rely on these foreign players too much and coaches usually

make tactics according to them, which makes local players cannot take responsibility physically and psychologically. Therefore, when these local players in the national team, they also cannot play a key role in resulting the games. 3. According to Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the purchasing power of Chinese football clubs increased to fifth in the world, which exceeds that of France and Russia. The price of foreign players in the Chinese football market is incredibly high and many clubs burning money to get them. Therefore, richer clubs could get more superstars while some poor clubs cannot get the financial support for signing good foreign players, which leads to a broad gap among each club. It is very unhealthy for the development of a league.

Opportunities: 1. Under the good environment of the Chinese football market, these foreign players could catch this opportunity to make themselves worthy and continue playing an important role in training and games, helping teams and local players improve. 2. With the development of global media, it is also a good opportunity for the Chinese Super League and its teams to expand their market shares in the world with the help of the influence of foreign players. 3. Clubs could develop their services and products to make more profits and establish a good reputation among the fan base. 4. Local players should take good advantage of these foreign superstars and improve themselves.

Threaten: 1. The rules and regulations of the Chinese Football League(CSL) are still not thorough, which makes the CSL develop unhealthily and unsustainably. 2. The management system of a professional football agent is not as good as which in Europe, resulting in the professional ability of football managers cannot match the development of the league. Therefore, the quality of the introduction of foreign players varies. 3. These big foreign players' transfer deals would lead to some managers' or officers' corruption.

## 5. Conclusions

According to the above analysis, there are some recommendations below:

1.Improving the youth football training system and encouraging clubs to balance their investment for foreign players and youth reserve construction. Because only by developing their players, can they sustainably develop their clubs and national team.

2.The Chinese Football Association should make thorough policies or rules to limit the attendance of foreign players in each game and give enough game time for local young players. This is from the administrative perspective, the administrative organizations and government play a very significant role in Chinese sports and make a sure win-win situation for players and teams.

3.Expanding the number of teams is another way to stimulate the Chinese football market and give more opportunities for players to play.

4.Improving the management system of football agents, increasing the quantity and quality of Chinese football agents, and connecting with international football agents.

5.Clubs should establish a sound system for the management and introduction of foreign players and should not invest blindly. Meanwhile, clubs should take good advantage of these famous players and expand their market share and finally make more profits.

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