

## INCREASING THE EXECUTION SPEED OF OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE TACTICAL ACTIONS IN THE FOOTBALL GAME AT THE TIME OF TRANSITION

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### Abstract

This paper highlights some ways to improve the execution time of offensive and defensive tactical actions, the way in which they influence the increase of the football player's specific speed. This aspect was experienced on a football team of 17-19-year-old junior from the Gică Popescu Football Academy, which participated in the Elite League Championship corresponding to their age. After the application of specific teaching methods, significant progress was registered at the level of all tested parameters. These football players carried out attack and defense actions with high speed, which has the opposing teams on the hip.

To meet these requirements, the player must find proper spots in the free space according to each situation, to control the ball in speed with any part of the body, to dribble in speed, to anticipate the opponent's move, to be able to easily overtake defensive players. The player is aware of every move and makes decisions before his opponent does, performs technical-tactical procedures in high speed conditions.

A coherent integrated training, with higher indices of physical development and a high level of knowledge of the game, leads to high performance, which requires players' rapid reactions to the opponents' actions and fast-paced game.

Conclusive results were recorded in all tests: speed without the ball, execution speed of offensive tactical collective actions, but also in tests applied through defensive collective tactical actions of pressure pressing performed after a careful analysis of the field positions of the opposing players.

In conclusion, the results obtained in the paper recommend this way of approaching teaching, which can be materialized in an effective model of how a football team should act and participate.

*Keywords: football, training, model, transition.*

### Introduction

In the last decade we have witnessed a diversification of the methods and means used by coaches to organize the team game. The main concern was to create a sustainable model, both for attack and defense, requiring a careful analysis of the opponent, every time this model is put into practice. Many clubs build a real industry around the team, investing substantial sums of money to have a methodology appropriate to the level of the players for whom it was invested, but also for those who grow up in the academy.

One of the preoccupations of the specialists was the analysis of the way in which the defensive and offensive transitions are made. Basically, these moments of the game are extremely important, because they must be executed at high speed, in order to react properly depending on the opponent and our possibilities, being executed primarily on small spaces and small number of players. Players' physical, physiological and technical responses are modified in response to changes in objectives [1]. Reducing the number of players in the game increases the number of repetitions of football skills and the number of decision-making

actions, and this provides a logical argument for the use of this strategy both in teaching football and in elite training environments. Thus, this information should be taken into consideration when designing weekly training schedules for footballers [2].

Therefore, it is important to be able to increase the possibilities of expression of the team in those few seconds of organizing the defense or adverse attack. If the speed of execution of offensive and defensive tactical actions is higher, we will consequently have a shorter reaction time of the team and the success will be greater. Football is a team sport with lots of connections among different players; every football team has its own dominant player(s) and frequent game pass patterns. However, frequent game combinations are not necessarily efficient because, for example, passes always between goalkeeper and defender have nothing to do with a chance to score [3].

The problem of the speed of the game refers to its development in speed, and for this we will study its characteristics in order to be able to elaborate new forms, methods and means for its improvement. Offensive and defensive tactical

actions carried out in speed are one of these means. Every second will count in the economy of the game. Therefore, it is necessary to design the construction of individual and collective tactical actions of attack and defense reconsidering the way the training is done. In fact, field dimension is one of the most frequently manipulated constraints in SSCGs during team games practice and yet little is known about the outcomes of these changes [4].

The game system and tactics of the opposing team will change the dynamics of the game in attack and defense designed by any team. The physical training of the players materialized in superior speed indices, the observance of tactical principles adapted to each situation will lead to well-organized and surprising game actions for the opponent, in order to obtain immediate advantages often using the same play forms or means. The selection of players will be important in this regard, imposing the need to have in the team players, who are suitable for the tasks imposed by the team's tactics.

To cope with these requirements, the player must run in the free space according to each situation, he must control the ball in speed with any part of the body, to dribble in speed, to anticipate the movements of opponents, to be able to easily overtake defensive players. Therefore, the data can be implemented into isolated position-specific drills during rehabilitation or additional conditioning. However, the skill of the practitioner is to design combination drills to train a number of positions simultaneously while ensuring variation for motivation and decision-making to represent the game. Future research should aim to quantify mechanical loading during intense match play to provide guidelines for appropriate training methods [5].

The player is aware of every move and makes decisions before his opponent does, performs technical-tactical procedures in high speed conditions. Therefore, the profile of the fast player is determined by his ability to act quickly in any phase of the play as well as over short distances and in small and crowded spaces. This is, in fact, the current interpretation of the notion of "fast play" [6].

#### **Materials and method**

The game of football has seen considerable progress mainly due to the ongoing struggle between attack and defense, the struggle to achieve or prevent the goal. In order to improve a player needs about 10 years to go through all the stages of preparation. Not all selected players can practice the game of football at the highest level,

so they will be educated to do what they can best, they will be oriented to the positions on the field where they can give maximum performance.

Proper and correct training during childhood and adolescence creates the necessary premises to increase the volume, intensity and complexity in training corresponding to the demands imposed by the big competitions. A coherent integrated training with higher indices of physical development and a high level of knowledge of the game, will lead to performance at the level of international requirements, which requires rapid reactions of players to the actions of opponents, a fast-paced game at high speed.

**The aim** of the research is to establish the most important aspects related to the training of 17-19-year-old juniors, who will try to increase their chances of rapid intervention depending on each field situation and the direct opponent's level of preparation at the time of transition game.

#### **Research hypotheses**

1. The training of juniors at this age is a major responsibility for coaches, who must master the methods and means of work, in any individual and collective situation;
2. Knowing and informing the players about their own possibilities of action and knowing the possibilities of the opponents' response to the individual and collective tactical actions in attack and defense will be the premises for the successful reaction in any situation;
3. At the same time, the reconsideration of the pedagogical action model of the coach by streamlining some technical-tactical elements as components of the process of training, education and implementation of individual and collective tactical actions of attack and defense will make the game faster and it will effectively increase its speed in all its forms.

#### **Research methods and techniques**

We actually acted by intervening on the following issues:

- Players were educated to anticipate the teammates and opponents' moves;
- Two or three possibilities for action in each situation were considered;
- We acted in the direction of mental participation, analysis, synthesis and decision corresponding to the actual situation in the game, encouraging the players' reactions of personality;
- The main focus was on controlling the ball according to the task and the presence of the opponent;

- We insisted on quickly finding the most eloquent acting situations, in order not to slow down the game and give the opponent the possibility to react;
- Technical flourishes were avoided and one-touch play was frequently used;
- Communication among players was done through pre-established signals;
- Situations of superiority were created at any time of training and play.

**The subjects of the research** were the 17-19-year-old juniors in Gică Popescu Football Academy, who participated in the Elite League

Championship, 2020-2021 edition, organized by the Romanian Football Federation. The subjects had superior physical, technical, tactical and psychological characteristics.

**Description of the motor tests of the experiment**

**1. Running speed in 10 and 30 meters:**

- Start standing, go to the beep. Players run in pair, 2 repetitions and the best is chosen.

**2. Offensive tactical actions:**

- The player with no. 2 (right-back) controls the ball (figure 1);
- The player with no. 2 (right-back) centers without controlling the ball (figure 2).

**Figure 1**

*Game route - Control the ball-transmission in front of the goal*



This route is executed in a group of 5 players, four attacking players with the participation of the full-backs, who perform centerings in front of the goal.

**Figure 2**

*Game route - Direct transmission in front of the gate*



In both cases, after the ball is taken behind the opposing defenders, they became active, being able to intervene in the centerings executed in front of the goal.

**3. Defensive tactical actions:**

- The team retreat in their own third (figure 3);
- The team perform pressure-pressing after losing the ball (figure 4).
- The reaction time of the group of players who participate compactly after losing the ball will be measured.

**Figure 3**  
*Compact defensive block folding*



The moments of losing the ball in any part of the field are taken into account.

**Figure 4**  
*Collective pressing*



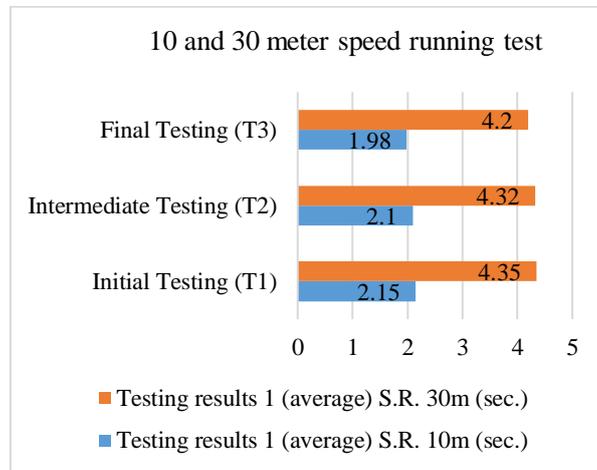
Collective pressing is initiated only on the loss of the ball in the lateral areas of the field. Each exercise was executed 10 times on the left side and 10 times on the right side, each time by the same players.

### Results

**Table 1.** Results obtained in the 10 and 30 meter speed running test.

Parameters (seconds)	Testing results 1 (average)	
	S.R. 10m (sec.)	S.R. 30m (sec.)
Initial Testing (T1)	2,15	4,35
Intermediate Testing (T2)	2,10	4,32
Final Testing (T3)	1,98	4,20
Difference T1-T2	0,05	0,02
Difference T2-T3	0,12	0,12
Difference T1-T3	0,17	0,15

**Figure 5**  
Running speed on 10 and 30 m - the graph of average

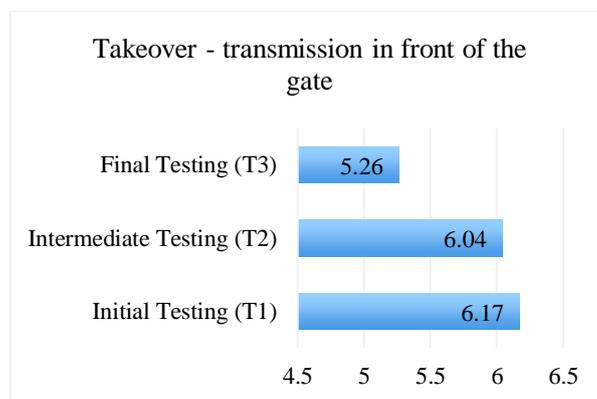


The frequent use of specific training methods in which the emphasis was on reducing the number of moves that slow down the movement, led to increasing the efficiency of offensive and defensive tactical actions. We notice that the speed without the ball increased from 2.15 seconds to 1.98 seconds in the case of 10 m running, and in the case of 30 m running from 4.35 seconds to 4.20 seconds.

**Table 2.** The results obtained on the game route - takeover - transmission in front of the gate

Parameters (seconds)	Test results 2 (average)
Initial Testing (T1)	6,17
Intermediate Testing (T2)	6,04
Final Testing (T3)	5,26
Difference T1-T2	0,13
Difference T2-T3	0,78
Difference T1-T3	0,91

**Figure 6**  
The game route - takeover-transmission in front of the goal - the graph of average

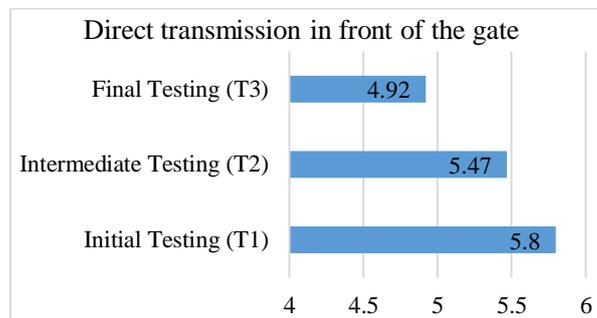


**Table 3.** The results obtained in the game route- Direct transmission in front of the gate

Parameters (seconds)	Test results 3 (average)
Initial Testing (T1)	5,80
Intermediate Testing	5,47
Final Testing (T3)	4,92
Difference T1-T2	0,33
Difference T2-T3	0,55
Difference T1-T3	0,88

**Figure 7**

*The game route - transmission in front of the goal - the graph of average*

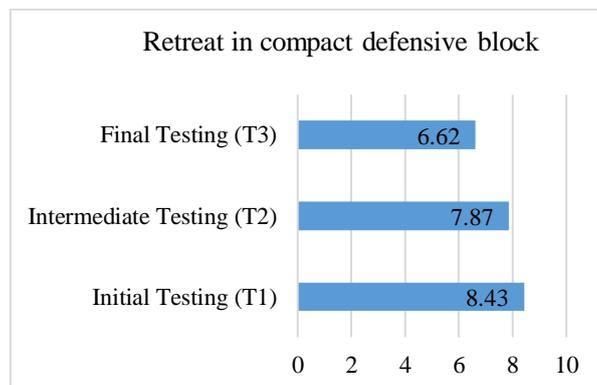


**Table 4.** The results obtained in the game route- Retreat in compact defensive block

Parameters (seconds)	Test results 4 (average)
Initial Testing (T1)	8,43
Intermediate Testing (T2)	7,87
Final Testing (T3)	6,62
Difference T1-T2	0,56
Difference T2-T3	1,25
Difference T1-T3	1,81

**Figure 8**

*The game route folding in compact defensive bloc - the graph of average*

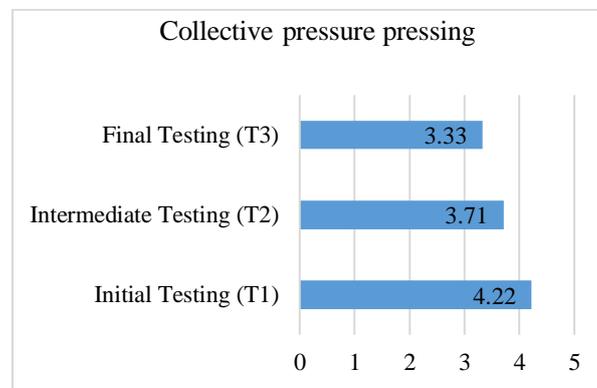


**Table 5.** The results obtained in collective pressure pressing

Parameters (seconds)	Test results 5 (average)
Initial Testing (T1)	4,22
Intermediate Testing (T2)	3,71
Final Testing (T3)	3,33
Difference T1-T2	0,51
Difference T2-T3	0,38
Difference T1-T3	0,89

**Figure 9**

*Pressure collective pressing - the graph of average*



These ways of working will improve both the fast construction of the game towards the opposing goal and the team's reaction during negative transition. Players manage to make quick decisions when losing and winning the ball.

### Discussions

Ball and ball tactical actions performed at a speed appropriate to each situation can create an important advantage for the team, which leads to the idea that choosing the optimal solution to solve the situation is extremely important.

The speed of execution or the speed of the singular movement appears in all cases combined with the other forms of speed (reaction or repetition) or strength. A football team's execution with high efficiency of the technical-tactical actions is conditioned by their rapid development, which is, in other words, at the maximum possible speed. In developing speed, we must take into account the way it manifests itself in the game, i.e. the correlation with the other motor qualities, but also in accordance with the technical-tactical manifestation of each player and the team as a whole.

The distance covered at high speed in a match is an important measure of match running performance given its correlation with physical

capacity and its ability to demarcate between various competitive standards, positions and gender in elite soccer [7].

The game model of the 18-19 year old junior team takes into account the superior abilities of each player to participate, equally and with the same efficiency, in the attack and defense phases, after he has perfected his ball technique, but and without the ball, the development of tactical actions in a cursive manner through quick demarcations and on future positions and precise passes to the best placed player.

The disadvantage of the attack consists in difficulties of the rather complicated technique, specific to handling the ball, against the aggressive actions of defenders who are concerned to avoid receiving a goal, but also try to take possession of the ball in order to counterattack [8]. From a practical perspective, players regularly interchanging to more demanding positions should be conditioned where possible to be able to cope physically and

technically with the switch. These findings have implications for developing position-specific training drills that mimic the characteristics of each position and which provide technical, tactical and physical overload [9].

This aspect involves covering the entire playing space (width and depth) by moving the players without the ball, in order to obtain numerical superiority and multiple possibilities for the ball holder to pass to the players closest to the opponent's goal. The main task of the tactics is to select the procedures, means and forms of playing the game against the opponent [10]. In the absence of specific performance instructions, it was predicted that attacker-defender dyads positioned closer to either the attacking or defensive goal of the ball dribbler would reveal different strategies and distinct player to-ball distance patterns than trials in a midfield position due to the constraint on performance imposed by the importance of these goal areas [11].

It is important to train the players' ability to use the pressing (when losing the ball), and the other defenders to apply it efficiently, reaction depending on the opponent with defense in the area or man to man. Players will also be encouraged to fully engage in the fight to recover the ball, to have the availability of maximum concentration in difficult moments in defense and quick collective decision, in order to create favorable defense situations. In all cases, we need mentally balanced players who are confident in their own abilities and in their teammates, aiming together towards winning.

Assisting players in making realistic evaluations of their own performances and to support them to work in areas of weakness may also support their development. This may entail regular discussions with players, encouraging them to reflect on key aspects of their performance and supporting them in developing strategies to target areas for improvement, for example [12].

### Conclusions

Running with and without the ball makes significant progress, which means that the corrections for each procedure, by removing unnecessary movements from the players' habits, gave the expected performance. Offensive and defensive tactical actions will have an increased efficiency, as a result of their development in speed, without a possibility of rapid reaction from the opponent. The use of adversity in games on small surfaces and small number of players (S.S.G.), will create the premises for obtaining superior results in training, over a short time. The selection of the most significant means of

improving individual and collective technique have led to the advancement of technical and technical-tactical factors, with direct effect on the assessment in the games [13].

Both the choice of models and the training itself must be adapted to the players' particularities and value, without reducing the strictness in training and with the focus on fulfilling performance objectives.

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