

**IMPROVING TECHNICAL PREPARATION OF U-12 FOOTBALL PLAYERS
THROUGH SPECIALIZED TRAINING EXERCISES**

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Annotation

This study examines the effectiveness of specialized training exercises in improving the technical preparation of U-12 football players. Modern football requires young athletes to develop technical skills such as ball control, dribbling, and passing accuracy from an early age. The purpose of the research is to analyze how special training exercises influence the development of technical skills among young players.

Key words

football training, technical preparation, youth football, U-12 players, football drills, skill development.

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается эффективность специальных тренировочных упражнений для повышения технической подготовленности футболистов категории U-12. Современный футбол требует от молодых спортсменов высокого уровня владения техническими навыками, такими как контроль мяча, ведение мяча и точность передач. Целью исследования является анализ влияния специальных тренировочных упражнений на развитие технических навыков у юных футболистов.

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada U-12 yosh toifasidagi futbolchilarning texnik tayyorgarligini oshirishda maxsus mashqlarning samaradorligi o'rganildi. Zamonaviy futbol yosh sportchilardan to'pni nazorat qilish, to'p bilan yurish va aniq uzatmalar kabi texnik ko'nikmalarni erta yoshdan rivojlantirishni talab qiladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi maxsus mashqlar orqali yosh futbolchilarning texnik ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish imkoniyatlarini tahlil qilishdan iborat.

Abstract

The development of technical skills is a key component in the long-term preparation of young football players. Modern football requires players to demonstrate high levels of ball control, passing accuracy, dribbling ability, and coordination from an early age. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of specialized training exercises in improving the technical preparation of U-12 football players.

Introduction. Football is one of the most popular sports in the world and continues to develop rapidly in terms of training methodology and performance demands. The success of a football player depends on the development of several important components, including technical, tactical, physical, and psychological preparation. Among these components, technical skills represent the fundamental basis for successful performance in football. Ball control, accurate passing, dribbling, and shooting are essential abilities that players must develop from an early age. In youth football training systems, the development of technical skills plays a



crucial role in the long-term formation of professional players. Modern football academies emphasize the importance of starting technical training at an early stage. Research shows that children between the ages of 8 and 12 demonstrate a high capacity for motor learning and coordination development. Therefore, this stage is considered optimal for improving football technique. However, many youth training programs still rely heavily on general physical exercises rather than structured technical training. As a result, young players may lack the necessary technical abilities required for higher levels of competition. To address this issue, coaches increasingly incorporate specialized technical drills and small-sided games into training sessions. These methods help players develop ball control, spatial awareness, and decision-making abilities under game-like conditions.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of specialized training exercises in improving the technical preparation of U-12 football players.

Literature Review. The development of technical skills in football has been widely studied in sports science literature. According to Bompa (2015), technical preparation forms the foundation for successful athletic performance and must be systematically developed during the early stages of athlete training. Reilly (2007) emphasizes that young football players must develop technical proficiency alongside physical fitness in order to perform effectively during matches. Technical skills such as passing accuracy and ball control allow players to maintain possession and create scoring opportunities. Williams and Hodges (2005) highlight the importance of skill acquisition during childhood and adolescence. Their research suggests that repetitive practice combined with game-based learning significantly improves technical performance in young athletes. Small-sided games are also considered an effective training method for youth football players. According to Hill-Haas et al. (2011), small-sided games increase player involvement, improve decision-making skills, and enhance technical performance. Despite the availability of these training methods, many youth coaches still lack structured programs specifically designed to improve technical preparation. Therefore, further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of specialized exercises in youth football training.

Research Methodology Participants. The study involved 24 football players aged 10–12 years from a youth football academy. The players had at least two years of football training experience. Participants were divided into two groups:

Experimental group – 12 players

Control group – 12 players

Training Program

The experimental group followed a specialized training program for 8 weeks, with three training sessions per week.

Each session lasted 90 minutes and included:

Warm-up exercises (10–15 minutes)

Technical drills (30 minutes)

Small-sided games (30 minutes)

Cool-down exercises (10 minutes)

The control group continued their regular training program.

Training Exercises. The experimental program included the following exercises:

- Ball control drills using the inside and outside of the foot
- Dribbling through cones at different speeds
- Passing accuracy exercises in pairs and groups
- First-touch ball control training
- Small-sided games (3v3 and 4v4)



These exercises were designed to simulate match conditions and improve coordination and decision-making.

Testing Procedures. To evaluate technical performance, several tests were conducted before and after the training program.

Tests included:

1. 30-meter sprint with the ball
2. Dribbling through cones test
3. Passing accuracy test
4. Ball control test

The results were recorded and analyzed using comparative statistical methods. The results of the study showed clear improvements in the experimental group after the training program.

Results

Test	Before Training	After Training
30 m sprint with ball	6.8 s	6.1s
Dribbling Test	12.4 s	10.9 s
Passing Accuracy	65%	83%
Ball Control Score	7	9

In contrast, the control group demonstrated only minor improvements.

These findings indicate that specialized technical training exercises significantly improve the technical skills of young football players.

Discussion. The results of this study confirm the importance of structured technical training programs in youth football development.

Specialized exercises allow young players to develop coordination, balance, and ball control. In addition, small-sided games provide opportunities for players to apply their technical skills in realistic match situations.

The improvement observed in the experimental group supports the findings of previous research, which emphasizes the role of structured practice and game-based learning in skill acquisition.

Youth football coaches should therefore prioritize technical training during early developmental stages.

Practical Implications. The findings of this study provide several practical recommendations for football coaches:

- Technical training should begin at an early age.
- Training sessions should include ball control and passing exercises.
- Small-sided games should be regularly used during training.
- Coaches should focus on game-based learning rather than only physical training.

Implementing these strategies can significantly improve the development of young football players.

Conclusion. The study demonstrates that specialized training exercises have a significant positive impact on the technical preparation of U-12 football players. The implementation of structured technical training programs can improve dribbling ability, passing accuracy, and ball control.

These findings highlight the importance of technical training in youth football development and provide useful recommendations for coaches working with young players.

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