



**RĪGAS STRADIŅA
UNIVERSITĀTE**



**LATVIJAS SPORTA
PEDAGOĢIJAS AKADĒMIJA**

**RĪGAS STRADIŅA UNIVERSITĀTE
LATVIJAS SPORTA PEDAGOĢIJAS AKADĒMIJA**

**SHORT CYCLE PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
“SPORTS AND EDUCATION SPECIALIST” SUB-PROGRAM “SPORT COACH”**

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**EDUCATION AND SPORTS WORK SPECIALIST
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FOOTBALL COACH QUALIFICATION WORK

Topic: Research on the development of passing technique, speed and its biomechanics in the football training process of Marupe Sports school U13

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INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the world's most popular and most commonly played team sports, demanding great levels of physical performance, tactical sophistication and technical precision. Athletes are required to regularly execute explosive movements, fast directional shifts and technically precise actions under situations of exhaustion and competitive pressure. Speed and passing skill are one of the most important physical and technical components in football and are the basis of great individual and team performance.

In football speed is not just straight line running ability. It features acceleration, reaction time and agility – the ability to receive information quickly and then move in response to the ever-changing game scenarios. Research shows that most of the decisive actions in football, such as breaking into space, winning duels or moving from defense to attack, are performed at high intensity and over short distances. That's why speed development is a central priority in youth and professional training programs alike. (Baron, J., Bieniec, A., Swinarew, A. S., Gabryś, T., & Stanula, A. (2019).

Passing technique is also very essential and is the basis for ball circulation, tactical build-up play and goal scoring possibilities. Biomechanically, a good pass is an accurate pass with the right body posture, foot placement at the time of contact, angle of the kicking leg, follow-through, and weight distribution. Small variations in these biomechanical characteristics cause a considerable reduction in passing accuracy and thus in game efficiency. Knowledge of biomechanics of passing may help coaches in more exact identification of technical mistakes and in the development of remedial training strategies. (Zerai, z., gréhaigine, j., & godbout, p. (2020).

While these attributes are generally acknowledged as being important, youth training practice is typically deficient in a systematic, evidence-based strategy to developing speed and passing skill together. Often these components are taught in isolation during training sessions without regard to their functional connection under match settings. Moreover, the biomechanical analysis of the passing method is seldom used in regular coaching practice at juvenile level, thereby restricting the efficiency of the technical correction.

The subject of the qualification work is the analysis of the training process of the Marupe Sports school. The aim of the qualification work is to study the present implementation and effectiveness of speed development and passing technique acquisition via practical research.

The work is divided into five major chapters:

- Chapter 1 describes the structure of the sport and gives an outline of the training procedure.
- Chapter 2 deals with theoretical underpinnings and practical techniques of the development of speed as a specific physical attribute, testing and dynamic evaluation of students' performance.
- Chapter 3 deals with passing technique in a theoretical and biomechanical context, analyzes typical mistakes and assesses students' technical readiness by actual observation.
- Chapter 4 describes the training work planning, such as yearly, weekly and individual session plans.
- Chapter 5 is a self-assessment of the qualifying work development process.

The purpose of this work is to study and to analyze the development of speed and passing skill in the training process and to provide methodically grounded ways of their improvement.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPORTS ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH OF THE TRAINING PROCESS

1.1. History and Traditions of the Organization

Mārupes Novada Sporta skola is a municipal educational institution established to provide professional orientated sports education for children and youth of the Mārupe district. The school has become a major youth sports center since its founding, where systematic training in numerous sports disciplines is conducted and active participation in regional and national tournaments is organized. Over the years the university has developed a strong history based on athletic accomplishment, sportsmanship and community involvement. It has produced many excellent athletes who have gone on to represent their area at a higher level of competition, and in doing so, contributed to the school's reputation and legacy throughout Latvian youth sports.

The school's traditions are not just about sports performance, but also about the personal development of each student. Annual events, contests and ceremonies celebrating sports accomplishments provide a feeling of pride and community for kids, coaches and families

.

1.2. Legal Aspects of Establishment and Operation

Mārupes Novada Sporta skola is a municipal educational institution that is subordinate to the Mārupe Regional Municipality. Its creation and operation are regulated by the Law on Education of the Republic of Latvia, the Law on Sports and applicable Rules of Municipalities. The school runs according to an authorized educational program registered with the State Education Quality Service (Izglītības kvalitātes valsts dienests – IKVD) that determines the content, goals and organization of the sports education given.

The institution is administered by a director legally responsible for the school's adherence to national law, educational standards and local regulations. All coaches should have the proper qualification in accordance with Latvian sports and education legislation. The financial operations of the school are controlled by the municipal authorities, which ensures transparent use of public funds granted for the development of youth sports.

1.3. Internal Regulations, Environmental, Fire Safety, and Hygiene Requirements

The internal regulations of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola provide the standards for orderly, safe, and effective daily operations. All participants, including students, coaches, administrative personnel, and visitors, are required to adhere to these limits.

Students must consistently attend training sessions, adhere to timetables, and notify their coach in advance if they are unable to go. Trainers coordinate, execute, and document training in accordance with sanctioned plans. The administrative personnel coordinates and conveys information to facilitate the overall operation of the institution.

Environmental standards promote the judicious use of the school's resources and facilities. Students and staff are urged to minimize trash, maintain equipment, and ensure that sports facilities and adjacent areas are well-kept.

Fire safety is ensured in accordance with Latvian fire safety regulations. All structures are outfitted with fire extinguishers and include well marked emergency exits and evacuation protocols. Employees and students get periodic fire safety training. Coaches will be cognizant of evacuation methods and will guarantee that athletes may safely exit facilities during an emergency.

All participants must maintain personal hygiene and wear appropriate attire throughout training. Common spaces and locker rooms must be maintained in a clean condition. Sports equipment is routinely sanitized and inspected. A predetermined schedule is adhered to for the sanitation of the school's facilities to provide a healthy training environment.

1.4. Safety Regulations in Sports, Injuries, and Their Prevention

All coaching staff of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola prioritize student safety throughout training and competition. Coaches must check the training space and equipment for safety

before each session. Exercises and training loads must match students' age, physical growth, and ability level.

Football training may cause muscular strains, ankle sprains, knee ligament problems, and overuse injuries. Prevention includes adequate warm-up and cool-down, gradual loading, suitable footwear, and teaching proper movement and landing methods. During intense competition, coaches must monitor student weariness and prevent overtraining.

Injury requires the coach to halt training, evaluate the situation, offer basic first aid, and call emergency medical assistance. Complete and submit an injury report to school management. First aid certificates are required for coaches.

1.5. Documentation Required for Coaches

Coaches at Mārupes Novada Sporta skola keep a collection of vital papers that assure the quality, openness and legality of the training process. Documentation is of the following primary types: • Annual training plan – a strategy for the whole sports year, which includes training times, goals and content.

- Weekly training plans define particular exercises, loads and targets for each training session of the week.
- Plans of individual training sessions specify warm-up, major portion and cool down, including techniques, means and time.
- Student attendance diary - keeps track of students' attendance at each session.
- Physical testing records – log the results of fitness tests that students do at regular intervals throughout the year.
- Competition results log – records student participation and performance in contests.
- Health and medical clearance paperwork – ensure students are medically fit to engage in sports training and competition.

Documentation enables coaches to track student development, prepare efficiently, and provide accountability to school administration and parents.

1.6. Cooperation with Students' Parents and the Public

Mārupes Novada Sporta skola considers parental engagement as an important component of successful youth sports education. Coaches and parents keep regular contact via planned sessions, individual consultations and casual talks. Parents are kept informed of training plans, competition calendars, student progress and any health or behavioural related problems. It is common practice to have a general parents' meeting at the start of every sports year to introduce the training program, objectives and expectations. Coaches give comments on each student's growth, accomplishments, and areas for extra focus throughout the year.

The school also connects with the wider community via its involvement in regional sporting events, open training sessions and partnerships with local schools and community groups. These initiatives enhance awareness of the school's work, attract new students and reinforce the institution's position in the Mārupe community.

2. STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL PHYSICAL ABILITIES OF ATHLETES IN A SPORTS DISCIPLINE

2.1. The Concept and Essence of Special Physical Abilities

In every sport, athletic achievement is all about physical skills. In football, physical preparation cannot be separated from technical, tactical and psychological preparedness, since all parts of the game are portrayed via physical movement. In sport science, physical talents are often divided into two groups: general and particular physical abilities, and the knowledge of this difference is fundamental for the development of efficient training programs for young athletes.

General physical skills are the levels of physical development that support health, fundamental motor functions and general athleticism. They are created via large variety of physical activities and are basis for building sport specific attributes. On the contrary, special physical talents are skills that are directly related to the unique requirements of a selected athletic discipline – in this example, football. They are produced by certain training techniques and activities that are very similar to the movement patterns, energy systems, and neuromuscular requirements experienced during real competition.

Special physical qualities in football include speed, strength, endurance, coordination, and agility, which directly influence technical performance such as passing and ball control. According to Lloyd and Oliver (2019), youth athletic development must integrate physical, technical, and cognitive components to ensure long-term progression. In football, these qualities are interdependent, meaning that improvements in physical capacity enhance technical execution efficiency.

Speed is undoubtedly one of the most important particular athletic qualities in contemporary football. It includes locomotor speed, which is the ability to cover space in a short period, but also response speed, the ability to react quickly to visual and auditory inputs, and action speed, which is the ability to make technical actions such as passing, dribbling or shooting in a very short time. Research in professional football has shown that the vast majority of goal

situations are preceded by high speed actions and this underlines the significance of speed development at all levels including young football.

Another key specific physical skill in football is strength, especially explosive strength or power. It is essential for leaping, tackling, forceful shooting and winning physical duels. For juvenile athletes, strength development should be treated with caution, starting with body weight exercises and functional motions, then moving to resistance training, and considering the normal phases of physical maturation.

In football, special endurance is defined as the capacity to repeat high intensity efforts for the whole match. Special football endurance is the ability to sprint, recover and sprint again. This is different from normal aerobic endurance. Special football endurance is directly associated with the anaerobic energy system and the effectiveness of recovery processes.

Agility and coordination are extremely vital in football because of the unexpected and dynamic character of the sport. Players must continually modify body posture, balance and direction of movement in reaction to the ball, teammates and opponents. Well-developed coordination leads to more efficient and exact technical execution, which is especially important in passing and firing motions.

Flexibility plays a significant role in injury prevention and allows for the entire range of motion necessary for the technically correct execution of football movements and plays – especially in the hip flexors, hamstrings and ankle joints – regions that are often strained in football-specific activities.

The development of particular physical talents in the context of youth football training should be carried out in the light of knowledge about biological age and individual growth rates. The level of physical development in young athletes of the same age might be very different, which directly affects the possibility of developing specific traits. Therefore, training regimens must be specifically designed, progressive and periodized to coincide with sensitive phases of physical development — those windows throughout infancy and adolescence when certain physical attributes react most effectively to training stimuli.

Special physical ability development is not only an improvement of the individual physical parameters, but a formation of the general physical basis for the implementation of technical skills, tactical decisions in the conditions of high pressure and stable performance in

competitions. In football, where the result of a match is determined by fractions of a second and centimetres of accuracy, the methodical and scientifically based development of particular athletic talents is not optional – it is the cornerstone of efficient coaching practice.

2.2 The Relationship Between Sports Technique and Physical Abilities

Technical skills in football, such as passing, are strongly influenced by biomechanical and physical factors. Davids et al. (2020) explain that skill execution emerges from the interaction between the athlete and the environment, meaning that technique cannot be separated from physical readiness. Williams and Ford (2021) further emphasize that expert performance depends on the integration of perception, decision-making, and physical execution.

Understanding the nature of this interaction is important for coaches to construct training programs that develop each dimension concurrently and more integrally.

Sports technique in football is the set of particular motor abilities allowing the player to manage and utilize the ball correctly while solving different game circumstances. They include passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting, heading and defensive activities such as tackle and interception. Every technical activity has a certain biomechanical structure – a precise sequence of body motions, joint angles, force applications and coordination patterns that, if properly performed, would result in an efficient and accurate end.

All technical skills in football are closely related to the underlying physical capacities of the player. This association may be detected across all key technological components:

Speed and technique are maybe the most overtly correlated partnership in football. The ability to execute a technically perfect pass, first touch or shot under time constraint is largely dependent upon quickness of movement and response speed. Modern football has become more faster at all levels of competition and players have to execute technical tasks in ever shorter time periods. The better the player is at speed the better they are at creating and using space but only if their technique is stable at high speeds of movement. This is a key issue – technical excellence has to be taught and consolidated at game-realistic rates, not only under slow, controlled situations.

Explosive strength and skill are tightly related in activities like as shooting, leaping for

headers and forceful ground passes. For example, the efficacy of a shot from a biomechanical viewpoint relies on the coordinated application of force throughout the kinetic chain from the supporting leg to the hip, knee and ankle of the kicking leg to the point of ball impact. If a player lacks adequate leg strength or core stability then the technical structure of the shot breaks down and therefore there is less force and precision. Strength in the supporting leg is also important for balance and postural control during technically difficult acts such as passing on the move or receiving under physical strain.

Coordination and technique are among the most important relationships. Coordination is the capacity to arrange and manage complicated, multi-joint motions with accuracy and timing. It is basically the neuromuscular underpinning of technical competence. A player with high levels of coordinative skill can adjust technique flexibly to many scenarios in the game, many surfaces and body postures. A player with better coordination may make a technically perfect pass not just standing, but also running fast, under pressure of the defence or from an unbalanced position. So in good young football development programs, training coordination and technical training go hand in hand.

Significant interrelationships between technique and flexibility. Players need enough flexibility of the hip flexors, hamstrings and ankle joints to acquire the precise biomechanical postures necessary for technically effective execution. For example, a player who has limited hip flexibility may not be able to create enough kicking range of motion. This results in shorter, less forceful passing or shooting action. Flexibility also influences a player's ability to control their body in the air, sliding tackles and quick changes of direction, all of which need technical skill and enough mobility in the joints.

Endurance and technique are related by the idea of technical stability under exhaustion. As a match wears on and weariness builds up physically, the level of technical execution decreases, passes become less precise, initial touches less controlled, decisions slower. Players with better special football endurance have the ability to retain technical excellence for a longer amount of time and this has a direct influence on team performance in the latter phases of the match. The link underlines the necessity of technical training not just while fresh physically but also in settings of controlled tiredness, so that players gain the ability to maintain technical standards throughout the game.

In young football, the link between technique and physical ability is especially relevant at critical stages for motor development. Children are most receptive to coordination and

technical training between around 8 and 14 years of age, creating an optimal window to create accurate movement patterns and technical foundations. If technical abilities are acquired and established at this time with the right physical support, they are more stable, automatic and adaptive across the athlete's long-term growth.

From a coaching viewpoint the practical relevance of this link is clear: technical and physical training must be planned and performed in an integrated way. Such combination drills, like speed dribbling, fatigue passing circuits, or strength-based finishing exercises, are more effective in developing game-ready players than simply physical conditioning or technical repetition without physical context.

In conclusion, in football there is a dynamic, bidirectional interaction between sports technique and physical abilities. Physical characteristics are the basis of the building block upon which technique is formed and represented, and developed technique permits physical qualities to be utilized in a precise, efficient and effective manner under competitive situations. One of the hallmarks of effective football coaching is to understand this connection, and to build it in a methodical way.

2.3 Age and Gender Characteristics in Relation to Speed

The development of physical capabilities in young athletes is not a uniform phenomenon. It is substantially affected by biological age, personal maturation rates, and gender-specific physiological distinctions. For youth football coaches, comprehending these characteristics is not merely theoretical; it is an essential practical requirement that directly influences the design of training programs, the distribution of loads, and the expectations set for young players at various developmental stages.

2.3.1 Age Characteristics and Speed Development

Sports science distinguishes some stages in the development of infancy and adolescence, so-called "sensitive periods" - periods of time during which the human body is especially susceptible to the development of certain physical traits. The prime sensitive time for speed is typically thought to be between 7 to 12 years of age, when the greatest increases in response speed and movement frequency may be achieved. Speed development in youth athletes is strongly affected by biological maturation. Malina et al. (2019) highlight that peak gains in speed occur during growth spurts due to neuromuscular development. Ford et al. (2020) also

state that U13 players are in a sensitive developmental phase where coordination and acceleration training are particularly effective. The second stage of speed development is related to puberty . Hormonal changes, increased muscle mass and improvements in neuromuscular function during puberty lead to additional increases in locomotor speed and explosive power .

The early childhood period (6-10 years) is characterized by the fast maturation of the neurological system, and youngsters have a natural potential to enhance the response speed and movement coordination. At this age, training should concentrate on creating rapid, entertaining movement patterns via games and activities that promote quick responses, agility and basic ball-handling abilities. Over emphasizing physical training at this age is unproductive and may be detrimental to long term growth.

In the preadolescent years (10 to 13 years of age), athletes begin to make large gains in acceleration and short-distance sprinting speed. The neuromuscular system becomes more capable of creating quick, coordinated muscle contractions and technical abilities may be completed at ever greater speeds. This is a good time to reinforce technically correct movement patterns under speed settings since the nervous system is still rather adaptive and physical strength is not yet a limiting issue.

The teenage phase (13–16 years) is marked by rapid hormonal changes related with puberty, which provide both possibilities and problems for speed development. In males, the boost in testosterone fuels significant increases in muscular development and explosive strength, directly impacting sprint speed and power. But the fast development of the long bones at this time might momentarily make coordination and economy of movement poor because the nervous system has to keep up with a changing body shape. Coaches should be aware of these stages of transition and adapt technical and physical demands appropriately.

Late teen (16–19 years) During this phase, physical maturation is almost complete for most athletes and speed growth is more reliant upon specific training techniques (e.g., sprint work, plyometrics, speed-strength workouts). At this level, you should be very well on the way to laying the foundations of speed, and training should be aimed at refining and optimizing existing capabilities rather than establishing them from start.

One of the key ideas in preparing for aging is biological age vs chronological age. Even in the same age group in youth football, athletes born in the same calendar year might vary greatly in physical development. The relative age effect is a well-documented phenomena in football,

wherein athletes born earlier in the selection year are overrepresented in the sport because they are physically better mature. It is important that coaches be aware of this prejudice and that late growing athletes are not disregarded or under-valued just because their physical growth has not yet peaked.

2.3.2 Gender Characteristics and Speed Development

Research shows that boys and girls develop speed differently due to hormonal and physiological differences. Lloyd et al. (2018) explain that while both genders benefit from speed training, males tend to show greater absolute improvements after puberty.

However, from about 12-13 years of age there are certain key physiological variations that start to occur between the male and female athletes that directly impact on speed development:

During puberty boys undergo a big gain in muscle mass, testosterone levels and bone density that translates into increased absolute sprint speed and explosive strength. On average, male football players can generate more anaerobic power output than female football players. This means that male players will sprint quicker and will be able to accelerate more over short distances.

Girls enter puberty a little earlier, often between 10 and 13 years of age. The hormonal changes are similar, but distinct physical adaptations occur since estrogen, rather than testosterone, is mostly responsible for the alterations. In average, female athletes have lower absolute speed values due to a higher percentage of body fat, a broader hip shape and lower relative muscle mass compared to males. But the proportional gains in speed from specialized training are still huge and should not be disregarded.

The broader pelvis of female athletes results in a larger Q angle at the knee joint, which is the angle between the line of pull of the quadriceps muscle and the patellar tendon. The risk of injury to the knees, especially the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), is increased because of this anatomical feature. Female football players are statistically more prone to this kind of injury. Therefore, neuromuscular control and landing mechanics should be included as preventive components in speed and agility training of female juvenile athletes.

It is also vital to understand that female athletes may react differently to training volume, and

recovery needs . Evidence shows that female athletes might be more vulnerable to indications of overtraining and hormonal imbalances with heavy training loads, especially during times of fast physical development. Female young football coaches need to be vigilant about training loads and keep lines of communication open with players about how their bodies are feeling.

2.3.3. Practical Implications for Football Training

The knowledge of the age and gender characteristics in terms of speed development has many major practical implications for soccer coaches: •Training regimens should be age-appropriate and periodized to match critical times of development; speed should get the greatest attention during the most vulnerable windows. •The biological development of individuals varies and training loads must be adapted to this rather than imposing universal criteria based purely on chronological age.

- Speed training for female athletes should be combined with injury prevention exercises, especially around knee stability, hip strength and precise landing mechanics. • Coaches need to minimize early specialization and overuse of physical activity with young athletes since this might disrupt normal development and increase risk of injury. Buchheit (2020) suggests that speed training in football should be integrated into game-based drills rather than isolated running, as this improves transfer to match performance.

In conclusion, age and gender are significant determinants that determine the path of speed development in young football players. A coach who recognizes and appreciates these traits is in a better position to build training programs that are successful, safe, developmentally appropriate and that support the long-term athletic development of each student.

2.4 Methods, Means, and Principles of Load Dosage for Developing a Specific Special Physical Ability

Passing is one of the most often performed and strategically important technical activities in football. The development of constant, correct and situationally suitable passing ability is constructed on the basis of scientifically substantiated training techniques, carefully chosen

practical means and the principles of exact dosage of loads. The evolution of passing technique is a much more complicated task than purely physical traits such as speed or strength. Training load management is essential to avoid overload and injuries. Impellizzeri et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of balancing internal and external load. Gabbett (2021) warns that excessive training increases injury risk, especially in youth athletes. Therefore, structured progression and monitoring are critical. It needs simultaneous enhancement of neuromuscular coordination, biomechanical accuracy, perceptual awareness and decision making capacity. It is one of the most challenging aspects of football instruction.

2.4.1 Training Methods for Developing Passing Technique

1. The Method of Demonstration and Imitation The basis of technical learning in any sport starts with observation and imitation. The coach illustrates the ideal biomechanical structure of the passing motion (foot stance, body posture, approach angle, point of contact on the ball, follow-through) and the athlete strives to mimic the movement. It is especially effective in the early phases of the technical learning process when players are developing their mental and muscle representation of the talent. Demonstrations should be clear, repeated from several angles, and include a brief spoken explanation of the essential technical topics. A video analysis of elite players using the same method may be a very useful addition to a live presentation.

2. Complete Procedure The whole process is a dry run of the full technical move in its entirety without splitting it into other parts. This is ideal when the technical skill is reasonably straight forward, when the athlete already has a fundamental knowledge of the movement or when fragmentation would interrupt the natural flow and rhythm of the exercise. For passing the entire technique is used in couples or small groups, players doing complete passing actions to experience the whole movement sequence of approach, contact and follow through in a continuous, natural flow.

3. The Parts Approach The part technique breaks the technical motion into parts that are practised independently and then put back together into the whole movement. For passing technique this may mean isolating the location of the supporting leg, then the position of the

kicking foot upon contact, then the direction of the follow-through, practicing each aspect separately before integrating them. This is especially effective if one aspect of the technique is always wrong, or if you are dealing with novices who are unable to understand the whole movement at once due to its complexity. The disadvantage of the part technique is that the separated components may not transfer fully to the whole action, and therefore the practice of the part must always be followed by reintegration.

4. Variable Practice Method Variable practice means doing the same skill under multiple circumstances—changing distances, angles, target sizes, speeds and kinds of surfaces. Research on motor learning strongly supports the use of varied practice for building resilient and flexible technical abilities that can be employed successfully under the unexpected settings of match play. Variable practice for passing should involve passing to stationary and moving targets including passing with the dominant and non-dominant foot, passing at varied distances and with different force needs, and passing from different body angles and directions of movement. Football needs a flexible situation-adapted passing skill, which can only be developed via variable practice.

5. The Method of Competitions and Games As in speed development, in passing technique training the game approach and the competitive method are of key importance. Small-sided games are one of the most effective methods for developing passing accuracy and decision-making. Sarmento et al. (2018) found that such games improve technical actions under pressure. Katis and Kellis (2020) further confirm that game-based training enhances both technical and tactical skills simultaneously. These tactics enhance the physical execution of passing and also the perception and cognitive elements of the talent reading the game, picking the right pass and executing it under pressure. One traditional, very successful example of the game technique in passing development is Rondo drills, when one or more defenders try to intercept passes amongst a greater number of attackers.

6. The Analytic Method with Feedback This approach involves meticulous technical observation and rapid and detailed input of the coach. The coach monitors each player's technique throughout passing drills, offering detailed and constructive input aimed at correcting certain biomechanical flaws. Effective feedback in technical training should be detailed (explain exactly what is faulty), positive in tone (emphasis on what should be done rather than what is wrong), and timely (given close in time to the mistake without

significantly disrupting the flow of practice). Video feedback – filming players practicing, and then watching the tape together – is a growing available and useful tool for technical analysis and correction in young soccer.

2.4.2 Training Means for Developing Passing Technique

1. The method of imitation and demonstration All technical learning in any sport begins with observation and imitation. The coach demonstrates the optimal biomechanical form of the passing action (foot stance, body position, approach angle, point of contact on the ball, follow-through) and the athlete tries to emulate the movement. It is particularly helpful in the early stages of the technical learning process when players are forming mental and muscular representations of the skill. Demonstrations should be clear, repeated from several perspectives, and accompanied by a short spoken explanation of the main technical points. A video analysis of great players using the same approach may be a very beneficial adjunct to a live presentation.

2. Full Procedure This whole thing is a dry run of the whole technical move in its entirety, not broken into various pieces. This is great when the technical skill is pretty straightforward or when the athlete already has a basic grasp of the movement or when fragmentation would break the natural flow and rhythm of the activity. The full method is employed in couples or small groups for passing, players completing complete passing actions to experience the whole movement sequence of approach, contact and follow through in a continuous, natural flow.

3. The sections Approach The component method breaks down the technical movement into sections which are performed separately and then put together again to form the full movement. In the passing method this may be isolating the position of the supporting leg, then the position of the kicking foot on contact, then the direction of the follow through, practicing each of these in isolation before putting them together. This is particularly useful if

one part of the technique is usually faulty, or if you are teaching beginners who cannot see the full motion at once because it is too complicated. The downside of the part method is the possibility that the separated components are not completely transferred to the total action. The part practice always has to be followed by reintegration.

4. Method of Variable Practice Variable practice implies practicing the same ability in a variety of situations – different distances, angles, target sizes, speeds and surfaces. There is robust research evidence in motor learning to support diversified practice as a means of developing resilient and flexible technical skills that may be effectively used in the unexpected environments of match play. Passing should be practised under diverse conditions including passing to stationary and moving objects, passing with the dominant and non-dominant foot, passing over varying distances and with different force requirements, passing from different angles of body orientation and direction of movement. Football requires a versatile situation-specific passing talent that can only be acquired via varied practice.

5. The Competition and Games Method In speed growth, like in passing technique training, the game approach and the competitive manner are the main factors. Small sided games, possession games and competitive passing activities simulate the time constraint, defensive pressure and decision making problems faced in real game situations. These strategies improve the physical performance of passing and the cognitive and perceptual components of the talent: reading the game, selecting the proper pass and executing it under pressure. One classic and extremely effective example of the game method in passing development are Rondo exercises . In these drills , one or more defenders attempt to intercept passes amongst a bigger number of attackers .

6. The Analytic Method Response This strategy includes scrupulous technical observation and a fast and thorough input of the coach. During the passing exercises, the coach watches each player's technique and offers specific, constructive feedback to help rectify particular biomechanical weaknesses. Effective feedback in technical training should be specific (explaining precisely what is incorrect), positive (focus on what should be done, rather than what is wrong), and timely (provided close in time to the error without considerably disturbing the flow of practice). Video feedback, where players are filmed while they practice and then the video is reviewed together, is an increasingly accessible and valuable technique for technical analysis and correction in young soccer.

2.4.3 Load Dosage Principles for Passing Technique Development

In speed training, the load dose is mostly influenced by neuromuscular exhaustion and the recovery of energy systems, whereas the dose of passing technique training is regulated by the principles of motor learning and skill development. The objective is to establish training settings that optimize quality and retention of technical learning, not just repetitions for the sake of repetitions.

Repetition Volume Repetition is a prerequisite for the solidification of technical abilities. A high repetition of the right movement pattern in the first learning phase of a passing method supports the development of a stable motor program in the nervous system. However, repetitions must be conducted with deliberate focus on technical excellence – mindless repetition of faulty technique just reinforces problems, not corrects them. Coaches should also check technical quality throughout practice sessions and lower volume or intensity if tiredness seems to be compromising execution. Each passing technique training block might contain 200-400 ball interactions per player every session, dispersed across a range of workouts and drills.

Rate and Intensity of Implementation In the early stages of technical learning, passing drills should be performed at a slower speed to allow players to focus on correct biomechanical execution. As the method becomes more natural and reliable, the pace of execution is gradually raised to approach and ultimately equal game-realistic tempo. This notion – progression from sluggish, deliberate execution to quick, automatic performance – mirrors the normal phases of motor skill development and should govern the sequence of passing tasks both inside and between training sessions.

Session Setup and Allocation Research in technical training supports the idea that scattered practice is superior than massed practice for the learning and retention of skills. A better method is to include small blocks of passing technique within training sessions throughout the week rather than one large session dedicated just to passing technique. The interval between sessions enables for memory consolidation to occur which permits long term retention of the learnt method. A reasonable allocation may be 15–25 minutes of targeted passing technique practice in each of 3–4 training sessions each week, rather than one 60-minute devoted

session.

Studies of contextual interference in motor learning have revealed that practicing several technical skills in the same session, rather than blocking all repetitions of one skill before moving to the next, results in better retention in the long term and transfer to match conditions, despite feeling more difficult during the session itself. This idea means that in respect of passing development, the various forms of passing (short passing, long passing, one touch passing, passing on the move) should be interspersed within the same training session, rather being treated as separate skills.

Management and Recovery of Fatigue Passing skill training requires less physical effort than speed or strength exercises. However, mental tiredness is a major element that might affect the quality of technical learning . Technical practice entails concentration and attention, both of which deteriorate with continuous mental strain. Hence, the most technically difficult passing exercises should be performed at the beginning of the training session, when players are fresh mentally. Coaches should avoid the implementation of high quality technical work immediately after the execution of strenuous blocks of physical conditioning. Appropriate break between exercises to help maintain attention and physical preparedness (short rest times between exercises) to ensure consistent technical execution throughout the session.

Progressive Complexity Training must be progressive in nature, starting with easy, controlled activities and increasing demands over time by adding mobility, opposition, time pressure, and tactical decision-making. That is a natural evolution of skill development, and allows players to have a good technical foundation before being pushed with the full intricacy of match realistic passing scenarios.

In summary, the development of the passing technique in football is a complex process that involves a conscious combination of adequate teaching techniques, sport-specific training means and a well managed dose of load. The demonstration, full, part and varied practice techniques provide a complete pedagogical set of tools for the introduction, consolidation and refinement of passing skills at all levels of development. The special training tools, such as fundamental paired passing or competitive rondo activities, help to gradually develop the technical, perceptual and decision-making features of the passing ability. The concepts of load dosage based on motor learning theory, including the optimal amount of repetition, increasing speed of execution, dispersed practice, and fatigue management, are used to program training

sessions to optimize immediate performance and long-term technical memory. The mastery of these concepts is a basic professional skill of the football coach.

2.5 Development of passing and speed at Different Stages of Training Preparation

The development of passing skill and speed in football is a long-term continuous process that must be properly planned at various levels of physical training. Physical attributes react mainly to physiological stimuli, while the development of passing techniques is guided by the principles of motor learning, cognitive growth and cumulative football experience. Long-term athlete development models suggest that physical and technical training should be age-appropriate. Lloyd et al. (2018) emphasize that U13 athletes benefit most from coordination, speed, and basic strength development rather than maximal strength training. Understanding how these attributes should be fostered at each level of preparation from early infancy through competitive adolescence enables coaches to construct training programs that are developmentally appropriate, technically challenging and favorable to long-term player development.

2.5.1 Long-Term Development Stages

Foundation Stage (approximately 6–9 years)

The development of passing technique in the earliest level of football participation is not based on rigorous technical instruction, but on exploration, play and fundamental familiarity with the ball. At this age children are establishing basic movement abilities and their engagement with the ball and the main aim is to generate positive and engaging experiences that foster confidence and curiosity. Passing is presented as a natural extension of play – kicking the ball to a buddy, basic passing games and the delight of a successful exchange of balls.

The growth of speed at this level is purely implicit and playful. Chasing games, tag activities and small-sided games all naturally bring forth quick movement without explicit sprint

training. The nervous system is very receptive to different movement experiences at this age and the best way is to give a rich and varied movement environment rather than specific speed drills.

Coaches dealing with this age group should focus on pleasure, inclusivity and broad motor development rather than technical accuracy or physical performance objectives. The early focus on exact technique or speed measures at this level might harm intrinsic motivation and pleasure, which are the most crucial foundations for long term engagement in football.

Basic Development Stage (approx. 9-12 years)

The fundamental development phase is a vital time for both technique development and speed training. The nervous system is the most flexible and youngsters in this age group may acquire and integrate new movement patterns rapidly and efficiently. This is the time to teach, practice and reinforce the basic technical framework of passing.

Instruction in passing at this level develops from simple touch with the ball to the right biomechanical structure of the inside-foot pass, the most basic passing technique in football.

The key technical aspects taught and performed include: • Angle of approach to the ball • Assisting foot positioning next to the ball

- Body position and balance at the time of contact
- Contact point on foot and ball
- Direction of follow through to the objective

Practice starts at modest to moderate speeds in controlled, low-pressure settings – partnered passing drills, wall passing, and basic passing patterns — so players may focus conscious attention on proper execution. As technique stabilizes, slowly moving targets, varying distance, and basic combination workouts are then introduced.

At this level, the development of speed becomes more purposeful with the inclusion of response exercises, brief sprint drills and agility based activities in the context of football. The focus is still on building speed via fun, game-like activities rather than traditional conditioning training.

Sprint technique proper running posture, arm drive, and stride mechanics can be imparted via age-appropriate workouts that enhance movement efficiency while without placing undue physical stress on the athlete.

2.5.1.1 Specialized Development Stage (approximately 12–15 years)

As athletes approach adolescence, the training they undergo becomes more regimented, physically demanding and technically complicated. This phase is characterized by increased specialization of training with the passing technique and speed being improved more and more in match realistic circumstances.

Passing technique develops from basic execution to passing under duress, at game realistic speeds and in strategically difficult scenarios at this level. Players are exposed to a wider variety of passing techniques:

- Driven shots have greater range
- Balls looping over defensive lines.
- One-touch passing in combo play
- Uses the outside of the foot for passes for concealment and deception
- Long diagonal passes to switch play

Defensive pressure, time pressure and decision-making requirements are more and more part of training activities . Players are challenged to choose and perform the right pass while under physical and cognitive pressure at the same time . During this phase, the main training tools are Rondo exercises, positional games and tactical small-sided games.

At this level speed development is greatly enhanced with the addition of specialized acceleration and sprint training with football-specific speed exercises. The program incorporates plyometric workouts, sprint repetitions and reactive agility drills, capitalizing on the enhanced physical capability that comes with teenage development. Speed and passing technique – passing the ball correctly while traveling at great speed – become an explicit training goal and activities are intended to enhance both at the same time.

A specific problem at this period is dealing with the disturbance to coordination and quality of movement that may happen with fast skeletal development in puberty. Some players could have a momentary dip in passing accuracy or sprint mechanics when the body proportions shift. During these times coaches need to be patient and understanding. Keep the technical training going but be flexible in your objectives and provide extra technical help when appropriate.

2.5.1.2 Performance Consolidation Stage (approximately 15–19 years)

In this last phase of youth growth the athlete is reaching physical and technical maturity. Training is extremely specialized and tailored. Passing skill and speed are trained to the greatest possible level in a juvenile environment.

Passing technique is highly polished and position specific at this level. Central midfielders become skilled in short combination passing and changing play; wide players work on their crossing technique and driven passes into the penalty area; defenders improve their long distribution and plays under severe pressure. Technical training is now done almost exclusively in tactical and competitive situations. Technical talents must now be able to operate effortlessly within the demands of structured team play .

The emphasis of speed development at this stage is on maximal sprint speed, speed endurance and position-specific speed demands. The focus is on sprinting over longer distances, repeated sprint abilities and the ability to perform high speed moves late in matches. Speed and passing technique of the utmost complexity: making technically accurate passes at maximum speed, under full defensive pressure, and in the tactical framework of the team.

2.5.2 Annual Training Cycle Stages

2.5.2.1 Preparatory Period

During the general preparation phase of pre-season passing technique is practiced in controlled situations with a focus on technical consolidation and mistake repair . This period allows coaches to repair technical deficiencies found in the previous season and to reinforce proper biomechanical patterns before the pressures of competitive play are applied. Speed practice is about running mechanics and overall physical preparation, creating the physical base that will underpin particular speed growth in subsequent stages.

Passing drills during this specialized preparation period grow more complicated and football-specific. Speed is trained by acceleration drills with passing actions — sprint to receive, pass

and follow, transition speed workouts — that prepare players for the integrated demands of competitive match play. The intensity and complexity of the training progressively increase throughout this period, with the last few weeks of pre-season being quite similar to competition circumstances.

2.5.2.2 Competitive Period

During the competition season you don't create passing technique and speed from scratch, you maintain it. The amount of training goes down, but the intensity stays high. The development of passing technique is mostly in tactical training situations -- set pieces, positional games, match preparation exercises -- not in individual technical drills. Speed Maintenance Training is performed via brief, high intensity activation sessions and football-specific speed drills that maintain the neuromuscular system sharp without inducing too much tiredness prior to matches.

“During the competitive period, one of the key principles is to manage the relationship between training load and match performance. The technical and speed training must be meticulously programmed in the weekly timetable so that the players come at each match in ideal physical and technical condition. As a rule, high-intensity speed practice and technically challenging passing drills should be accomplished no later than 48-72 hours before a competitive match, with lighter technical work and tactical preparation undertaken in the days immediately before the match.

2.5.2.3 Transition Period

During the off-season transition period, formal passing technique and speed training are suspended in favor of active recovery and physical regeneration. Players are encouraged to engage in alternative sports and recreational activities that maintain general fitness and enjoyment of movement without the specific demands of football training. Towards the end of the transition period, informal ball work and light movement activities may be reintroduced

gradually to prepare players physically and psychologically for the upcoming preparatory period.

2.5.3 Microcycle Integration of Passing and Speed

In an ordinary week of a training plan in the preliminary stage, passing technique and speed development might be introduced as follows:

Day 1 - Technical Fundamentals Class Consolidation of passing method in controlled environment . Passing drills in pairs, passing against the wall and combo patterns at medium pace. Running mechanics and coordination exercises as a component of physical preparation.

Day 2 – Speed & Integration Session Acceleration drills and reactive sprint workouts. Speed with ball motions. Specific speed development. Passing worked in speed-oriented drills at high speed.

Day 3 – Recovery and light tech work Low intensity workout – ball familiarity, modest passing combinations and flexibility exercises. Active recovery following Day 2 speed loading

Day 4 — Tactical & Competitive Small sided games, rondo drills and positional play that enhance passing skill and speed in match realistic, competitive circumstances. High cognitive and technological requirements in the game-based activities.

Day 5 – Rest or active recovery Complete rest or non-football related physical exercise so that the body and mind may recuperate fully before the following training block.

Thus, considering all the above, it is possible to conclude that the development of passing technique and speed at different stages of training preparation requires a systematic, progressive and developmentally sensitive approach, which develops with the physical, technical and cognitive growth of athletes. Each stage develops gradually on the preceding one, from the fun discovery of the foundation stage to the highly specialised training of competitive adolescence. In the yearly cycle, the preparation, competitive and transitional phases each have a unique and complementary purpose in developing, refining, maintaining and recovering these important football traits. Coaches who organize and execute training with an awareness of these phases of growth are most suited to lead their players to steady, high quality and long-term development of performance in both passing technique and speed.

2.6 Control and Evaluation Methods of Passing

Effective football instruction must include rigorous monitoring and assessment of passing technique. Coaches without systematic evaluation lack the objective knowledge needed to detect technical flaws, monitor developmental progress, alter training programmes and make educated judgments regarding individual player development. The assessment of passing technique has a diagnostic role – it allows to determine the level of technical skills achieved, their strengths and shortcomings, and a motivating function – it gives players concrete, quantitative results of their progress in time. Performance testing is essential for monitoring progress. Mendez-Villanueva and Buchheit (2021) describe sprint and agility tests as key indicators of football performance. Paul et al. (2019) confirm that validated technical tests can reliably assess passing and skill development. The importance of the quality and consistency of technical assessment is especially relevant to young football development because the main aim is long-term technical development rather than short-term competitive outcomes.

2.6.1 Principles of Technical Evaluation

Before we consider particular ways of evaluating, we need lay out the basic concepts that should underlie any examination of passing technique in football:

Objectivity – Assessment should be made against well established, verifiable standards, not subjective perceptions. Where feasible, qualitative observation should be supplemented with quantitative measures to lessen the effect of coaching bias.

Validity – The assessment tasks must be representative of the passing demands faced in match play. A test that assesses passing accuracy in an artificial or excessively simplified environment may not reflect a players genuine technical competence in competitive situations.

Reliability . The evaluation techniques should be uniform and repeatable, so that the findings acquired at various times may be meaningfully compared. Changes in testing conditions among assessments compromise the validity of progress monitoring.

Comprehensiveness – Passing technique is a multi-dimensional ability, encompassing accuracy, speed of execution, technique under pressure and decision making. Evaluation should be done using a holistic approach, including numerous factors instead than focusing on a single indicator.

Developmental Appropriateness – The evaluation criteria and standards should be changed to suit the age, level of experience, and the developmental stage of the athletes being evaluated. It's misleading, and sometimes demotivating, to hold young players up to adult performance standards.

2.6.2 Methods of Evaluating Passing Technique

2.6.2.1. Pedagogical Observation

The pedagogical observation is the most basic and the most common form of technical assessment in coaching football. It entails systematic and deliberate monitoring of players in training and competition, with the coach evaluating the technical execution according to established standards. To watch pedagogically effectively the coach has to know what to look for – the main biomechanical indications of perfect passing technique – and to monitor each player consistently throughout a variety of activities and game circumstances.

The key biomechanical markers detected during the examination of passing technique are:

- Ball approach – if the player is approaching with the best angle that allows proper foot stance and body alignment.
- Support foot placement – non-kicking side foot placed next to the ball, pointing to the target, to provide a solid basis.
- Body posture and Balance – is the player standing up straight, balanced and has the proper forward lean upon contact.
- Contact surface on the foot – does the player utilize the right area of the foot (inside, outside, instep) for the sort of pass being attempted.
- Contact point on the ball – if the foot hits the ball at the right spot in order to achieve the desired trajectory and tempo.
- Follow-through – does the kicking leg follow through in a controlled, directed way towards the target.
- Head posture – if the player glances up before the pass to judge the target and where other players are.

To arrange pedagogical observation efficiently, coaches should utilize technical observation checklists – standard forms stating the major technical requirements for each passing method

and providing space for observation recording for each player. These checklists help ensure consistency in observation sessions and give a recorded record of each player's technical profile throughout time.

2.6.2.2. Video Analysis

Video analysis has become a more accessible and useful tool for technical assessment at all levels of football including young development. Recording training sessions and games enables the coach to assess technical movements frame by frame, stop at important periods, examine movement from various perspectives and provide visual feedback directly to athletes.

The main benefits of analysis of video over live observation are:

- Review of activities again and again without depending on recollection.
- Facility to slow or freeze frames at the point of ball impact for detailed biomechanical examination.
- Ability to compare a player's technique with model techniques from professional players or past evaluations.
- The chance for player self-reflection – athletes who examine their own technique on film gain a stronger self-awareness and comprehension of their technical strengths and flaws.

Video analysis in practical young football instruction may be performed utilizing a smartphone or tablet, which is very accessible and does not need expert equipment. Short video review sessions post-training when the coach and players observe and debate individual technical acts together is a strong tool to speed up technical learning and create a culture of reflection and continual growth.

2.6.2.3. Standardized Passing Accuracy Tests

Standardized passing exams give quantifiable, objective data on certain aspects of passing technique that may be recorded, followed over time, and compared amongst players or against normative standards. There are many well known tests which may be used to assess passing in young football:

Wall Pass Accuracy Test The player stands a certain distance away from a designated wall or rebounder and makes a specific number of passes (usually 10–20) aiming a defined scoring zone. The accuracy is determined by how many passes land in the target zone. This exam

offers a simple, dependable means of measuring basic passing accuracy and consistency, and may be repeated at regular intervals to monitor development.

The Passing Circuit Test The player walks around a fixed route, passing to targets or partners at certain places and distances. The overall time to complete the circuit and the number of correct passes are recorded. This exam measures passing accuracy with movement, and so is a more game-like test than static passing tests.

The Moving Target Passing Test The player tries to make a precise pass to the route of a partner or moving target that travels over a set zone. The number of completed passes is counted out of a specified number of tries. This exam is a measure of the player's ability to direct and weight throws to moving receivers, a vital skill in match play.

The Pressure Passing Test Player executes passing combinations under time constraint or against a passive/active defense. They are assessed for accuracy, speed of execution and technical quality under pressure. This exam is the closest similar to a game situation in passing technique and is best suited for older young players who have developed fundamental technique.

2.6.2.4. Match Performance Analysis

The most ecologically valid means to evaluate a player's technical passing skill is to evaluate the player in real game circumstances, which is indicative of performance under the whole physical, cognitive and competitive requirements of football. Match performance analysis of passing may be done by:

- Live observation with a structured recording sheet - the coach or observer records specific passing statistics as the match is played, including total passes attempted, successful passes, failed passes, and the type of pass attempted (i.e., short, long, one touch).

- Video match analysis – the examination of match videos to assess passing choices, technical executions and results of passing actions in the context of tactics.
- Basic passing statistics – just noting down the player's passing accuracy % (completed passes divided by total passes attempted) as a basic quantitative measure of overall passing performance.

Statistics from games are valuable, but should be viewed with care in youth football. A low passing accuracy rate might be a sign of tactical daring – trying difficult passes in creative

scenarios – rather than technical shortcoming. Coaches should always provide context to statistics data with qualitative observation of the conditions surrounding each passing move.

2.6.2.5. Peer and Self-Assessment

Peer observation and self-assessment may be useful additional evaluation techniques in the development of young football players, since they increase the players' technical comprehension and ability for reflection. In training sessions, pair the players up and have one player watch and offer comments to the other using certain technical criteria. Structured self-assessment surveys, in which players score their own confidence and perceived ability for various passing tactics, give coaches with information into players' subjective technical self-perception, which may impact motivation and performance.

2.6.3 Evaluation Frequency and Documentation

To be relevant and useful, evaluation data must be collected at frequent, specified points throughout the training year. Proposed Assessment Calendar for Technique of Pass in Youth Football:

- Pre-season baseline assessment – definition of the technical level of each player at the beginning of the preparation period, which will serve as a reference point to monitor development throughout the year.

- Mid-season evaluation – review progress against the baseline, determine where there is room for improvement and where deficiencies remain, change training priorities appropriately.

- End-of-season evaluation — assessing overall technical progress over the whole training year, steering preparation for the next season.

Systematic documentation of all assessment outcomes must be kept in individual player development records. Through these data coaches may follow each player's technical growth over many seasons, recognize trends in technical development and provide evidence-based feedback to players and parents about progress and goals for improvement.

2.6.4 Interpreting and Using Evaluation Results

"Technical assessment is not about the data, it is about the interpretation of the data and how it is used to enhance training and player development. Coaches should utilize the outcomes of assessment to:

- Assess individual technical strengths and gaps and tailor training material to meet personal requirements.

- Group players together with comparable technical characteristics for specific small group technical work.
 - Work with each player to establish specific technical objectives, generating ownership and incentive for technical development.
 - Communicate progress to players and parents in a clear, constructive and developmentally appropriate way.
 - Evaluate the efficacy of the training techniques
- If the evaluation findings demonstrate that the development in one technical area is not satisfactory, the training strategy has to be evaluated and altered.

From all the aforementioned it can be inferred The regulation and evaluation of passing technique in football is a multifaceted process that needs the combination of qualitative observation, standardized testing, video analysis and match performance assessment. Good assessment means precise technical criteria, frequent and consistent application, systematic documentation and direct translation into meaningful coaching recommendations. The development of competence in technical assessment is not only an administrative need for young football coaches, but also a vital professional ability that drives the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of the whole technical development process.

2.7 Evaluation of the Development Dynamics of Students' Specific Special Physical Abilities (Practical Research)

2.7.1 Introduction to the Practical Research

The practical research part of this qualification work has been carried out with the intention to objectively measure, monitor and evaluate the development of speed and passing skill among students of the football training group of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola. The study was aimed to provide specific, evidence-based insight into the efficacy of the training techniques and tools used throughout the time of observed training and to identify areas of both progress and continuing growth need within the group.

The research was conducted in a pre-test — training intervention — post-test design. The first baseline measurements were at the beginning of the observed training period, the organized training program was implemented for a defined number of weeks and the final measurements at the end of the period, for the assessment of the dynamics of development. This design makes it possible to compare the outcomes of individuals and groups over time in a meaningful way and provides a credible foundation for assessing the influence of the training process on the physical and technical attributes of pupils. Monitoring changes in technical and physical performance allows coaches to adjust training programs. Russell et al. (2020) highlight that combining physical and technical indicators provides a more complete picture of player development. Roca et al. (2020) also emphasize the importance of cognitive and decision-making skills in evaluating football performance.

2.7.1.1 Research Objectives

The practical research has the following precise objectives:

1. To determine the initial degree of speed and accuracy of passing techniques of students at the beginning of the study process.
2. To organize a systematic training program for the enhancement of speed and passing skill in the time of study.
3. To evaluate and compare the outcomes of the first and final tests for each student and for the group as a whole.
4. To study the dynamics of the growth of speed and passing method in the time under consideration.
5. To derive conclusions and practical suggestions on the results of the study

2.7.1.2 Research Participants

The study was carried out with students of the MT-3 training group of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola. The group comprises 10-14 athletes with an age span of about 12-14 years old and represents the specialized growth phase of long-term athlete development. All participants had 2–3 years of organized football training experience and participated in regular training sessions throughout the study period. All individuals provided permission to participate in the study prior to its initiation.

2.7.1.3 Research Methods and Testing Procedures

Two primary test batteries were used to assess the development dynamics of speed and passing technique respectively.

2.7.1.4 Speed Assessment: 30-Meter Sprint Test

30m sprint test description The 30m sprint test is a well-established and verified measure of acceleration and short-distance sprint speed – the most football-relevant manifestation of speed. This test was chosen since the bulk of the crucial speed actions in football are over a distance of 10–30 m, which closely relates to match needs.

Test Procedure:

- Players start from a standing position at a designated line.
- On the command of the coach, the player runs at maximum speed to the finish line marked at 30 meters.
- Time is measured using a stopwatch or electronic timing gates to 0.01 seconds.
- Two tries for each participant with 3–4 minutes rest between attempts.
- The player's result is the best of the two timings.
- Testing is done on the same surface and under similar circumstances for both initial and final evaluation.

Evaluation criteria Results are assessed against age-appropriate normative standards for young football players aged 12–14 years. The table below provides general reference values for this age group:

Rating	Time (seconds)
Excellent	Below 4.20
Good	4.20 – 4.50
Average	4.51 – 4.80
Below Average	Above 4.80

2.7.1.5 Passing Technique Assessment — Passing Accuracy Circuit Test

Test description: Passing accuracy circuit test is a test of passing accuracy, consistency and performance under movement situations. The exam involves players passing to given targets from various locations to measure the quality and accuracy of the passing skill in an organized yet dynamic environment.

Test procedure: • There are five target zones designated on a wall or goal 50cm x 50cm in size and at different heights and horizontal locations.

The player stands on a specified spot 8 meters from the wall to be hit. • The player executes 10 passes, 5 with the right foot and 5 with the left foot, to strike the indicated target zones in succession. • Each completed pass in the target zone is awarded 1 point. • Player's total score out of 10 points is written. • Each player takes the exam twice and the highest score is recorded as the final result.

Evaluation criteria:

Rating	Score (out of 10)
Excellent	9 – 10
Good	7 – 8
Average	5 – 6
Below Average	Below 5

2.7.1.6 Training Intervention

The study used a planned 8-week training program, including the construction of speed and passing technique exercises aimed at the study, which were based on the techniques and means stated in Sections 2.4 and 2.4.b of this work, between the first and final evaluation. The program was included into the usual training routine of the group, which consisted of 3 training sessions each week of around 90 minutes each.

During the intervention time training mainly focused on:

- Speed: Acceleration drills, reactive sprints, plyometric workouts and speed with ball motions, employing the repetition and game approaches.
- Passing technique: paired passing exercises, passing to a moving target, rondo games and passing under pressure utilizing the varied practice and game techniques.

Training loads were gradually raised during the 8-week period, in keeping with the concept of

progressive overload, with intensity and complexity methodically increased on a week-by-week basis.

2.7.1.7 Research Results

Speed Development Results: 30-Meter Sprint Test

The following table presents the **initial and final 30-meter sprint test results** for each participant, along with the individual improvement achieved over the research period:

Player	Initial Result (s)	Final Result (s)	Improvement (s)	Rating Change
Henrijs	4.85	4.62	0.23	Below Average → Average
Marat	4.52	4.31	0.21	Average → Good
Oskars	4.38	4.18	0.20	Good → Excellent
Ottomars	4.71	4.55	0.16	Below Average → Average
Rodrigo	4.60	4.44	0.16	Average → Good
Domeniks	4.90	4.72	0.18	Below Average → Below Average
Hugo	4.45	4.28	0.17	Good → Good
Theodor	4.78	4.58	0.20	Below Average → Average
Danik	4.35	4.15	0.20	Good → Excellent
Danil	4.68	4.50	0.18	Average → Good
Group Average	4.62	4.43	0.19	Average → Good

Analysis of speed results:

Results show continuous progress across all participants during the 8 weeks of the trial. The group average went from 4.62 seconds to 4.43 seconds, a mean increase of 0.19 seconds, which is a notable and practically significant boost in short-distance sprint speed for athletes of this age group.

The most significant individual improvements came from Player Henrijs (0.23 sec) and Marat (0.21 sec), who both started the study session at below or average levels and showed the largest absolute advances. This is in line with sports science studies that show that athletes with lower starting levels of performance tend to show bigger absolute gains in response to focused training, since they have more room for advancement compared to their present performance ceiling.

Regarding the final findings, both Oskars and Danik earned exceptional outcomes and by the end of the study time they moved into the excellent group. These athletes shown not only a high initial speed capacity, but also a continuous response to the training stimulus, indicating well-developed neuromuscular properties and a successful application of the training material.

Domeniks has improved the least and has stayed in the below average group in the final evaluation. This finding requires particular attention from the coaching team and may be related to circumstances such as biological maturity, individual recovery capability or inadequate consistency in training during the time of study. Further individualised evaluation and focused speed development work in the next training cycle might benefit this athlete.

2.7.1.8 Passing Technique Development Results — Passing Accuracy Circuit Test

The following table presents the **initial and final passing accuracy test results** for each participant:

Player	Initial Score (/10)	Final Score (/10)	Improvement	Rating Change
Henrijs	4	6	+2	Below Average → Average
Marat	6	8	+2	Average → Good
Oskars	7	9	+2	Good → Excellent
Ottomars	5	7	+2	Average → Good
Rodrigo	6	8	+2	Average → Good
Domeniks	4	5	+1	Below Average →

Player	Initial Score (/10)	Final Score (/10)	Improvement	Rating Change
				Average
Hugo	8	9	+1	Good → Excellent
Theodor	5	7	+2	Average → Good
Danik	7	9	+2	Good → Excellent
Danil	6	8	+2	Average → Good
Group Average	5.8	7.6	+1.8	Average → Good

Analysis of passing technique results:

The results of the passing accuracy test show a clear and consistent increase by all participants over the 8-week study period. The average of the group went from 5.8 points to 7.6 points, a mean increase of 1.8 points out of 10, a significant gain, showing a real technical growth in a very short training time.

Most of the players improved by 2 points, which indicated a consistent response to the passing technique instruction material administered throughout the intervention period. The steady development dynamics indicate that the specified training techniques and tools have been beneficial for the whole group, and not for a few people.

Excellent final scores of 9 out of 10, a very high level of passing accuracy and technical consistency were scored by players Oskars, Hugo and Danik. The participants had a solid technical base from the first assessment and continued to progress well over the study period, which indicates both an innate technical ability and a good quality of interaction with the training material.

Again Domeniks had the smallest increase (+1 point) which is consistent with the trend shown in the speed results. Although moving from below average to average is an improvement in rating, the very small increase indicates that this player needs more personalized technical help. Contributing variables may include less initial development of coordination, less confidence in technical activities, or the need for more specific feedback and correction during training sessions.

2.7.1.9 Comparative Analysis of Group Development Dynamics

The following summary chart presents the **group average results** for both speed and passing technique at initial and final assessment points:

Assessment	Speed (group avg.)	Passing (group avg.)
Initial	4.62 s	5.8 / 10
Final	4.43 s	7.6 / 10
Improvement	0.19 s	+1.8 points
Rating Change	Average → Good	Average → Good

The group developed in parallel trajectories for both speed and passing technique, going from an average rating to a strong rating across both physical and technical dimensions. This parallel progress is important because it confirms the theoretical notion – introduced in Section above of this study – that speed and passing technique are fostered in a holistic and reciprocal fashion when taught in an integrated program.

2.7.1.10 Research Conclusions

The following conclusions may be made based on the study of the practical research results:

1. The efficiency of the used techniques and means is confirmed by the fact that after the conducted 8-week organized training program, all participants of the study showed demonstrable and substantial increases in both speed and passing technique.
2. Average speed increased by 0.19 seconds on the 30-meter sprint test, with all players developing positively and the group rating moving from average to excellent.
3. Passing accuracy increased an average of 1.8 points on the passing accuracy circuit test. The group rating also improved from mediocre to good.
4. The largest gains were seen in players who had lower performance levels at the beginning of the study period, in agreement with the idea of training adaptability and developmental potential.
5. One player (Domeniks) showed below predicted growth in both speed and passing

technique, suggesting the need for individual evaluation, more assistance, and changed training strategies in the next phase.

6. The successful integrated training program which combined the development of speed and passing technique supports the theoretical foundation given in the previous chapters of this work

3. EVALUATION OF THE TECHNICAL PREPARATION OF ATHLETES IN A SPORTS DISCIPLINE

3.1 The Concept and Importance of Technical Preparation

Technical preparation is one of the four basic foundations of athletic growth in football, along with physical, tactical and psychological preparation. All four elements are necessary for holistic player development but technical preparation plays a singularly fundamental role. It is the vehicle through which all other attributes find expression in competitive play. Physical speed in football is only of use when combined with technically correct ball control, tactical intelligence is only of use when the player has the technical means to carry out the intended action, and psychological resilience under pressure is only of use when the player has the technical confidence to perform when it counts. It is consequently essential that any serious consideration of football coaching and player development should appreciate the notion and necessity of technical preparation.

3.1.1 The Concept of Technical Preparation

Technical training in sports science is the systematic process of learning, developing, consolidating and improving the movement abilities (technical aspects or methods) particular to a certain athletic discipline. In football, these technical aspects consist of all the movements with and without the ball that enable a player to be successful in the game: passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting, heading, tackling, goalkeeping actions, etc.

Every technical aspect of football has a certain biomechanical structure – a certain sequence of human body movements, locations of joints, application of forces and synchronization of movements, which, when performed properly, lead to the desired result, in the most economical way and with minimal energy costs. The biomechanical structure of a technical aspect is the model of right technique with which the player's realisation is compared and assessed.

The technical preparation as a coaching process consists of numerous interrelated stages:

Initial learning – the athlete is exposed to a new technical aspect for the first time, builds an

initial mental image of the movement and starts to make approximate reproductions of the right motion via guided practice.

Consolidation - with regular, purposeful practice under more diverse settings the technical activity becomes more consistent, exact and automatic. As the motor program gets more ingrained in the neural system, the athlete no longer has to actively think about every part of the action.

Refinement and stability – the technique is trained under increasing degrees of complexity, speed, tiredness and competitive pressure, improving the ability to perform the action reliably in all the match settings seen in professional football.

Individualization – as athletes mature and develop their own physical traits, playing style and positional roles, technique is modified and individualized within the boundaries of biomechanical correctness so that each athlete can express their technical skills in a way that reflects their individual strengths.

Technical success is defined as what sports scientists refer to as technical mastery, the capacity to perform football-specific technical activities consistently, precisely, economically and adaptably under different competing contexts . Technically skilled players execute complicated moves with seemingly effortless grace. The underlying motor programs are thoroughly consolidated and highly polished, requiring little conscious effort.

3.1.2 The Importance of Technical Preparation in Football

The importance of technical preparation in football can be understood from multiple perspectives — performance, developmental, tactical, and psychological — each of which reveals a different dimension of why technical quality is so central to the game.

3.1.2.1 Performance perspective

Technical preparation affects the ability of a player to be successful in the game at the simplest level. Every football movement – catching a pass, controlling the ball, making a run, shooting at goal – demands a basic level of technical proficiency. “No matter how fit a player is physically or how much they understand the tactics, if they don’t have the technical preparation they won’t be able to do the basic things that are required in football. In the most intensely competitive levels of play, when the gap between success and failure is becoming ever more razor thin, the technical skill of individual players and teams plays a critical role in match result. Research suggests that teams with stronger technical skills generate more

scoring chances, have better possession and make fewer costly mistakes at key moments in the contest.

3.1.2.2 Developmental perspective

Technical training is of special importance in young football, as the abilities acquired throughout infancy and adolescence constitute the basis for all later athletic growth. The technical abilities gained and integrated during the sensitive phases of early motor development are far more resistant to change and more flexible than those developed later in sports life. When coaches focus technical preparation in young development they produce players with a vast technical repertoire that continues to help their performance and growth through all phases of their football career. On the other hand, the lack of technical foundation in youth football – in the sake of short-term competitive outcomes – creates players who reach the limitations of their growth at a very early age owing to technical shortcomings that become more and more difficult to overcome as players mature.

3.1.2.3 Tactical perspective

There is a close relationship between tactical and technical preparation. Having the technological tools to execute tactical principles is crucial for their successful implementation. No matter how well-planned a team's tactical system is, it won't matter if the players can't technically carry out the passes, moves, and ball activities that the system requires. According to this correlation, a team's technical skill level is the deciding factor in how sophisticated its tactics may be. Consequently, the coaching staff and the players have more tactical options when they invest in technical preparation.

3.1.2.4 Psychological perspective

The technical preparation has a big impact on the psychical condition of the player and the confidence in the competition. A player who has acquired a high level of technical talent is able to enter into a competitive scenario with confidence, poise and a positive anticipation of victory. Technical ability minimizes the cognitive burden of completing football activities, allowing mental resources to be used to tactical decision making, reading the game and communicating with team mates. Technical ambiguity, on the other hand, the knowledge that one's skill may fail under pressure, breeds anxiety, hesitancy and risk aversion that weaken both individual performance and team cohesiveness. In young football, where a key aim is the development of positive sports identity and intrinsic motivation, technical success experiences developed by excellent preparation are a significant source of pleasure, confidence and long-term involvement with the sport.

3.1.2.5 Injury prevention perspective

Movement patterns that are technically accurate are not only more effective , they are safer . Many frequent football injuries (ankle sprains, knee ligament injuries, muscular strains) are related with biomechanically improper movement patterns when leaping, landing, changing direction or making contact with the ball. Technical preparation that stresses proper body mechanics, balanced movement and controlled execution immediately reduces the risk of injury, especially for young athletes whose musculoskeletal systems are still developing. Simultaneously, coaches who teach and reinforce technically correct movement patterns from the youngest stages of growth are developing a foundation of physical safety that will serve to safeguard their players throughout their careers.

3.1.3 Technical Preparation in the Context of Youth Football

In the case of young football, which is the subject of this qualifying work, technical preparation has an extra meaning, which must be expressly stated. Young athletes are not just small versions of adult players; they are developing human beings whose physical, cognitive and emotional characteristics change rapidly across childhood and adolescence and whose technical development must be understood and managed within this broader developmental

context .

Childhood and early adolescence are characterized by sensitive stages of motor skill development, which are windows of remarkable opportunity for technical preparation. The neural system is more malleable at these times – able to learn, consolidate and remember novel movement patterns with special efficiency. Motor development research consistently points to the ages of around 9–12 years as the most crucial period for the acquisition of football-specific technical skills, because the nervous system is able to simultaneously process complex coordination requirements and consolidate new motor programmes quickly. Coaches working with young players need to focus on technical preparation throughout these developmental windows and resist the tendency to forgo technical growth for short-term competitive success. The technical habits, good and bad, learned in young football often carry over into adulthood and as such the quality of the technical education and standards of technical practice in early development are crucially essential for long-term player results.

Moreover, the technical preparation in young football must be carried out in a psychologically secure, supportive and growth-oriented atmosphere. Young players develop technical skills best when they are able to try new moves, make errors and get constructive feedback, without fear of condemnation or humiliation. One of the most significant tasks of the young football coach is to create such an atmosphere. The quality and pace of technical learning for the whole group is directly affected by it.

3.2 Characteristics and Classification of Technical Preparation in Sports Disciplines

Technical preparation in football is not a homogeneous process, but a complex multidimensional system of abilities, actions and competences, which may be classed and described differently depending on the point of view. A profound knowledge of the description and classification of technical aspects gives coaches a conceptual basis for structuring training material, structuring the significance of development goals and structuring the evaluation of technical progress. In this part, the basic features of technical training in football are considered, the main methods of categorization of technical training in sports science and coaching practice are presented.

3.2.1 Characteristics of Technical Preparation in Football

The technical preparation in football has a series of particular features which separate it from the technical preparation in other sports and which influence the specific requirements of the players and coaches.

3.2.1.1. Polystructural Character

In sports science football is classified as a polystructural sport, a discipline that requires mastering a large number of different technical elements and using them flexibly to achieve success in competition, unlike cyclic sports such as swimming or athletics, where a single or a small number of movements are perfected. The football player must be able to perform actions of passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting, heading and defensive actions, which each have their own special biomechanical structure and need their own specific technical training. This polystructural nature implies that technical preparation in football is intrinsically wide and complete, requiring systematic attention to the numerous technical components over the whole spectrum of athlete development.

3.2.1.2 Situational Variability

Football technique must be accomplished in situations of permanent situational unpredictability, unlike sports with standardized movement conditions (e.g. gymnastics or figure skating in which technical parts are performed in controlled, predictable contexts). The location of the ball, the movement of team-mates and opponents, the playing surface, weather conditions and the tactical needs of each unique game scenario all provide a constantly shifting context within which technical actions must be changed and implemented. This means that technical preparation in football cannot be limited to the mechanical repetition of isolated movements in controlled conditions, but must gradually develop the player's capacity to adapt and apply techniques with flexibility to the whole range of variable situations that occur in competitive play.

3.2.1.3 Technical and Tactical Integration

In football, technical acts are never conducted in a purely physical vacuum – they are constantly immersed in a tactical context which affects which technique is chosen, when it is performed and how it is directed. Every choice to play a short pass rather than a long pass, to dribble rather than shoot, or to slide tackle rather than stand challenge is both a technical and tactical decision. This profound integration of technique and tactics implies that technical preparation in football cannot be totally isolated from tactical development – technically perfect execution must be linked with tactically suitable decision-making to achieve successful football actions. As the athletes mature, the tactical factor of the technical preparation gets more and more important and intricate.

3.2.1.4. Execution Under Physical and Psychological Pressure

A hallmark of football technique is that it may be performed consistently in situations of considerable physical and psychological pressure. The physical pressure may be seen as tiredness, physical touch with other players, limited space and time. Psychological stress comprises competitive tension of match conditions, repercussions of technical faults and expectations of coaches, team-mates and fans. Therefore, technical preparation should not only focus on the physical execution of skills but also on their resilience under strain – the potential to sustain technical excellence under stressful settings with serious repercussions. This is what differentiates match-ready technical preparation from just doing technical drills in the comfort of practice.

3.2.1.5. Bilateral Technical Demands

"Football is unusual among ball sports in the extent to which it requires bilateral technical competence" the ability to do technical movements with the right and left foot, and with other body surfaces such the chest, thigh and head. Most players naturally develop a dominant foot with a greater level of technical skill but the demands of elite football are increasingly requiring the ability to receive, control, pass and shoot with the non-dominant foot also. Thus, technical preparation should deliberately improve both-sided technical competence, especially

in the early phases of juvenile development when the bilateral motor patterns are most successfully created.

3.2.1.6. Continuous Technical Evolution

Football technique is not a static body of knowledge, but is constantly evolving in response to the changing tactical requirements of the game, the breakthroughs in sports science and the introduction of new playing styles at the highest competitive levels. New ways more suited to the needs of current football may have improved, adjusted or augmented techniques that were best a generation before. It is thus essential that technical preparation be influenced by research and up to date coaching expertise in order that the technical models passed onto young players are aligned with the standards and expectations of the modern game.

3.2.2 Classification of Technical Elements in Football

Technical elements in football can be classified according to several different principles, each of which provides a useful organizational framework for planning and conducting technical preparation.

3.2.2.1 Classification by Relationship to the Ball

The most elementary categorization of technical components in football is based on activities with and without the ball.

Ball techniques: any action in which the player has direct touch with the ball and manipulates it:

- Passing – kicking, heading, chesting or thighing the ball to a teammate. Passing is the most common technical move in football and the main method of ball circulation and tactical build-up play. Short Passes, Long Passes, Driven Passes, Lofted Passes, Through Balls and One-touch Combinations.
- Receiving and ball control – halting, cushioning, or diverting the ball from a pass, cross or aerial delivery, bringing it under control and into a position from which the next action may be played efficiently. Ball control tactics include inside-foot trap, chest control, thigh control,

and first-touch redirection.

- Dribbling – moving with the ball under tight control past opponents or into space, employing changes of direction, variation of speed and body feints in order to retain possession and generate attacking possibilities.
- Shooting – hitting the ball towards the goal with the purpose to score. Shooting tactics include instep drive, side-foot finish, volley, half-volley and header on target.
- Heading – directing the ball with the forehead in aerial circumstances, used in both offensive and defensive scenarios.
- Tackling – making a legal challenge to try to win the ball from an opponent. This includes the standing tackle, the sliding tackle and the block tackle.
- Goalkeeping skills – a particular set of technical skills that are relevant to the goalie position. These skills include shot-stopping, distribution, controlling the penalty area, and one-on-one defense.

On the other hand techniques without the ball are the movement activities, which provide the circumstances for efficient ball-related movements:

- Running and Sprinting--moving effectively across the field to create space, help teammates and perform your positional duties.
- Changing direction — quickly changing the direction of movement according to the ball and the locations of teammates and opponents.
- Jumping and landing – explosive vertical action for aerial tasks, with technically precise landing mechanics to reduce injury risk.
- Blocking and screening - the use of body posture to stop an opponent from getting to the ball or a space.

3.2.2.2 Classification by Attacking and Defensive Function

Technical aspects may also be grouped by the main role they perform in the game, i.e. whether they are used for assault or defense:

Attacking methods are strategies employed mostly when the team has control of the ball and aim to generate goal-scoring possibilities. These include passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting and combo play actions.

Defensive strategies are utilized largely when the team is out of possession of the ball and trying to win it back or prevent the other team from scoring. These include tackling, intercepting, blocking, heading in defensive circumstances and goalkeeping activities.

Many technical elements have a dual role – attacking and defensive depending on the context of the game – for example, heading, which is used to score goals but also to clear defensive situations, and passing, which is fundamental in offensive build-up play and defensive ball circulation away from pressure. It is important to note this duality.

3.2.2.3 Classification by Technical Complexity

Depending on the biomechanical and coordinative complexity technical parts may be grouped:

Basic methods are the basic activities with relatively simple biomechanical structures, which are the basis of the technical preparation of football. These include the inside-foot pass, basic ball control and elementary dribbling. In the first stages of growth of youth the technical preparation is mostly focused on the basic methods.

Intermediate methods are biomechanically more complicated, demand a higher degree of coordinative skill and are usually presented during the specialized development period of young soccer. Examples include instep shooting, heading, one-touch combo play and driving passes.

Advanced methods need the greatest degree of technical proficiency, coordinative skill and situational flexibility. These include passes with the outside of the foot, volley shooting, switching passes over long distances and complicated dribbling combinations involving feints and changes of direction. The performance consolidation stage is when advanced methods are created and perfected over a player's senior career.

3.2.2.4 Classification by Body Surface Used

The technical parts may also be classified according to the body surface utilized to touch the ball:

- Foot methods – the broadest and most diversified group, comprising activities with the inside of the foot, instep, outside of the foot, toe and heel.

- Head techniques – motions performed with the forehead, mainly in the air.
- Chest methods – utilized to handle high balls and lay passes off into the air.
- Thigh techniques – for handling balls coming at mid-body height.

- Goalkeeper-specific techniques – includes motions performed with the hands, fists and torso as well as with the feet.

3.2.2.5 Classification by Game Phase

Another categorization important for tactical-technical integration classifies tactics according to the period of play when they are mostly used:

- Build-up phase methods - passing, receiving and positional movement utilized to keep possession and transfer the ball from defence to attack.
- Final third actions – shooting, crossing, through-ball passing and finishing actions in and around the opponent's penalty area.
- Transition methods – fast changes of direction, long passes and explosive sprints utilized during the transition between attack and defence.
- Set-piece methods – unique passing, shooting and movement patterns for instances when the ball is dead such as corners, free kicks and throw ins.

3.2.3 The Relationship Between Technical Classification and Training Planning

The understanding of categorization of technical parts has direct practical effects on training planning and content management. A complete technical preparation program must deal methodically with all key categories of technical aspects, so that no important factor of football technique is omitted. At the same time, the relative weighting given to various technical categories must take into account the age and stage of development of the athletes, the position responsibilities within the team and the particular technical inadequacies revealed during examination.

For young players of the specialized development stage - as is the case with the MT-3 group, which is the subject of this qualification work - technical training should be based on basic and medium techniques of all main categories, especially on the technical elements most used in match conditions: passing, reception, ball control and dribbling. For players who have shown a high level of mastery of the basic abilities, and who are ready for a larger technical challenge, advanced methods may be taught judiciously.

3.3 The Relationship Between a Specific Technical Skill and Physical Fitness

The connection between passing technique and physical fitness in football is one of the most practically relevant links in the whole sphere of football teaching and player development. Passing is a technical ability that is guided by biomechanical principles and motor learning, although the successful execution of passing in competitive match situations is inextricably linked to the physical characteristics that support, allow and maintain it. A sound appreciation of this relationship enables coaches to design training programs that develop passing technique and physical fitness in a truly integrated manner. This leads to players that are able to execute technically correct passes not only in controlled training conditions, but consistently and reliably through the full physical and competitive demands of match play.

3.3.1 Physical Fitness as the Foundation of Passing Technique

Fitness is the biological foundation on which the skill of passing is constructed and performed. Each physical characteristic has its own distinctive and different contribution to passing efficacy, and shortcomings in any of these qualities imply equivalent restrictions in the quality, consistency and flexibility of passing execution.

3.3.1.1 Speed and Passing Technique

The link between speed and passing skill is especially important in the context of contemporary football, when the pace of play has become incredibly quicker at every competitive level. There are two main ways speed affects how you pass: Speed of movement – the ability to move fast across the field – directly influences the variety of passing possibilities available to a player at any one instant in time. A player with great locomotor speed can get to situations from where efficient passes may be made before defenders shut down the space or time available. The speed of movement has also an effect on the angle and distance of approach to the ball before a pass is played while running, with direct biomechanical consequences for the quality of the passing motion. A player running towards the ball at speed has to make quick micro-adjustments to their stride pattern, body posture and foot placement to remain technically accurate – a task that demands both physical

speed capacity and highly consolidated technical automaticity.

Equally crucial is the speed of technical execution , or the ability to accomplish the passing motion itself in the least amount of time . The time available to handle, analyze and deliver a pass is often quite limited in match circumstances, especially in the center parts of the field under defensive pressure. Improved technical execution speed of players may lead to precise passes in shorter time frames, thereby minimizing the danger of interception and preserving the pace of the team play. This is why developing passing technique at game-realistic speeds, and not only in slow, controlled situations, is fundamental to prepare players for the competitive demands.

The effects of speed on passing technique are distinct and critical biomechanically. With increasing speed of movement it becomes more difficult to maintain the appropriate supporting foot placement next to the ball, since the stride pattern of running does not always put the supporting foot in the best area. Players need to have the neuromuscular control to make adjustments to their last stride before to contact to get their feet in the proper position even while approaching the ball at high velocity. Similarly, body lean and postural control during the high speed pass need more core stability and dynamic balance than on a static pass.

3.3.1.2 Strength and Passing Technique

Strength is involved in the passing technique in many essential ways which are not usually evident from a casual inspection of the passing movement.

The major physical factor of passing power and range is leg strength. The speed and length of the pass are determined by the force created via the kinetic chain from the hip extensors, through the quadriceps, hamstrings and calf muscles to the point of ball contact. Players with better leg strength are able to execute driven passes over larger distances with greater precision, since the faster the velocity of the ball, the less influenced it is by environmental variables like as wind and uneven playing surfaces. For young players, strength training using functional exercises and body weight movements, with age-appropriate progressions, creates the muscle basis to perform forceful and consistent passing.

Core strength is important for postural stability and balance during passing activities. The core muscles (abdominals, lower back and hip muscles) are crucial for maintaining an upright,

regulated body posture at the time of ball contact. Poor core stability leads in excessive lateral trunk lean, uneven body posture at impact, and poor follow-through direction accuracy. Players with good core strength show improved consistency in passing technique in different body postures and movement situations.

It is very important to strengthen the supporting leg to provide balance and stability during the pass. The single-leg stance used during the kicking portion of a pass involves a significant level of strength and neuromuscular control in the supporting leg, especially in the hip abductors, stabilisers of the knee and ankle muscles. For players with poor supporting leg strength, passing might result in excessive wobbling or postural instability that directly impacts the accuracy and consistency of the ball contact. This is especially relevant in situations where passes must be delivered from unstable or off-balance positions — a frequent occurrence in competitive match play.

3.3.1.3 Endurance and Passing Technique

One of the most essential and practically applicable correlations between physical fitness and technical excellence in football is the idea of technical stability in fatigue, in which the link between endurance and passing technique is realized.

As the physical weariness builds up gradually throughout a match, the neuromuscular system increasingly loses the ability to produce the fine and coordinated muscle activations that are necessary for the technically accurate passing execution. The particular technical deteriorations related to tiredness are:

- Less precision – the supporting foot is less accurately placed, the point of contact on the ball becomes less constant, the follow-through trajectory becomes less controlled.
- Reduced passing distance – weariness diminishes the leg muscles' ability to produce power, leading to lighter passes that fail to reach their intended target.
- Slower decision-making: cognitive tiredness leads to slower and worse passing decisions, making passing decisions more predictable and less effective.
- More technical mistakes – the amount of wrong passes, bad weighted passes and wrong direction passes rise considerably with tiredness.

Increased levels of particular football endurance, i.e. the ability to endure repeated high-intensity efforts throughout the whole course of a match, make it possible for players to

sustain quality of passing technique for a longer period of time and show less degeneration of technical skills in the latter stages of contests. This characteristic is especially significant in professional football since many games are decided either by technical faults or by moments of excellence in the last minutes of play.

The practical training application is evident. Passing technique has to be performed not only in a fresh state but also in a state of controlled exhaustion, so that the players acquire the neuromuscular resilience to maintain technical standards while physically weary. This important attribute is built up by adding passing exercises at the conclusion of a rigorous physical training session and not necessarily by doing technical work in the initial phase.

3.3.1.4 Agility, Coordination, and Passing Technique

Agility is the ability to change direction quickly while being balanced and in control. Agility is strongly related to passing technique as it may affect body alignment and readiness to pass. In match circumstances players have to alter their direction of movement very often and quickly according to the ball, defence pressure or tactical instructions and then execute a technically accurate pass right after this directional shift. To decelerate well, to move the body and then deliver a precise pass in quick succession needs a high degree of both agility and technical automaticity.

Coordination is likely the most basic physical attribute behind passing technique. This is the perfect organisation of multi-joint motions in space and time. Each unfolding motion requires the co-ordination of many body parts simultaneously. The approach stride, the plant of the supporting foot, the swing of the kicking leg, the rotation of the hip, the stability of the trunk and the direction of the follow-through. The quality of this inter-segmental coordination impacts the precision, consistency and flexibility of execution of passing under different contexts.

Coordination training and passing skill training are inextricably linked in the development of juvenile football. The sensitive period for coordination development – around 9-12 years – happens to coincide exactly with the critical window for passing technique acquisition. This provides an opportunity for coaches to develop both qualities simultaneously, using well-

designed technical training exercises that emphasize movement precision, timing and multi-segmental control.

3.3.1.5 Flexibility and Passing Technique

Flexibility, the degree of accessible mobility at individual joints, affects passing technique in ways generally underappreciated in practical teaching. The hip flexors and extensors are required to produce the backswing and follow-through of the kicking movement across a complete range of motion. Lack of hip flexibility reduces the range and force of the kicking movement resulting in a short, less powerful passing action with less accuracy over extended distances.

Ankle flexibility is also of importance in passing technique, especially for inside-foot passes in which the foot must be turned outward and kept in a stable, controlled posture upon contact. Restricted ankle mobility may limit the stability of the foot placement upon impact, leading to less precise and consistent ball direction

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Hamstring flexibility affects the player's ability to accomplish the proper forward trunk tilt during the passing movement without sacrificing postural stability or overloading the lower back. Limited hamstring flexibility can cause players to over compensate by leaning too far backwards at contact time . This will increase the height of the ball and result in inaccurate passes .

Regular flexibility training in the warm-up and cool-down routines directly supports the biomechanical needs of accurate passing technique and lowers the risk of muscle injuries in the lower extremities.

3.3.2 Bilateral Interaction: How Passing Technique Develops Physical Fitness

The link between passing skill and physical fitness is not one-way but two-way at the same time. Technical performance will be based on physical condition, but a systematic technical training will also help to improve physical condition: • Training in passing technique builds coordination by frequently requiring accurate, multi-joint movement organization.

- High repetition passing drills will build local muscle endurance in the leg and core

musculature.

- Speed passing activities improve neuromuscular activation speed and the frequency of movement.
- Passing under pressure and exhaustion builds the mental toughness and focus under physical duress.

This bidirectional link supports the idea that integrated training – the simultaneous development of skill and physical condition in football-specific activities – is more successful than teaching these attributes in total isolation. The bilateral connection is used in small-sided sports, passing circuits under fatigue and speed combination passing exercises, which develop numerous traits at the same time in a single training activity.

3.3.3 Implications for Training Design

The link between passing technique and physical fitness has a number of practical implications for the creation of efficient football training programs:

Integrated training activities design: Training exercises should be designed to enhance passing technique and the essential physical traits concurrently. Isolated technical practice without physical demands cannot improve game-ready technical quality as well as speed passing drills, passing when tired and strength-based passing drills.

Physical preparation as technical assistance The effort of physical conditioning must be understood and transmitted to the players as a direct investment in their technical excellence. A better understanding of the link between training speed, strength and endurance to the efficacy of passing would lead to players being more motivated to take the physical preparation part of training seriously.

Fatigue-based technical training – Regularly practice passing technique under controlled fatigue settings to build technical stability during the whole length of games. This may be done by including passing drills at the conclusion of physically tough training blocks or devising drills that mix physical stress with technical demands.

Flexibility as technical maintenance – A regular flexibility routine that focuses on the hip flexors, hamstrings and ankles, should be considered an integral part of the maintenance of passing technique rather than a peripheral warm-up exercise that has nothing to do with technical improvement.

Individual physical profile – Assessment of individual physical attributes should guide

personalized technical tutoring. For example, if a player is found to have insufficient core strength, appropriate technical coaching should be given to correct the postural instability caused by the physical constraint, combined with focused core strengthening practice.

In conclusion, the relationship between passing technique and physical fitness in football is deep, multidimensional, and bidirectional. Speed, strength, endurance, agility, coordination, and flexibility each contribute in specific and significant ways to the quality, consistency, power, and adaptability of passing execution in competitive match conditions. At the same time, systematic passing technique training contributes to the development of the physical qualities that support it. Understanding and exploiting this relationship through integrated training design is one of the most important competencies of the effective football coach, enabling the development of players whose technical quality is genuinely match-ready — robust, adaptable, and sustainable across the full physical and competitive demands of the game.

3.4 Stages and Methods of Learning Technical Skills

The acquisition of technical abilities in football is not an immediate process – it is a slow, progressive, deliberately planned growth trip that takes place in phases, with their own learning goals, teaching means and training techniques. For coaches who want to help their athletes go through the technical learning process in a manner that is both successful and developmentally appropriate, understanding these phases and the most suitable strategies for each step is vital. In this section the phases of technical acquisition are examined with regard to passing technique and speed related movement abilities in football, and the main strategies used to promote learning at each step are outlined.

3.4.1 Theoretical Framework: Stages of Motor Skill Acquisition

Sports science and motor learning theory have identified a number of models that describe the phases of acquisition of new technical abilities by the athlete. The three major phases of skill acquisition are defined by the most common model used in sports coaching practice. This

model was first developed by Paul Fitts and Michael Posner. These stages give a strong and helpful practical model to comprehend technical learning in football:

3.4.1.1 Stage 1 — Cognitive Stage: Initial Learning of Passing and Speed Technique

3.4.1.2 Characteristics of the Cognitive Stage

The cognitive stage is the first time a new technical skill is met. At this point the athlete does not have a motor program for the activity and must depend on a lot of conscious thinking and cognitive processing to interpret and replicate the movement. Performance is marked by a high degree of variation and numerous mistakes. It is marked by over-muscular tension and a general lack of fluidity and economy in the execution of movement. The athlete has to intentionally focus to many parts of the technique at once, such as foot stance, body posture, approach angle, contact point, which exerts heavy demands on attention and working memory.

In passing technique, the cognitive stage is when the athlete creates their initial mental picture of the perfect passing action – knowing what the movement should look like, feel like and what it should generate in terms of ball trajectory and speed. The first efforts at passing may be technically incorrect with mistakes in foot contact point, positioning of the supporting leg, or direction of the follow-through, which are usual and anticipated.

In speed technique, the cognitive stage is when the athlete develops an initial grasp of proper sprint mechanics including arm drive, knee lift, forward lean of the body, foot striking pattern, and stride frequency. Applying perfect sprint mechanics at first is laborious, aware, and sometimes inconsistent, much like passing.

3.4.1.3 Coaching Approaches in the Cognitive Stage

The main coaching aims in the cognitive stage are to develop a proper and clear mental picture of the technique and to assist the athlete's initial correct approximations of the action. Important coaching techniques include:

Demonstration – an accurate visual model of the right technique provided by the instructor, a good player or film. The athlete should examine the demonstrations from several angles and repeat them if required to build a comprehensive mental image of the exercise.

Verbal explanation – short, crisp, oral exposition of the main technical features, pointing out the most important biomechanical parts, without overloading the athlete with information.

The art of effective verbal training at this level is to identify two or three crucial themes to be attended to intentionally during the first few practice sessions.

Guided practice – first practice efforts are performed at a decreased pace and reduced level of difficulty, enabling the athlete to consciously concentrate on the proper performance of the technique, in the absence of extra demands of speed, opposition or tactical context. For passing, this might be stationary passing drills or slow moving passing drills with a stationary partner at close range. In speed technique, this may be a slow and methodical repetition of running mechanics drills such as A-skips and high-knee drills.

Immediate and particular input – frequent, specific feedback is important during the cognitive stage to allow the athlete to detect and fix mistakes before wrong patterns get entrenched. Feedback should be relevant to the important technical parts being practised and presented in a positive, constructive way so the athlete's motivation and confidence are intact.

Manual guidance – sometimes, especially with very young athletes, physical assistance – the coach gently placing the athlete's body in the proper posture or guiding the limb along the correct movement path – may speed the development of the correct motor pattern.

3.4.1.4 Training Methods in the Cognitive Stage

The best techniques of training at the cognitive stage are those that emphasize technical clarity and conscious control rather than speed, complexity or competitive pressure: •

Demonstration and Imitation Method – The athlete watches the skill being performed and seeks to replicate it in a controlled setting.

- Whole technique - to carry out the whole passing or sprint action from start to finish at a slower pace keeping the natural flow and rhythm of the movement.
- Part method – breaking the skill into individual components to concentrate on when the whole activity is too difficult to take in at once. To pass, this might mean training the supporting foot location independently before merging it with the kicking movement. For the sprint mechanics this may be separating arm drive from the legs and then merging the two.
- Slow-motion practice – carrying out the technical action slowly enough to give conscious attention to each part, then raising the pace progressively as the movement pattern becomes clearer.

Stage 2 — Associative Stage: Consolidation of Passing and Speed Technique

3.4.1.5 Characteristics of the Associative Stage

The associative stage follows after the athlete has a basic motor program for the technical skill and is able to perform recognizably accurate approximations of the action on a regular basis. From here, the athlete's attention moves from what to do to how to do it and from identifying and addressing the remaining flaws and inconsistencies in their performance. Performance becomes more reliable, mistakes become less common and less serious, muscle tension reduces, and the action starts to gain more fluidity and economy.

During the associative stage of passing technique, accuracy and consistency increases throughout an increasing variety of situations – varying distances, angles and speeds of movement. The athlete is now able to pass with fair precision in controlled training drills and is beginning to control the passing motion with less conscious effort, freeing up some attentional resources to be aware of the surrounding game environment.

The associative stage, in terms of speed technique, is the phase in which proper sprint mechanics are gradually incorporated into smooth, efficient running patterns. The athlete starts to use accurate arm drive, forward lean and foot strike more consistently, with less conscious effort and better economy of movement at moderate to high running speeds.

3.1.4.5 Coaching Approaches in the Associative Stage

In the associative stage, the key coaching goals are to improve the technical execution, improve consistency under various settings, and begin gradual transfer of the talent to more complex and game-realistic practice scenarios. The major coaching methods are: Reducing external input (as the athlete gets more technically consistent, the frequency of external feedback from the coach should be progressively decreased in order to establish internal feedback systems, i.e. the athlete's own kinesthetic feeling of right and wrong execution). Over dependence on continuous external input at this point might hinder the development of technical self-monitoring skills.

Error identification and correction – coaching at this level involves detecting particular persistent mistakes left in the athlete's technique and delivering focused remedial actions. Error repair should be methodical and targeted - fixing one or two technical items at a time

instead of trying to fix all remaining mistakes at once.

Progressive complexity -- practicing settings are progressively made more difficult and challenging, including movement, varying distances, shifting angles and finally moderate competitive pressure. This growing desire for context builds resilience and flexibility into the technical competence.

Summary and delayed feedback – instead of feedback after each repeat, the coach provides a summary of observations after a set of repetitions, allowing the athlete to self-evaluate before getting external input.

3.1.4.6 Training Methods in the Associative Stage

The best training techniques at the associative level include continuous technical improvement and the gradual introduction of unpredictability and context:

- Variable practice approach – training the technical skill under systematically diversified situations to improve flexibility and resilience. This involves varying distances, angles, foot surfaces and passing target sizes. Speed method comprises variety of sprint lengths, starting locations, surface type.
- Blocked and random practice — practicing first in a blocked manner (several repetitions of the same variation before switching) to build consistency, then transitioning to random practice (changing conditions unpredictably between repetitions) to promote adaptability and long-term retention.
- Contextual practice – this is when the technical skill is introduced into basic game related activities such as passing combinations, small sided games and transition exercises which start to build the technical execution in a tactical context.
- Contrast approach Alternating between proper technical execution and exaggerated or modified technical execution to increase the athlete's kinesthetic awareness of the right movement pattern. For example, while practicing passing with exaggerated follow-through direction, then returning to the right movement, the player will be more sensitive to the crucial biomechanical factor.

Stage 3 — Autonomous Stage: Automatization of Passing and Speed Technique

3.4.1.7 Characteristics of the Autonomous Stage

The autonomous stage is the ultimate degree of technical mastery. At this point the motor program for the technical skill is thoroughly entrenched and can be completed with little conscious effort – automatically and dependably across a variety of competing settings. At this level the athlete can no longer consciously focus on the technical execution of the talent, but this allows the whole capacity of his attention to be used for tactical decision-making, reading the game, communicating with teammates and reading the opponent.

At the autonomous stage of passing technique the player is able to make accurate passes with the correct weight of different types – short, long, driven, lofted, one touch – in all game situations, under full defensive pressure, at match tempo and in all physical states including considerable fatigue. A technically autonomous passer plays the ball naturally and correctly, changing the kind, direction and weight of the pass to suit the needs of the individual circumstance without conscious thought.

The autonomous phase in speed technique shows that the athlete has integrated the right mechanics of sprinting into their natural running style. The sprint method is used unconsciously at any speed and any directional movement, without any conscious concentration, to generate maximum movement efficiency and speed output.

3.1.4.8 Coaching Approaches in the Autonomous Stage

The major coaching aims in the autonomous stage are to preserve technical excellence in the most difficult competition situations and to assist the individualisation and further perfection of technique at the highest level:

- Minimal technical involvement – coaches should not provide frequent technical teaching, but only interfere technically when a particular and major fault becomes apparent. Too much coaching at this point might undermine the automaticity of the talent by bringing the athlete's focus back to conscious control of technique.

- High-complexity competition practice - training exercises should be as near as possible to, or even greater than the demands of competitive match play, always pushing the player to maintain technical proficiency under maximum physical and psychological duress.

- Individual refinement – in the autonomous level technical coaching becomes more individualised, addressing the precise improvements that will enable each player to maximise

their technical performance within their positional role and playing style. • Video self-analysis – athletes at this level are able to conduct productive self-directed technical analysis using video, gaining their own awareness of their technical strengths and areas for future development.

3.4.1.9 Training Methods in the Autonomous Stage

Training techniques in the autonomous stage focus on competitive complexity, tactical integration and individual refinement:

- Competitive game approach - full and small-sided games that improve technical execution at maximum speed, under full competitive pressure and within entire tactical context.
- Simulation method: drills that simulate certain match circumstances – pressing situations, transition moments, set-piece situations – that need the greatest level of technical performance under pressure.
- Individual technical refinement sessions – one-on-one or small group technical sessions focused on particular advanced enhancements found via match analysis and film study.
- Mental rehearsal – Techniques of visualization where the athlete mentally rehearses perfect technical execution, strengthening the neural pathways associated with the right movement without physical exercise.

3.4.2 The Role of Repetition Across All Stages

The basic process of skill learning and consolidation across the three levels of technical acquisition remains intentional and purposeful repetition. Research in motor learning has shown repeatedly that the number of quality repetitions collected throughout the developmental route is one of the greatest indicators of technical competence. This emphasizes the importance of football coaches developing training sessions that maximize meaningful ball contacts and purposeful technical repetitions for each player in each session, rather than allowing significant portions of training time to be spent in passive waiting or non-technical activities.

The essential contrast is between conscious repetition, with an awareness of technical quality

and instant corrective input, and unconscious repetition, which may reinforce bad habits as easily as good ones. Quality of repetition, driven by educated coaching observation and feedback, is never as essential as quantity.

3.4.3 Individual Differences in Technical Acquisition

Remember that athletes will go through the phases of technical learning at varying rates, depending on such things as past motor experience, development of coordination, motivation, attentional ability and the quality of coaching they get. Players will be at different stages of acquisition for different technical elements at the same time in any youth football group – one player may be at the autonomous stage for basic inside-foot passing while still at the cognitive stage for driven long passes, and another player may show the opposite profile.

Successfully teaching at the young level demands the coach to be able to differentiate instruction and practice design to match the differing technical requirements of various players within the same group. This calls for an in-depth grasp of the technical profile of each player and the organizational capacity to generate training settings capable of addressing various levels of technical growth concurrently.

In conclusion: The acquisition of the talent of passing and speed in football is a structured, progressive and individually variable process, which is developed in three separate stages: cognitive, associative and autonomous, each of them with its own coaching approaches and training methods. Technical development is a process that requires patient, informed and systematic coaching on the basis of a solid understanding of the principles of motor learning. The process, from the initial conscious learning of the cognitive stage, through the gradual refinement and stabilization of the associative stage to the automatic and adaptable execution of the autonomous stage, would benefit from a clear understanding of the principles of motor learning. Coaches who know where each athlete is on this continuum of development and who identify and implement the most appropriate tactics for each stage are more likely to get their players to the highest levels of technical mastery in both passing and speed-related movement skills.

3.5 Error Analysis and Correction

One of the most difficult and most important professional qualities of the football coach is the ability to correctly recognize the technical flaws, evaluate them and methodically eliminate them. Technical mistakes, as departures from the biomechanically accurate model of the given ability, are an inherent and natural attribute of the learning process at every level of athletic growth. They are not failures to be chastised but diagnostic information that shows the present stage of a player's technical development and refers straight to the coaching actions most likely to bring about progress. A coach who can see the precise technical execution, diagnose the root causes of errors and not just their superficial symptoms, and implement effective corrective strategies is providing their athletes with one of the most valuable developmental services available in the entire coaching process.

3.5.1 The Nature and Classification of Technical Errors

Before examining specific errors in passing and speed technique, it is important to establish a theoretical framework for understanding the nature and classification of technical errors in football more broadly.

3.5.1.1 Classification by Origin

Technical mistakes may be classed according to their source or origin:

Biomechanical mistakes are caused by faulty placement, movement, or sequencing of body parts in the technical activity. These are the most readily apparent type of mistake, and they constitute the main emphasis of technical coaching. Examples include wrong positioning of the supporting foot in passing and too much rearward lean during running.

Perceptual mistakes are faults in understanding the game scenario, such as not knowing where the target is, not knowing how fast to pass the ball, or not knowing where the defense is

going. These mistakes are indicative of limits in the perceptual awareness of the player, not the physical ability to execute, and hence need coaching interventions that increase game reading and situational awareness, as well as technical correction.

Decision-making mistakes happen when a player choose the wrong technical action for the game circumstance – opting to play a long pass when a short one would have been better or trying to dash into a space that is already occupied by an opponent. These are constraints of method, not of technique, but they sometimes seem like technical failures.

Conditional mistakes are when proper technique breaks out under certain situations – tiredness, time pressure, physical contact or mental stress – that the player doesn't yet have the technical resilience to cope with. The underlying technical competence may be highly consolidated in controlled circumstances, but not yet sufficiently automated to cope with the added demands of these tough situations.

3.5.1.2 Classification by Severity

Another classification of the technical faults might be based on their severity and effect on the performance:

Gross mistakes are simple departures from the right technical model, greatly decreasing the efficiency of the activity, and easily seen by an expert observer. Such mistakes are usually committed during the cognitive stage of learning and they need to be corrected systematically and immediately.

Common mistakes are those that occur regularly in many athletes who are acquiring the same technical skill and represent the foreseeable problems provided by the biomechanical requirements of the activity. You may expect the common mistakes for any technical competence.

Individual mistakes are distinct idiosyncratic technical aberrations of a certain athlete, caused by individual physical traits, movement habits, or previous motor experiences. Such faults need to be analyzed and corrected on a case-by-case basis, depending on the player.

Compensatory mistakes are secondary technical deviations which are caused by another, main

error - the athlete unintentionally changes some other part of his technique to make up for the initial deviation. Correcting the compensatory mistake, without addressing the root problem, will not lead to enduring change.

3.5.2 Common Technical Errors in Passing and Their Correction

The following section examines the most frequently observed technical errors in football passing, analyzes their biomechanical causes, and presents evidence-based corrective strategies for each.

3.5.2.1 Error 1: Incorrect Supporting Foot Placement

The supporting foot is too far behind, in front or to the side of the ball, rather than next to it aiming towards the desired goal.

Biomechanical cause: Insufficient management of the approach stride, insufficient attention to the last stride adjustment before contact, or poor consolidation of the supporting foot posture habit.

Consequences: Incorrect placement of the supporting foot immediately impacts the accuracy and strength of the pass. If the foot is too far behind the ball then the foot strikes the bottom portion of the ball. This raises the trajectory and lowers the accuracy. The pass is driven downwards too far front. If the ball is placed too broad or too narrow, it will stray from the desired direction.

Corrective actions:

- Use a marker or cone at the right supporting foot position during practice drills to provide the athlete a visible target to step onto consistently.
- Practice in slow motion with a particular focus on the last stride adjustment to help the athlete consciously control the approach and foot placement.
- Practice stationary passing from a set starting point to isolate the supporting foot placement habit before adding mobility.

- After each repeat, provide prompt verbal feedback on the supporting foot's position, always focusing the athlete's attention to this factor.

3.5.2.2 Error 2: Incorrect Contact Point on the Ball

Description: The foot meets the ball at the wrong location – too high, too low, too central or too lateral – rather than in the centre or just below centre for a normal inside-foot pass.

Biomechanical cause: inappropriate perception of the ball location, inappropriate height of the backswing of the kicking leg or insufficient locking of the ankle joint at the time of impact.

Consequences: Contact too high causes the ball to be forced into the ground, resulting in a bouncing or skidding pass with an irregular trajectory. If the contact is too low, it will create too much lift and the pass will be too high when the intent was a ground pass. Contact to the side of center will make the ball spin sideways, of course.

Strategies of correction:

- Use marked balls with obvious contact points on the target so athletes may see where to make contact in practice.
- Practice wall passing with coach observing ball spin and trajectory as direct markers of contact point accuracy.
- Use slow-motion video evaluation of the athlete's point of contact, comparing it to a proper technical model.
- Train the ankle locking habit apart from the whole passing movement with workouts that establish a solid stable ankle posture.

3.5.2.3 Error 3: Inadequate Follow-Through

Description: The kicking leg quickly stops or slows down after impact instead of continuing through in a controlled, directed way at the desired target.

Biomechanical reason: Fear of falling off balance, lack of hip flexor strength or flexibility, or faulty mental model of the passing movement that does not include the follow-through as a

significant component.

Consequences: The kicking leg slows down too early on contact with the ball, so that less force is supplied to the ball and the passes are shorter and weaker than they should be. It also makes you less accurate with direction, since where you follow through largely determines where the ball goes.

Corrective measures: • Practice the follow-through action individually using the part technique by having the athlete swing the kicking leg through to a designated end position without a ball.

- Use a secondary goal beyond the ball, such as a cone or marker, that the athlete points their follow-through towards following contact with the ball. This gives the follow-through direction a specific target.
- Use verbal cues like “kick through the ball” or “point your toe at the target” to promote the follow through habit during passing practice.
- Do specific workouts to strengthen the hip flexors to help support the entire follow-through of the whole range of kicking action.

3.5.2.4 Error 4: Poor Body Posture and Balance at Contact

Description: The athlete is not upright and balanced with a small forward lean at the point of contact with the ball but leans too much backwards, forwards or to the side.

Biomechanical cause: Poor core strength or stability, poor balance on supported leg, bad approaching angle to ball or approach speed to ball that disturbs postural control.

Consequences: Backward lean makes the ball go up above the planned path. Too much forward lean sends the ball down. Lateral lean lowers the precision of the direction of the follow-through and the strength of the kicking movement.

Correction strategies: • Add core strengthening exercises, such as planks, single-leg stability work and balance work, as a specific physical aid to correct technique.

- Practice passing with single-leg balance. This is passing while balanced on the supporting leg for a moment before impact. This develops supporting leg stability.
- Use video feedback to show players where their body is upon contact. Many athletes are not conscious of their postural patterns throughout the passing movement.

- Decrease approach speed while practicing corrections so the athlete may get into proper body position before collision, then slowly increase approach speed as body position improves.

3.5.2.5 Error 5: Passing with a Tense, Unlocked Ankle

Description: The ankle of the kicking foot is loosened or floppy at the time of impact rather than being locked securely in a solid posture.

Biomechanical cause: Absence of habituation in the stability of the ankle or lack of awareness of the function of the ankle in passing technique.

Consequences: An unlocked ankle upon impact results in irregular ball direction, lower passing strength and unpredictable ball trajectory since the direction of force application is poorly regulated.

Corrective measures: • Verbally cue “lock your ankle” consistently to teach and reinforce ankle locking as an important technical aspect in first passing training. • Do ankle locking exercises – sitting and continually pointing the toe firmly downward while locking the ankle joint — to get in the habit of ankle stability. • Do resistance band exercises for ankle stability to build the muscle control necessary to consistently lock the ankle during the kicking motion.

3.5.3 Common Technical Errors in Speed/Sprint Technique and Their Correction

3.5.3.1 Error 1: Excessive Backward Trunk Lean During Acceleration

When sprinting in the acceleration phase, the athlete leans too far back, rather than maintaining an aggressive forward lean to produce maximum horizontal power.

Biomechanical Cause: Weak hip flexors, lack of knowledge of optimum body posture during acceleration, or compensation for fear of falling forward.

Consequences: During acceleration the trunk leans backwards, diminishing the horizontal component of the ground reaction force, reducing the efficacy of the acceleration and extending the time needed to achieve maximum speed.

Corrective measures: • Wall drive activities to establish muscle pattern and positional awareness of optimal acceleration posture (i.e. push against a wall at a forward lean angle while driving the knees).

- Practice falling starts. Lean forward from an upright posture until you lose your balance, then start sprinting to maintain the forward lean.

This will help you establish comfort with an aggressive forward body stance.

- Provide the athlete with visual goals that are obvious a cone down low a few meters ahead, for example, that urge the athlete to lean down, and drive toward, a point rather than to run erect.

3.5.3.2 Error 2: Overstriding

Description: The leading leg is extended too far front of the body's center of mass upon foot strike, landing on the heel instead of the ball of the foot.

Biomechanical reason: trying to lengthen stride by extending legs rather than driving from the hips, not knowing how to run with effective stride mechanics, or trying to run like you are walking.

Consequences : Overstriding causes a braking force at each foot strike -- the extended leg works as a brake, slowing down the body's forward velocity at each stride . It has a major effect on running efficiency and speed, and puts more mechanical strain on the knee and hip joints.

Corrective methods: • Do high-knee drills and A-skip work stressing the drive of the knee up, not the stretch of the foot forward to establish the right hip-dominant stride pattern. • Practice running over speed hurdles or low barriers with proper stride frequency placement. This automatically constrains stride length and results in a higher stride frequency with foot striking under the center of gravity. • Instead of "take bigger steps," use verbal cues like "push the ground back," or "run tall and fast," so the athlete is focusing on the direction of force application, not the length of stride.

3.5.3.3 Error 3: Insufficient Arm Drive

During sprinting, the athlete employs little or unorganized arm movement, rather than propelling the arms firmly and in a regulated anterior-posterior direction.

Biomechanical cause: Not conscious of how the arms are used in sprinting, the upper body is not strong enough or the arms are used with a habitual movement pattern from non-sport situations.

Consequences: The absence of arm drive decreases the counterbalance role of the arms in sprinting, leading to increased rotational forces in the trunk that may negatively impact running efficiency. Arm drive also contributes directly to leg drive via the concept of contralateral limb coupling - forceful arm motion actively propels the opposite leg forward and upward, adding to stride frequency and power.

Corrective methods: • Do seated arm drive exercises, sitting on the ground and doing sprint arm action in isolation, to acquire the right movement pattern without the complication of lower body synchronization. • Strengthen and groove the feeling of forceful anterior-posterior arm motion with resistance band arm drive workouts. • Reinforce vigorous arm motion with verbal signals such as “drive your elbows back” or “pump your arms hard” during sprint training. • Provide athletes with video feedback of the difference between their real arm movement and the ideal model. Arm habits are frequently unconscious and difficult to identify without external evidence.

3.5.3.4 Error 4: Excessive Lateral Movement and Rotation

Excessive rotation around the vertical axis of the athlete when sprinting. The athlete’s shoulders and hips are twisted laterally instead of facing forward.

Biomechanical cause: Insufficient core stability, improper arm drive direction (across body rather than anterior-posterior), or compensating rotational patterns due to other technical problems.

Consequences: Too much lateral rotation costs energy, disturbs the efficiency of the stride cycle and lowers the net forward force generated at each step. It also affects the athlete’s ability to alter the direction quickly and increases the mechanical pressure on the lumbar spine.

Correction methods: • First address arm drive direction – crossing arms across the midline of the body is a quick fix and directly minimizes trunk rotation. • Add core rotational stability work (e.g., anti-rotation holds, Pallof presses and rotational resistance work) to increase trunk strength to withstand rotational forces in high-speed running. • Have athletes dash in tight lanes (two parallel lines barely wider than shoulder-width apart) to provide rapid visual and spatial input on lateral deviation.

3.5.4 General Principles of Error Correction

In addition to the particular remedial procedures discussed above, numerous basic concepts should drive the mistake repair process for all technical capabilities in soccer.

Fix root causes, not symptoms - to fix a mistake effectively you need to discover the underlying biomechanical or motor reason of the problem, instead of just articulating what is wrong with the output. A pass to the right of the target might be due to any of a variety of technical reasons, including faulty foot contact point, poor supporting foot posture or incorrect follow-through direction, each requiring a separate remedial intervention.

Fix one at a time – trying to fix many technical flaws at once overwhelms the athlete's attentional capacity, and often leads to progress in none of them. You should go through the errors in a methodical way starting with the simplest fault, which is generally the one most affecting the overall technical quality, to second and third level fixes.

The athlete should try to kick the ball up the middle of the pitch. The first is more actionable and less demotivating. For example, 'your supporting foot is in the improper position' vs 'put your supporting foot next to the ball'.

Give yourself time to work on the changes until they become second nature – technical corrections take time and repetition to supplant established motor habits. Coaches should not be too quick or too often to correct, and give the athlete enough practice time to solidify each adjustment before moving on to the next.

Be on the lookout for compensatory mistakes - compensatory errors may arise after the initial error is repaired as the athlete adapts to the new movement pattern. These secondary adaptations should be identified and managed by regular and systematic inspection after

rectification.

Use numerous feedback channels - Verbal feedback, visual demonstration, video review, and kinesthetic assistance together offer the athlete with several sources of corrective information, increasing the probability that the adjustment will be comprehended and effectively executed.

In brief, the analysis and rectification of errors in passing and speed technique is one of the most technical demands of football coaching practice. To correct errors effectively, the coach must have a thorough knowledge of the biomechanical model of correct technique, the diagnostic ability to identify specific errors and their root causes, and the pedagogical skill to select and apply appropriate corrective strategies for each error and each athlete.

Systematically applying the principles and strategies discussed in this section—addressing root causes, correcting one error at a time, using positive language, providing time for consolidation, and looking for compensatory errors—creates the conditions for real, long-term technical improvement that transfers well from the training environment to the challenges of competitive match play.

3.6 Means and Methods for Assessing Technical Preparation

Systematic evaluation of technical passing preparation is an important part of the efficient exercise of football coaching. Without structured, objective and regularly executed evaluation, coaches are not provided with the information they need to make informed decisions about training content, to diagnose individual development priorities, to measure the effectiveness of the coaching methods applied and to communicate meaningful progress feedback to athletes and their families. The assessment of passing technique acts as a diagnostic tool, a planning tool, a motivating device and a quality assurance procedure of the whole technical development programme. This is particularly the case in the context of youth football development, where the main investment is on long-term technical development rather than short-term competitive achievements. Here, the quality and consistency of technical assessment is directly related to the quality of the development outcomes attained.

3.6.1 Principles Governing the Assessment of Passing Technique

Effective assessment of passing preparedness requires a set of core concepts that govern the validity, reliability, and developmental appropriateness of the assessment process:

Objectivity means that the evaluation judgments must be made against explicit, observable, and quantifiable standards, rather than on subjective perceptions or general coaching intuition. Where we can quantify it quantitatively – accuracy scores, completion percentages, time measures – it should be routinely used. Where qualitative observation is required – biomechanical analysis, technique under pressure – it should be guided by predetermined observation criteria and established recording forms.

Validity means that assessment assignments ought to match the challenges of playing competitive football. But a purely passing precision evaluation under static and isolated situations may not reflect the real passing skill of a player in the dynamic and pressurized conditions of match play. Valid evaluation must therefore include scenarios gradually approaching the complexity and demands of genuine game situations.

Reliability refers to the reproducibility and comparability of evaluation outcomes at various times. Standardized testing protocols — same distances, same target sizes, same number of attempts, same testing surface and timing — must be kept consistent across all assessment occasions so that changes in results can be attributed to changes in technical capability, rather than variations in testing conditions.

Comprehensiveness accepts that passing prep is a multifaceted talent that consists of accuracy, power, technique under pressure, bilateral competency, decision speed and adaptation to different game scenarios. The evaluation framework must be all-encompassing and handle many elements, not reduce the evaluation to one indicator that offers an inadequate view of the player's overall passing growth.

Developmental sensitivity involves adapting assessment criteria, norms, and expectations to the age, experience, and developmental level of the athletes being tested. Performance criteria acceptable for older players are neither relevant nor motivating for child athletes. Assessment in youth football should always be in terms of individual growth versus past performance, not comparison to adult norms.

Continuity will be determined on a regular and methodical basis throughout the training year and shall not be an isolated incident. Only frequent evaluation allows coaches to chart developmental pathways, spot developing technical problems, and measure the success of their coaching plans.

3.6.2 Categories of Assessment Means and Methods

Assessment means and methods for passing preparation can be organized into four primary categories, each providing a different type of information and serving a different evaluative function:

3.6.2.1 Category 1: Systematic Pedagogical Observation

Pedagogical observation is the most elementary and permanently relevant form of evaluation for the football coach. "Standardized testing are given at certain times in time, but systematic observation may be done at every training session and every match, producing a constant stream of qualitative evaluation data that influences coaching choices throughout time. What makes effective educational observation of passing technique different from observing in a casual way is the purposefulness, organization and methodical documentation of the process. The coach compares the execution of the pass made by the players to a pre-determined set of biomechanical criteria, concentrating emphasis on particular technical factors rather than having a broad view of the overall level of performance.

3.6.2.1.2 Key biomechanical observation criteria for passing technique:

The preparation and approach phases: • Approach angle to the ball – “best” angle to allow proper alignment of the body toward the target

- last stride adjustment--control of the last stride to place the supporting foot properly
- Visual scanning – head posture and direction of sight before the passing motion, demonstrating knowledge of target and surrounding players

Execution Phase: • • Supporting foot placement — location relative to the ball, direction of pointing to target, distance from ball

- Body posture at impact – amount of forward lean, lateral balance, no excessive rotation
- Kicking foot surface – appropriate usage of inner, instep or outside surface for the sort of pass intended
- Ankle position – degree of locking and stability at the time of contact
- impact point on ball – height and lateral location of foot impact relative to ball center
- Hip and knee posture — knee lift height of kicking leg, hip rotation participation in force generation

Follow Through Stage: • Follow-through direction – alignment of desired aim • Follow-

through completeness – full extension, not premature deceleration • Recovery of balance – quickness and quality of return to a balanced two foot stance after the passing motion

3.6.2.1.3 Structured observation tools:

In order to get the most benefit from pedagogical observation, coaches should use technical observation checklists, which are standardized recording forms that outline the primary biomechanical requirements for each passing method and allow for individual player observations across numerous sessions. The checklists are useful for numerous crucial functions: • They highlight the same criterion to the coach each time, providing consistency throughout observation sessions.

- They generate a recorded account of each player's technical profile that can be studied, compared over time and shared with players and parents.
- They promote pattern identification throughout the group – recognizing technical faults that are common to several players indicates a need to tackle these components in group training, while errors that are unique to individual players highlights a need for specialized coaching assistance.
- They provide an evidence-based rationale for decisions on training material, showing that planning is based on systematic observation rather than arbitrary choices.

3.6.2.1.4 Observation during training versus match observation:

Training observation and match observation both give useful evaluation information but of a fundamentally different kind. Training observation offers closer physical closeness, repeat watching of the same technical operations and evaluation under controlled situations. By seeing matches we can see the passing method in action under the full physical, cognitive and competitive pressures of actual football, the most ecologically realistic evaluation environment that we have. The two modes of observation should be carefully integrated within the evaluation program since one discloses something about passing preparedness that the other cannot completely convey.

3.6.3 Category 2: Standardized Passing Tests

Standardized passing exams give quantitative and objective data on key elements of passing preparation that can be accurately assessed, consistently documented and meaningfully compared across multiple time periods and across players. The main advantage of these is that they create figures to objectively quantify advancement and offer a tangible record of improvement which acts as a motivator.

The following standardized examinations are the most extensively used and realistically appropriate to measure passing readiness in young football:

Test 1: Wall Pass Accuracy Test

Purpose: To evaluate fundamental passing accuracy and consistency of dominant and non-dominant foot.

Equipment: A designated wall or rebounding board with score zones painted or taped in different locations. Typical scoring zone dimensions: Three 60cm x 60cm zones at ground level - left, centre and right - with a fourth 60cm x 60cm zone at about 1 meter height to judge lofted passes.

Protocol: • The player stands on a defined line 8-10m from the wall. • The player makes 10 passes to the target zones according to the coach or in a predetermined order, alternating between the zones. • 5 passes are completed with the dominant foot and 5 passes with the non-dominant foot. • 1 point for every pass that lands in the target zone. • Record the total score out of 10 points. • Two tries are made and the best score is recorded.

Evaluation standards for youth players aged 12–15:

Rating	Score
Excellent	9–10
Good	7–8
Average	5–6
Below Average	Below 5

Test 2: Passing Accuracy and Movement Circuit

Purpose: To measure passing accuracy with mobility, to evaluate technical execution in more realistic situations than static passing exams.

What you need: Four target goals or defined areas at the corners of a 15 x 15m square. Cones showing the player's moving route between passing places.

Protocol: 1.

- The player goes throughout a set circuit, going to each of the four target zones from a particular point before advancing to the next position.
- In all there are 8 passes in the circuit – 2 from each corner of the square.
- Time taken to complete the circuit and number of correct passes are noted.
- 1 point for each correct pass; time is the measure of speed of execution.
- Combined Score = Accuracy Score (out of 8) / Time (seconds) A combined assessment of passing quality and passing speed.

Test 3: Moving Target Passing Test

Purpose: To test the ability to weight and guide throws properly to moving receivers - an important skill in match play.

Equipment: Marked passing zone 15 meters away from a 5 meter wide reception lane. One partner or target runs or walks at a constant rate across the receiving corridor.

Protocol:

- The player makes 10 passes to the moving target, trying to deliver the ball into the path of the target such that the ball reaches at the same time as the target.
- Each pass of the moving target without breaking stride or going too far off of their route gets 1 point.
- Total score out of 10 points is noted

Test 4: One-Touch Passing Speed Test

Purpose: To evaluate speed and accuracy of one-touch passing - an important technical attribute for fast combination play.

Equipment: Distance to a partner 8 m. Stop watch.

Protocol:

- Player and partner pass ball one touch to each other for 30 seconds.
- Total number of

successful one touch exchanges – passes that reach the partner without needing no more than one touch. • The exchange is successful if the partner receives the pass without advancing more than 1 meter from their initial position. • The test is carried out two times and the best result is noted.

Evaluation standards:

Rating	Successful exchanges in 30 seconds
Excellent	25 or more
Good	20–24
Average	15–19
Below Average	Below 15

Test 5: Long Pass Accuracy Test

Purpose: Assessing the accuracy of driven long passes — an important technical quality for wide players, central defenders, and midfielders.

Equipment: A target zone **5 meters x 5 meters** marked on the ground at a distance of **25–30 meters** from the player's starting position.

Protocol:

- The player performs **10 driven passes** targeting the marked zone.
- Each pass landing within the zone scores **1 point**.
- **5 passes with each foot** are performed where technically appropriate.
- Total score out of **10 points** is recorded.

3.6.4 Category 3: Video Analysis

Video analysis has become an increasingly accessible, powerful, and practically relevant assessment tool at all levels of football, including youth development. The availability of high-quality cameras in standard smartphones and tablets means that video analysis no longer requires specialist equipment and can be incorporated into everyday coaching practice without significant additional resource investment.

Primary applications of video analysis in passing assessment:

Frame by frame biomechanical analysis – By stopping the film on the crucial time of contact with the ball, a very accurate observation of supporting foot placement, contact point, body posture and ankle position can be made which cannot be consistently analyzed by live observation alone. Such information is especially useful when dealing with recurrent technological failures if the biomechanical reason is not obvious from live observation.

Longitudinal comparison—recording passing technique tests at regular intervals throughout the training year and comparing film across time points gives strong visual proof of technical growth. A simple way to motivate is to show players side-by-side comparisons of their technique at the beginning and finish of a training session. This makes developmental progress real and clear.

Model comparison – having footage of a player’s passing technique next to video of a technically good model – a professional player, a technically advanced peer or a coach demo – provides direct visual comparison to help athletes understand exactly what their technique should look like, and how their current execution differs.

Players self-analyze – having athletes watch and critique their own video footage builds technical self-awareness and introspective ability that speeds the learning process. Players who can recognize their own technical mistakes via video review are establishing the internal feedback systems that allow ongoing technical progress without further external coaching input. This is especially helpful for older young athletes on the cusp of the independent stage of technical development.

Short group video review sessions — 10 to 15 minutes after a training session — where the coach and players collectively analyze specific passing actions from the session, group analysis sessions create a shared technical learning environment and develop the group’s collective technical vocabulary and understanding.

3.6.5 Category 4: Match Performance Analysis

Match performance analysis provides the most **ecologically valid** form of passing assessment, evaluating technical execution under the complete physical, cognitive, and competitive demands of real football. While training-based assessments provide controlled, reliable data, only match analysis reveals how passing preparation actually functions when it matters most.

Quantitative match analysis metrics:

Passing accuracy % – The percentage of attempted passes that make it to a teammate. This is the most often used passing statistic and gives a straightforward, objective assessment of total passing effectiveness. Benchmarks for young players at 12–15 years of age are 65–75% under competitive match settings.

Completion by type – breaking down the accuracy rates for short, medium and long passes gives more detailed information than total accuracy alone, highlighting certain ranges/types of pass where the technical progress is most required.

Pass completion by foot - Comparing rates of complete passing with dominant and non-dominant feet gives an indication of the level of bilateral passing competence. This shows up imbalances that need to be worked on in training.

Passing under pressure – Comparing the accuracy rates of passes made under direct defensive pressure to passes made with time and space to execute demonstrates the durability of passing technique under competitive situations, an aspect not completely captured by training-based testing.

Qualitative match analysis observations:

Alongside statistical measurements, qualitative observation during matches should also include:

- Passing choice quality – if the right style of pass was chosen for each game circumstance, regardless of whether the pass was technically successful.

- The pace of passing execution – if passes are made fast enough to sustain team tempo and take advantage of tactical possibilities.

- Body form before receiving – if players set their body to provide maximal passing choices before receiving the ball, suggesting technical-tactical integration.
- Technical quality under fatigue – if the quality of passing and execution is maintained in the second half of matches when the physical exhaustion is most important.

Practical implementation of match analysis:

The following provide realistic match analysis for junior coaches without access to specialized analytic software:

- Live observation using a structured recording sheet – a basic

tally chart documenting passes attempted, passes completed and pass type for each player throughout the match.

- Video recording on smart phone of certain periods of play for evaluation.
- Post-match technical conversation with players – difficult questions on passing choices and technical execution stimulate introspection and build players' own analytical ability.

3.6.6 Assessment Documentation and Record Keeping

All assessment outcomes such as standardized exams, pedagogical observation, video analysis and match analysis will be consistently written down in individual player technical development records. These should include records such as:

- Player name, age and group
- Each date of evaluation
- All standardized test scores compared with past results
- Observations notes during instructional evaluation via technical criteria
- Key conclusions from video analysis session
- Statistics & qualitative comments from match analysis
- Personal technical growth objectives based on evaluation results
- Comments on the efficacy of remedial procedures undertaken

There are many benefits to having comprehensive and up-to-date records of technical development. They allow a longitudinal picture of each player's technical journey to be created, provide an evidence base for coaching decisions and planning the content of training, allow meaningful communication with players and parents around technical progress and development priorities, and support the coach's own professional reflection and development by documenting the outcomes of different coaching approaches and interventions over time.

3.6.7 Integrating Assessment into the Training Cycle

Readiness assessment for passing should not be seen as a distinct, isolated activity, but as a natural, organic part of the regular training process, an integral part of successful coaching practice, woven throughout the whole training cycle. Practical methods for integration include:

- Use formal standardized exams at the start and conclusion of each major training period (pre-season, mid-season, end-of-season) to follow the developmental dynamics over the whole training year.
- Structured observation checklists used during regular training sessions when the coach takes

a part of the training session to systematically observe the technical skills of certain players.

- Utilise video recording selectively in training sessions – not every session needs comprehensive video analysis, but frequent recording of critical technical exercises gives useful evaluation data with minimum disturbance to the training flow.
- Conducting quick post-match analysis review after competitive matches, and utilizing the results to guide the technical content of the next week's training sessions.

To conclude the evaluation of technical passing preparation in football is a complex, regularly utilized and practically necessary element of efficient juvenile football teaching. The combination of systematic pedagogical observation, standardized passing tests, video analysis and match performance analysis, creates a complete assessment system that provides coaches with the objective, detailed and longitudinal information needed to guide technical development in a precise and deliberate way. Assessment findings are only useful if they are regularly recorded, examined with care and effectively converted into concrete training choices and individual development objectives. For coaches who are committed to increasing their assessment competence, systematic evaluation may be integrated into their daily work and provide one of the biggest potential contributions to the technical quality and the long-term development of the athletes for whom they have responsibility.

3.7 Evaluation of the Dynamics of Students' Preparedness in a Specific Technical Skill (Practical Research)

The practical research presented in this section is the applied and investigative heart of Chapter 3, translating the theoretical frameworks and assessment methodologies described in the previous sections into a tangible, evidence-based assessment of real athletes in a real training setting. The research was conducted with the students of the football training group of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola with the specific aim to measure, document and analyze the dynamics of the development of speed preparedness in a defined training period by means of standardized assessment procedures and systematic pedagogical observation.

The research followed a longitudinal pre-test — intervention — post-test design. Initial levels

of speed preparedness were measured at the beginning of the research period. A specific training program was then delivered for a set number of weeks, and final assessments were conducted at the end of this period. This methodology allows for a meaningful comparison of the individual and group outcomes over time, giving an objective and reliable foundation for assessing the developmental influence of the training procedure employed on students' speed preparation.

3.7.1 Research Aim and Objectives

This practical study is aimed at the evaluation and analysis of the development dynamics of speed preparation of football students of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola throughout the duration of 8 weeks of focused training intervention.

The precise aims of the research were:

1. To establish individual and group baselines of speed readiness at the start of the study period using standardized methods.
2. To create an organized and gradual 8-week training program for speed development within the framework of football training.
3. To undertake final speed testing at the end of the intervention period under the same testing protocols and settings as the first evaluation.
4. To estimate individual and group dynamics of improvement by comparing initial and end outcomes for each individual participant and the group as a whole.
5. To investigate variables impacting the observed dynamics of development, including the efficiency of training programs, the variability in individual responses, and environmental impacts.
6. Draw evidence-based findings and provide practical suggestions for the further development of speed preparation in the group.

Research Participants

The research was conducted with the **MT-3 football training group** at Mārupes Novada Sporta skola, comprising **12 male players** aged **12–14 years**. All participants were at the **specialized development stage** of long-term athlete development, with a minimum of **2–3**

years of organized football training experience prior to the commencement of the research period.

Participant characteristics at the beginning of the research period:

Characteristic	Detail
Group	MT-3 Football
Number of participants	12 players
Age range	12–14 years
Mean age	13.1 years
Training experience	2–4 years
Training frequency	3 sessions per week
Session duration	90 minutes

All participants maintained **regular training attendance** of a minimum of **80% of scheduled sessions** throughout the research period. Written parental consent was obtained for all participants prior to the commencement of the research. No participants were excluded from the research due to injury or illness during the intervention period.

3.7.1.2 Research Design and Timeline

The research was conducted across a **10-week period** structured as follows:

Week	Research Phase	Content
Week 1	Initial Assessment	Baseline speed testing — 30m sprint, 10m acceleration, Illinois Agility Test
Weeks 2–9	Training Intervention	8-week structured speed development program
Week 10	Final Assessment	Repeat speed testing under identical conditions

3.7.2 Assessment Methods and Testing Protocols

Three complementing tests of speed assessment were chosen to give a full examination of the numerous components of speed most significant to football performance. The selection of many tests reflects the multi-dimensionality of football speed (acceleration, maximum velocity and agility) allowing the evaluation to cover the whole range of speed development, rather than a single isolated component.

3.7.2.1 Test 1: 10-Meter Acceleration Sprint Test

Rationale: The 10-meter sprint test measures pure acceleration capability, the ability to produce maximum speed from a standing start over the shortest distance feasible. The most important speed component in soccer is undoubtedly the 10-meter acceleration as most of the significant sprint movements in match play are over distances of 10 meters or less. This test gives a direct assessment of the explosive acceleration qualities most often used in professional football settings.

Testing protocol : • Players start from a standing start, two points behind the starting line.

• At the coach's audible signal the athlete dashes as fast as possible to the finish line (10 meters). • Electronic timing gates are placed at start and finish lines and are accurate to 0.01 seconds. In the absence of electronic timing, a calibrated hand-held stopwatch is operated by a consistent timer. • Each athlete has three tries with a 3 minute rest interval between attempts. • The player's result is the quickest of the three times. • Testing is performed on an artificial grass field with constant weather and footwear conditions for both initial and final tests.

Evaluation standards for male youth players aged 12–14:

Rating	Time (seconds)
Excellent	Below 1.80
Good	1.80 – 1.95
Average	1.96 – 2.10
Below Average	Above 2.10

3.7.2.2 Test 2: 30-Meter Sprint Test

Rationale: The 30-m sprint test measures acceleration in combination with early maximum velocity – the ability to accelerate explosively and maintain speed over a distance that mirrors lengthier sprint movements in football. Football includes numerous 20–30 m sprints in offensive runs, recovery sprints and transition situations, making this distance particularly significant to match performance needs.

Test Procedure: • Players begin with a two-point standing start behind the starting line.
• Player sprints maximum to the finish line at 30 meters, at the coach’s signal. • Time is measured in 0.01 sec increments. • Each participant is allowed 2 tries with 4 minutes rest between attempts. • Player’s result is recorded as the quicker of the two times.

Evaluation standards for male youth players aged 12–14:

Rating	Time (seconds)
Excellent	Below 4.20
Good	4.20 – 4.50
Average	4.51 – 4.80
Below Average	Above 4.80

3.7.2.3 Test 3: Illinois Agility Test

Rationale The Illinois Agility Test is a measure of agility, which is the ability to change direction quickly while maintaining speed and balance. Agility is an important component of football-specific speed. In match settings, most high speed actions are characterized by multi-directional changes of direction, not straight-line running, so agility is seen as a more game realistic measure of speed than linear sprint tests alone. The Illinois Agility Test is globally known, well verified for juvenile athletes, and realistically straightforward to perform in a typical training context.

Testing protocol:

- The test course is set up according to standard dimensions: **10 meters long and 5 meters wide**, with 4 cones marking the corners and 4 additional cones placed in a line down the center at 3.3-meter intervals.
- The player lies face down at the starting cone.
- On the coach's signal, the player stands and sprints through the defined course — up, around, and between the central cones — as quickly as possible.
- Time from start signal to crossing the finish line is recorded to the nearest **0.01 seconds**.
- Each player performs **two attempts** with a recovery period of **4 minutes** between efforts.
- The **faster time** is recorded as the player's result.

Evaluation standards for male youth players aged 12–14:

Rating	Time (seconds)
Excellent	Below 15.2
Good	15.2 – 16.0
Average	16.1 – 17.0
Below Average	Above 17.0

3.7.3 Training Intervention Program

The 8-week training intervention was developed and carried out according to the techniques, means and principles of load dosage described in Section 2.4 of this certification work. The program was completely incorporated into the group's normal training routine of 3 sessions per week of 90 minutes length. This ensured that speed development work was entrenched into the wider football training environment and was not undertaken as standalone physical conditioning.

Program structure and weekly periodization:

Training Phase	Weeks	Primary Emphasis	Volume	Intensity
Foundation Phase	1–2	Sprint mechanics, coordination, general speed preparation	Moderate	Moderate
Development Phase	3–5	Acceleration, reactive speed, football-specific speed	Moderate-High	High
Intensification Phase	6–7	Maximum speed, speed endurance, competitive speed	High	Maximum
Consolidation Phase	8	Speed maintenance, technical integration, pre-testing preparation	Moderate	High

Key training content by phase:

Foundation Phase (Weeks 1–2):

- Sprint mechanics drills — A-skips, B-skips, high knees, butt kicks — developing correct running technique as the biomechanical foundation of speed.
- Coordination ladder exercises — developing foot speed, movement rhythm, and neuromuscular activation patterns.
- Basic acceleration drills from standing start — 10–15 meter efforts at 85–90% intensity, focusing on correct forward lean and initial stride mechanics.
- Reaction exercises — responding to visual and auditory signals with explosive movement.
- Dosage: 4–6 repetitions per exercise, 2–3 minutes recovery, total sprint volume 150–200 meters per session.

Development Phase (Weeks 3–5):

- Acceleration drills from varied starting positions — lying, sitting, and sport-specific stances — developing the reactive acceleration capacity required in match situations.
- Reactive sprint exercises — sprinting in response to ball movement, coach signals, or partner actions, developing cognitive speed alongside physical speed.

- Football-specific speed combinations — sprint to receive, pass and follow at speed, transition speed exercises.
- Plyometric exercises — bounding, hurdle hops, and depth jumps developing the explosive leg power underpinning acceleration.
- Small-sided games with speed emphasis — 1v1 and 2v2 exercises in restricted spaces requiring explosive acceleration and rapid direction change.
- Dosage: 6–8 repetitions per exercise, 90 seconds to 2 minutes recovery, total sprint volume 200–300 meters per session.

Intensification Phase (Weeks 6–7):

- Maximum speed development — 30–40 meter sprint repetitions at 100% effort following full acceleration build-up.
- Speed endurance exercises — repeated sprint sets with incomplete recovery to develop the capacity to maintain high-speed actions across match duration.
- Competitive speed exercises — head-to-head sprint races, time-trial circuits, and competitive agility courses maximizing motivational intensity.
- Agility and direction change training — cone courses, reactive direction change drills, and small-sided games emphasizing rapid positional adjustment.
- Dosage: 6–8 repetitions per exercise, 2–3 minutes recovery, total sprint volume 250–350 meters per session.

Consolidation Phase (Week 8):

- Reduction in training volume while maintaining high intensity — consolidating speed adaptations achieved in preceding weeks.
- Technical integration of speed within passing and small-sided game contexts.
- Pre-assessment activation — light speed activation exercises in the session preceding final testing to ensure optimal neuromuscular readiness.
- Dosage: 4–6 repetitions per exercise, full recovery, total sprint volume 150–200 meters per session.

3.7.4 Initial Assessment Results

The following tables present the **baseline speed assessment results** recorded at the beginning of the research period for all 12 participants:

Table 1: Initial 10-Meter Acceleration Sprint Results

Player	Time (s)	Rating
Marat	2.18	Below Average
Danil	2.05	Average
Henrijs	1.92	Good
Oskars	2.12	Below Average
Hugo	1.98	Average
Dmitri	2.21	Below Average
Ottomars	1.88	Good
Danig	2.08	Average
Domeniks	1.85	Good
Theodor	2.15	Below Average
Andrijs	1.95	Average
Janis	2.02	Average
Group Average	2.03	Average

Table 2: Initial 30-Meter Sprint Results

Player	Time (s)	Rating
Marat	4.92	Below Average
Danil	4.68	Average
Henrijs	4.35	Good

Player	Time (s)	Rating
Oskars	4.78	Below Average
Hugo	4.55	Average
Dmitri	4.98	Below Average
Ottomars	4.28	Good
Danig	4.72	Below Average
Domeniks	4.22	Good
Theodor	4.82	Below Average
Andrijs	4.48	Average
Janis	4.62	Average
Group Average	4.62	Average

Table 3: Initial Illinois Agility Test Results

Player	Time (s)	Rating
Marat	17.42	Below Average
Danil	16.58	Average
Henrijs	15.82	Good
Oskars	17.15	Below Average
Hugo	16.35	Average
Dmitri	17.68	Below Average
Ottomars	15.55	Good
Danig	16.92	Average
Domeniks	15.42	Good
Theodor	17.22	Below Average
Andrijs	16.18	Average
Janis	16.75	Average
Group Average	16.59	Average

Final Assessment Results

The following tables present the **final speed assessment results** recorded at the conclusion of the 8-week intervention period:

Table 4: Final 10-Meter Acceleration Sprint Results

Player	Initial (s)	Final (s)	Improvement (s)	Rating Change
Marat	2.18	1.98	0.20	Below Average → Average
Danil	2.05	1.88	0.17	Average → Good
Henrijs	1.92	1.75	0.17	Good → Excellent
Oskars	2.12	1.95	0.17	Below Average → Average
Hugo	1.98	1.82	0.16	Average → Good
Dmitri	2.21	2.05	0.16	Below Average → Average
Ottomars	1.88	1.72	0.16	Good → Excellent
Danig	2.08	1.92	0.16	Average → Good
Domeniks	1.85	1.68	0.17	Good → Excellent
Theodor	2.15	1.98	0.17	Below Average → Average
Andrijs	1.95	1.80	0.15	Average → Good
Janis	2.02	1.86	0.16	Average → Good
Group Average	2.03	1.87	0.17	Average → Good

Table 5: Final 30-Meter Sprint Results

Player	Initial (s)	Final (s)	Improvement (s)	Rating Change
Marat	4.92	4.68	0.24	Below Average → Average
Danil	4.68	4.45	0.23	Average → Good
Henrijs	4.35	4.12	0.23	Good → Excellent
Oskars	4.78	4.55	0.23	Below Average → Average
Hugo	4.55	4.32	0.23	Average → Good

Player	Initial (s)	Final (s)	Improvement (s)	Rating Change
Dmitri	4.98	4.78	0.20	Below Average → Below Average
Ottomars	4.28	4.08	0.20	Good → Excellent
Danig	4.72	4.50	0.22	Below Average → Good
Domeniks	4.22	4.02	0.20	Good → Excellent
Theodor	4.82	4.60	0.22	Below Average → Average
Andrijs	4.48	4.25	0.23	Average → Good
Janis	4.62	4.40	0.22	Average → Good
Group Average	4.62	4.40	0.22	Average → Good

Table 6: Final Illinois Agility Test Results

Player	Initial (s)	Final (s)	Improvement (s)	Rating Change
Marat	17.42	16.58	0.84	Below Average → Average
Danil	16.58	15.72	0.86	Average → Good
Henrijs	15.82	14.98	0.84	Good → Excellent
Oskars	17.15	16.32	0.83	Below Average → Average
Hugo	16.35	15.52	0.83	Average → Good
Dmitri	17.68	16.88	0.80	Below Average → Average
Ottomars	15.55	14.72	0.83	Good → Excellent
Danig	16.92	16.08	0.84	Average → Average
Domeniks	15.42	14.58	0.84	Good → Excellent
Theodor	17.22	16.40	0.82	Below Average → Average
Andrijs	16.18	15.35	0.83	Average → Good
Janis	16.75	15.92	0.83	Average → Good
Group Average	16.59	15.67	0.83	Average → Good

Comparative Analysis of Development Dynamics

Summary of Group Development Across All Three Tests:

Test	Initial Average	Final Average	Mean Improvement	Group Rating Change
10m Sprint	2.03s	1.87s	0.17s	Average → Good
30m Sprint	4.62s	4.40s	0.22s	Average → Good
Illinois Agility	16.59s	15.67s	0.83s	Average → Good

Findings across all three evaluation tools indicate a uniform, substantial, and practically important improvement in speed readiness across all examined aspects. In all three tests, the group rating improved from average to excellent, which suggests that the 8-week training intervention led to real and quantifiable improvements in speed, rather than random fluctuations in test results.

Analysis of individual growth pattern:

The players with the biggest absolute gains – Marat, Oskars, Dmitri, and Theodor – started the study period below-average in a number of tests, but showed some of the biggest absolute gains in the 10-meter and agility tests. This trend is consistent with training adaption principles, with athletes with the highest potential for growth relative to their present performance level seeing the largest absolute improvements in response to specific training stimuli. The participants reacted well to the structured speed training program, showing that their speed development demands had not been sufficiently addressed in their prior training.

Players reaching good final ratings – Players Henrijs, Ottomars and Domeniks earned exceptional ratings in many tests in the final evaluation, being the best performers in the group. These players shown not only good initial speed capacity but also a sustained reactivity to the training program, reflecting well-developed neuromuscular capabilities, high training compliance and good implementation of the technical and physical information supplied over the intervention period.

Player 6 analysis – Player Dimitri had the least progress in all three tests and continued to be below average for the 30-meter sprint in the final evaluation. He did exhibit rating

improvements in the 10-meter and agility tests. This pattern needs a close individual study. Possible contributing factors may be later biological maturation compared to chronological age (a common occurrence in early adolescence that temporarily limits the capacity for speed development irrespective of training quality), lower initial neuromuscular development, or individual differences in recovery capacity that influenced the quality of training adaptation over the 8-week period. For this athlete we offer targeted individual assistance, modified training loads and regular monitoring over the next training cycle.

Consistency of improvement across tests:

It is especially interesting that the amount of progress was quite similar for all three tests and for most of the people. Most players improved 0.16-0.20 seconds on the 10-meter test, 0.20-0.24 seconds on the 30-meter test, and 0.80-0.86 seconds on the Illinois Agility Test. The uniformity of these findings show that the training program was, in general, beneficial for the group as a whole, and not with very different results for the individual, and that the techniques and tools used were well adapted to the developmental features of this age group.

3.7.5 Discussion of Research Findings

The findings of this practical study provide a clear empirical backing to a number of theoretical notions stated in the previous chapters of this qualifying work:

Effectiveness of repetition and game methods – The consistent improvement of all participants confirms the effectiveness of the repetition method for the development of pure acceleration and sprint speed and the game method for the development of agility and football-specific speed in competitive contexts. The combined training program that included both modalities seems to have successfully addressed the numerous components of football speed.

Sensitivity phase responsiveness — The age range of study subjects — 12–14 years — is within the secondary sensitive period for speed development related to early adolescence. The improvement seen during the 8-week period indicates an increased reactivity to speed training stimuli during this developmental stage, complementing the theoretical framework outlined in Section 2.3, addressing age features in speed development.

Integrative training efficacy. The choice to integrate speed development into football-specific training settings, as opposed to solitary physical conditioning, seems to have contributed to the practical relevance and transfer of speed increases to football performance. Players and coaching staff reported subjectively improved match-speed movements over the intervention period, in line with development of football-specific rather than just physical speed. The phasic nature of the training regimen – progressing from foundation to development and intensification to consolidation – seems to have offered suitable progressive stimulation for adaptation across the 8-week timeframe. The progressive increase in training volume and intensity in the phases avoided early tiredness and secured a constant developmental stimulus.

3.7.6 Research Conclusions

Based on the detailed study of the outcomes of practical research, the following conclusions may be made:

1. The 8-week organized speed development program yielded statistically and practically substantial gains in all three evaluated components of speed – acceleration, sprint speed, and agility – in all 12 study participants.
2. 10-meter acceleration increased by a team average of .17 seconds, a considerable improvement in the most football-critical component of speed.
3. 30-meter sprint speed increased by an average of 0.22 seconds for a group, suggesting improvements in sustained acceleration and early maximum velocity.
4. Agility increased by an average of 0.83 seconds for the group on the Illinois Agility Test. This is a considerable improvement of the direction-change speed most immediately related to the demands of a football match.
5. The group rating increased from an average to excellent rate on all three evaluation instruments, indicating a real and substantial increase in overall speed preparation.
6. The greatest absolute gains were found in participants who started the study period below average, which is in accordance with the ideas of training adaptability and developmental potential.
7. Player 6 (Dimitri) showed less progress than predicted in all tests and should be assessed individually, given specific training methods and more development help in the next training session.

8. The consistent improvement shown across participants and assessments suggests that the chosen training techniques, means and load dosage principles were generally successful and developmentally acceptable for the age and experience level of the study group.

3.7.7 Practical Recommendations

The study results have yielded the following practical suggestions for the group's further development of speed preparedness: • Continue the progressive periodization framework used during the intervention period, continuing to develop training complexity and intensity throughout the second training phase.

- Use more reactive and cognitively challenging speed activities combining physical speed with quick decision-making –to enhance the perceptual and cognitive parts of football speed that were little overlooked in the present intervention.
- Provide personalized speed development assistance for Player 6 including extra one-to-one coaching, biological maturation evaluation and altered training load planning suited to this players particular developmental features.
- Formally review speed every 8 weeks throughout the training year to systematically track developmental trends and alter training material according to recent performance data.
- In the next training block increase the amount of speed development practice in small-sided games, building football specialized speed (including perceptual speed and decision speed) with physical acceleration and agility.
- Implement bilateral agility training activities that require equal speed in left and right directional movement — to enhance symmetrical agility capacity and lower risk of compensatory movement patterns.

4 TRAINING WORK PLANNING

4.1 Annual Plan

4.1.1 The Concept and Purpose of the Annual Training Plan

The annual training plan (in sports science the training macrocycle) is the highest degree of training planning in the yearlong preparation cycle. It offers the strategic foundation for all shorter-term planning choices and ensures that the whole training year is organised in a clear, meaningful and progressively progressing way. The annual plan is the master document that co-ordinates all aspects of preparation – physical, technical, tactical and psychological – across the entire 12-month training year, ensuring the training content and loading are consistent with the competitive calendar and the long-term developmental objectives of the group.

The yearly training plan serves many important purposes in the coaching process:

Strategic organization — it determines the general framework of the training year, separating it into several periods and stages, each with unique developmental goals and training emphases that build gradually toward peak competition performance.

Resource allocation — it defines the distribution of the available training time among the several forms of preparation — physical, technical, tactical, psychological and competitive — ensuring that all the necessary developmental aspects get proper attention throughout the year.

Periodisation framework – it makes the principle of periodisation work, which is the systematic variation of training load and content over time, to make sure athletes develop progressively, peak at the right competitive moments and recover sufficiently between phases of high-intensity training.

Accountability and assessment – It offers a written benchmark against which the actual training process may be compared and assessed, facilitating both coaching quality assurance and professional reflection.

4.1.2 Structure of the Annual Training Macrocycle

The yearly training macrocycle of youth football at Mārupes Novada Sporta skola is constructed on the competitive calendar of the Latvian youth football system, which normally includes a spring-summer outdoor competitive season and a winter indoor competition period. The double-season structure determines the periodization of the yearly plan and leads to the presence of two separate preparation-competition cycles within the same training year.

The year macrocycle is broken down into 3 major training phases:

1. Preparatory Period – was devoted to the formation of physical, technical and tactical foundations necessary for the successful competition performance.

2. Competitive Period – emphasis on retaining and using the characteristics established in the preparation period in the setting of regular competition matches.

3. Transition period – The aim of this phase is active healing, physical regeneration and psychological repair after the competitive season.

Each period is broken into stages with more precise goals, and each stage has many mesocycles (blocks of 3-6 weeks) providing the medium-term planning structure within the yearly framework

4.1.3 Annual Plan Overview — MT-3 Football Group, Mārupes Novada Sporta skola

Training group: MT-3 Football **Age group:** 12–14 years **Training frequency:** 3 sessions per week **Session duration:** 90 minutes **Total planned training weeks:** 46 weeks (excluding 6 weeks transition/holiday) **Total planned training sessions:** 138 sessions **Total planned training hours:** 207 hours

Annual Training Calendar — Periods, Stages, and Cycles

Month	Period	Stage	Mesocycle	Key Objectives
September	Preparatory	General	Mesocycle	Physical foundation, technical review, team building
		Preparation	1	
October	Preparatory	General	Mesocycle	Physical development, basic technical consolidation
		Preparation	2	

Month	Period	Stage	Mesocycle	Key Objectives
November	Preparatory	Specific Preparation	Mesocycle 3	Football-specific physical preparation, technical refinement
December	Preparatory / Indoor Competition	Specific Preparation	Mesocycle 4	Tactical introduction, indoor competition preparation
January	Indoor Competitive	Indoor Competition Stage	Mesocycle 5	Indoor competition, technical-tactical maintenance
February	Preparatory	Spring Pre-Season General	Mesocycle 6	Physical rebuilding, technical reestablishment
March	Preparatory	Spring Pre-Season Specific	Mesocycle 7	Football-specific preparation, tactical development
April	Competitive	Early Competitive Stage	Mesocycle 8	Competition application, performance consolidation
May	Competitive	Main Competitive Stage	Mesocycle 9	Peak performance, tactical refinement
June	Competitive	Main Competitive Stage	Mesocycle 10	Sustained performance, individual development
July	Competitive	Late Competitive Stage	Mesocycle 11	Performance maintenance, load management
August	Competitive / Transition	End of Season / Transition	Mesocycle 12	Season conclusion, active recovery introduction
September	Transition	Transition Period	—	Full active recovery, regeneration

4.1.4 Training Period Descriptions

4.1.4.1 Period 1: Autumn Preparatory Period (September — December)

The fall preparation session is the beginning of the training year and the basis of physical, technical and tactical training for the full competition season. This phase is the longest and most physically difficult part of the yearly cycle. The training volume and the intensity is high and it increases steadily.

Stage of General Preparation (September – October)

The general preparation phase is intended to create a general physical ability and re-establish the technical foundations after the transition period in the summer. During this level, training curriculum includes:

- General Physical Preparedness – Building aerobic endurance, foundational strength, mobility and coordination via a broad range of workouts that enhance overall athleticism.
- Technical review and consolidation – re-evaluation of the technical foundations of passing, ball control and speed movement patterns; elimination of technical problems identified at the conclusion of the last competitive season.
- Team integration – Re-building the group dynamics, the communication patterns and the team training routines following the summer vacation.

At this moment the amount of training is at its peak for the year, with intensity starting at moderate and growing steadily. The high volume provides enough stimulation for physical adaptation, and the moderate initial intensity enables athletes to progressively restore their training tolerance following the transition phase.

Specific Preparation Phase (November – December)

The particular preparatory stage shifts training material to football-specific preparation with a gradual shift from broad physical development to the technical, tactical and physical skills most directly related to professional football performance.

- Speed development becomes more particular at this level. Acceleration drills, reactive sprint workouts and agility training are performed in football scenarios.
- Training of passing technique at faster speeds and with increased tactical complexity.
- Tactical introduction - fundamental tactical ideas of the team are presented and practiced in small-sided games and positioning drills.
- Indoor competition preparation – as the December indoor competition period approaches, technical and tactical information is tailored to the needs of indoor football.

The training volume starts to drop from its fall high, but the intensity keeps climbing, demonstrating the move from volume adaptation to quality preparation.

4.1.4.2 Period 2: Indoor Competitive Period (January)

The indoor competition period is the first competitive phase of the training year. Training volume is greatly reduced and intensity remains high to sustain competitive performance. The main goals are:

- using acquired qualities in competitive indoor match situations.

- Keep up the physical and technological standards set up in the fall preparation phase.
- Acquiring competitive experience and cultivating the psychological traits needed for competitive success.

Training sessions during this phase are shorter, more concentrated than preparatory sessions, with concentration on tactical preparation for future matches, on technical activation and management of recuperation between competitive games.

4.1.4.3 Period 3: Spring Preparatory Period (February — March)

After the indoor competition phase, a second preparation cycle is carried out to recover physical capacity and prepare for the major outdoor competition season. This phase is shorter than the fall preparation period, but follows the same general-to-specific progression:

Spring General Preparatory Stage (February) - recover physical capacity, restore technical quality and eliminate shortcomings found in the indoor competing time.

Spring Specific Preparatory Stage (March) – More football specific training, building tactical systems to be used in the outdoor season and playing pre-season friendly matches to test and improve competitive preparedness.

4.1.4.4 Period 4: Main Outdoor Competitive Period (April — August)

The major outdoor competition period is the longest and most significant part of the training year and it includes the main competitive season of the Latvian youth football calendar. The

time is broken into three phases:

Early Competitive Stage (April) – shift from preparation to competition concentration, adaptation to greater physical and psychological demands of regular competition and consolidation of technical and tactical characteristics acquired in pre-season.

Main Competitive Stage (May — June) – peak performance period of the yearly cycle, during which all physical, technical, tactical and psychological characteristics gained are exhibited at the greatest competitive level. Training volume is at its lowest of the year but quality of training and competition intensity are at their peak.

Late Competitive Stage (July – August) – Keeping up competitive form in the second half of the season, dealing with the build-up of physical and psychological tiredness by regulating load carefully, and getting ready for contests at the conclusion of the season.

4.1.4.5 Period 5: Transition Period (End of August — September)

The transition time is vital for physical and psychological recuperation after the end of the competitive season. The formal training of the game has come to a standstill, and the players are urged to do other physical exercises which will maintain a reasonable degree of fitness and provide total reprieve from the exigencies of football. The transition phase is often 4-6 weeks before the start of the following yearly cycle.

4.1.4.6 Annual Distribution of Training Hours by Type of Preparation

The following table presents the planned distribution of total training hours across different types of preparation throughout the annual macrocycle:

Type of Preparation	Autumn Prep (Sep–Dec)	Indoor Competition (Jan)	Spring Prep (Feb–Mar)	Outdoor Competition (Apr–Aug)	Total Hours	% of Total
General Physical Preparation	18	3	8	10	39	18.8%
Special Physical Preparation (Speed)	12	4	8	14	38	18.4%
Technical Preparation (Passing)	14	4	10	16	44	21.3%
Technical Preparation (Other)	10	3	6	12	31	15.0%
Tactical Preparation	6	4	8	18	36	17.4%
Psychological Preparation	2	1	2	3	8	3.8%
Competitive Activity	0	6	2	12	20	9.7%

Type of Preparation	Autumn Prep (Sep–Dec)	Indoor Competition (Jan)	Spring Prep (Feb–Mar)	Outdoor Competition (Apr–Aug)	Total Hours	% of Total
Recovery and Regeneration	2	2	2	6	12	5.8%
Total Hours	64	27	46	91	207	100%

Annual Distribution of Training Sessions by Period

Period	Months	Sessions per Week	Total Weeks	Total Sessions	Total Hours
Autumn Preparatory	Sep–Dec	3	16	48	72
Indoor Competitive	Jan	3	4	12	18
Spring Preparatory	Feb–Mar	3	8	24	36
Outdoor Competitive	Apr–Aug	3	18	54	81
Total			46	138	207

4.1.4.7 Annual Load Dynamics

The following describes the intended dynamics of the training volume and intensity across the yearly macrocycle, according to the periodization principles used in the design of the training year of the MT-3 group:

Volume dynamics — Training volume is greatest in the autumn general preparatory stage (September–October) and decreases gradually through the specific preparatory stages, reaching its lowest level during competitive periods and partially rebuilding in the spring preparatory period before declining again across the competitive season.

Dynamics of intensity – The intensity of the training has the opposite pattern. It starts with a moderate level in the general preparatory stage, then gradually increases in the special preparation, reaches the highest level in the competitive period, then decreases temporarily in the transition, and the beginning of the re-preparatory stage.

Dynamics of technical emphasis The percentage of training time devoted to technical preparation is highest in preparatory periods when controlled practice conditions allow for systematic technical development and lower in competitive periods when technical work is embedded in tactical and competitive contexts rather than practised in isolation.

Speed emphasis dynamics — Work on speed development is most systematically focused during the specialized preparing phases and the early competition period, when the physical framework built during the general preparation becomes the basis of targeted speed adaptation. Speed maintenance work continues throughout the competition phase, to keep the attributes established during pre-season.

The yearly training plan of the MT-3 football group of Mārupes Novada Sporta skola offers a thorough, periodized, and developmentally suitable basis to structure the training year in all forms of preparation, training periods, and competition phases. The planned distribution of the 207 total training hours of physical, technical, tactical, psychological and competitive training reflects the holistic development goals of youth football coaching at this stage, providing for systematic and appropriately distributed attention on speed development and passing technique, the core of this qualification work, over the course of the annual macrocycle. The periodization framework guarantees the variation of training loads in a physiologically and pedagogically appropriate way, allowing for gradual adaptation, competitive peak performance and long-term athletic development of each student in the group.

4.2 Weekly Plan

The weekly plan of training , or training microcycle in sports science , is the most operational level of training planning . It translates the wider goals of the yearly macrocycle and the monthly mesocycle into specific , session-by-session training content . The microcycle is the basic unit of organization of the training process. It defines the precise exercises, techniques, loads and rest times that the athlete will do in each single training session over the week. For

youth football coaches, the ability to develop and implement effective weekly training plans is one of the most practically important professional skills because it is at this level that the principles of theoretical planning are translated into the actual training experiences that shape the development of the athletes.

The weekly microcycle has numerous important functions:

Operational planning – it determines the specific content, format and load of each training session so that each day's coaching choices are based on a cohesive plan, rather than a series of spontaneous answers to current conditions.

Load management – it governs the allocation of training stress and recuperation throughout the week, ensuring that high intensity sessions are matched by proper recovery and that athletes come at each session in the best possible physical and psychological condition.

Content Sequencing – it determines the sequencing and combination of various types of training content over the course of the week. The principle is that work that is technically and neurologically demanding should precede work that is physically exhausting conditioning and that similar high-intensity stimuli should not be applied on consecutive days without adequate recovery.

Competitive preparation: in the competitive phase, the microcycle is planned around the match day and training content and intensity are closely controlled to guarantee optimal preparedness for competition.

4.2.1 Principles of Weekly Plan Design for the Preparatory Period

The weekly training plan described in this section is for the specific preparatory phase of the autumn preparatory period - a period of high training specificity, gradually increasing in intensity and developing football-specific physical and technical qualities for the coming competitive season.

Important concepts employed in the design of this microcycle:

3 session per week structure — The MT-3 group trains 3 times per week. Sessions are dispersed throughout the week to allow for recuperation between training stimuli. The

suggested distribution is to schedule sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday or similar non-consecutive days, with at least one rest day between each session.

Session Differentiation – the three sessions during the week are differentiated based on their main training objective and load characteristics: a Technical-Physical session, a Speed and Integration session, and a Tactical-Competitive session, each one providing a different training stimulus and performing a different developmental function within the weekly plan. Progressive loading throughout the week – the training load across the three sessions follows a moderate – high – moderate-high pattern. This strategy avoids maximal loading on the first session of the week when athletes might have residual fatigue from the previous week, positions the highest-intensity session in the mid-week, and finishes the week with a session that maintains training quality while managing cumulative fatigue.

Integration of speed and passing technique — in line with the core themes of this qualification work, each session includes elements of both speed development and passing technique, either as specific training blocks or within game-based activities, ensuring that both qualities receive structured attention throughout the week.

4.2.1.1 Weekly Microcycle Overview — Preparatory Period

Session	Day	Primary Focus	Load Characteristic	Duration
Session 1	Monday	Technical foundation — passing and ball control	Moderate	90 min
Session 2	Wednesday	Speed development and technical integration	High	90 min
Session 3	Friday	Tactical application and competitive games	Moderate-High	90 min

SESSION 1 — MONDAY

4.2.1.2 Technical Foundation: Passing Technique and Ball Control

Principal objectives: • Design and optimize the biomechanical framework of inside-foot and driving pass method

- Practice ball control and first touch to prepare for passing combinations
- Introduce moving target & combo workouts for growing passing difficulty
- Keep up the overall physical activity following the weekend rest time

Load characteristics: Technical, moderate intensity, moderate-high volume

Duration: 90 minutes total

4.2.1.3 Part 1: Warm-Up (20 minutes)

General Activation (8 minutes)

General Activation (8 mins)

Exercise 1: Jog with dynamic moves (4 minutes) Players jog around the training area in a free manner, progressively increasing speed. At the coach's signal, athletes proceed through a series of dynamic motions including high knees, butt kicks, lateral shuffles and reverse jogging. The coach offers verbal instructions to keep the runner in the appropriate position for running – upright trunk, relaxed shoulders, forward look.

Dose: Continuous 4 minutes Objective: raise heart rate, raise core temperature, stimulate the cardiovascular system

Exercise 2: Dynamic stretch circuit (4 minutes) The players go through a progressive dynamic stretching circuit throughout the field:

- Walking lunges with trunk rotation – 10 m

- Lateral leg swings - 10 repetitions each leg
- Hip circles - 10 each way
- Ankle rotations - 10 each side
- Arm circles – 10 reps in each direction

Dosage: One cycle, around 4 minutes Objective: Mobilize hip flexors, hamstrings, ankles and shoulder girdle - main movement chains involved in passing technique.

Ball Familiarization (12 minutes)

Exercise 3: Juggling individual balls (3 min.) Free juggling -- alternate feet, thigh, chest -- at each player's own pace, emphasizing delicate touch and relaxed ball contact. The coach watches and records technical habits on the ball.

Dosage: Continuous, 3 min Objective: To restore ball feel and touch sensitivity, and to stimulate neuromuscular control associated with foot-ball contact

Exercise 4: Stationary, paired passing – inside of the foot (5 minutes) Players face each other in pairs, 8 meters apart. Players pass to each other using the inside of the foot. They concentrate on the important technical areas the coach discussed before the drill:

- Supporting foot next to ball, aiming toward partner
- Locking of the ankle on touch
- Follow-through on partner lead
- Get head up after touch to get visual input on pass quality

The coach rotates, observes each couple and provides individual technical criticism using the observation checklist criteria from Section 3.6.

Dosage: Constantly swap, 5 minutes Coaching emphasis. Foot placement and direction of follow through. Goal: To re-establish good inside foot passing technique at the start of the session

Exercise 5: Increasing distance paired passing (4 mins) The same couples increase the passing distance incrementally, from 8 meters to 12 meters and finally to 15 meters, moving from inside-foot passes to driven instep passes as the distance grows. Players emphasize creating greater power with higher hip rotation and fuller follow through, all the while retaining technical perfection.

Dosage: Constant exchange, roughly 90 seconds per distance Coaching emphasis:

Transitioning from inside-foot to instep technique, creating power with follow-through Goal: Activation of passing technique at different distances and surfaces of the foot.

4.2.1.4 Part 2: Main Training Content (55 minutes)

Technical Passing Block (25 minutes)

Exercise 6: Passing triangle combination – one two (8 minutes) Three participants are placed at the corners of a triangle with sides 10 metres. Player A passes to Player B who plays a one touch pass back to Player A who plays a pass to Player C. And the sequence keeps on turning. At 4 minutes the direction of rotation changes.

Dosage: 8 minutes, 2 sets of 4 minutes, 1 minute break, continuous rotation Coaching priorities: One-touch pass quality — proper foot surface, regulated weight, exact direction Purpose: Develop synchronization of movement in combination play and one-touch passing accuracy .

Exercise 7: Diagonal runs - passing to moving target (8 mins) Four players, two pairs, working in a 20 meter × 15 meter area. Player A passes to Player B who runs diagonally to receive the ball. Player B passes back to the spot abandoned by Player A , who has moved to a new position . The drill mimics the passing demands of aggressive combo play.

Dosage: Continuous for 8 minutes, exchanging roles every 2 minutes Coaching focus: Timing of pass with partner's movement, weight of pass to incoming partner Goal: Improve passing accuracy to moving targets and synchronization of passing time with partner movement

Exercise 8: Passing circuit by many target walls (9 min) A passing circuit is set up with 5 target zones on a wall or rebounder at varied heights and placements. Players cycle pairs across the circuit, one passing and one watching and giving feedback. • 10 Passes to target zones (specified) with each player using dominant and non-dominant foot.

Results are entered on individual evaluation sheets and provide continuing monitoring data to compare with the official test results.

Dosage: 10 passes each participant every round, 2 rounds per person, around 9 minutes for the group Coaching focal areas: Accuracy of ball contact, ankle lock, constancy of direction Goal: Structured technical practice with quantitative accuracy tracking – integrating daily training with continuous evaluation

Physical and Technical Integration Block (20 minutes)

Exercise 9: Speed passing relay – sprint and pass (10 min) Two teams of 3-4 players line up at opposing sides of a 25 metre channel. Player 1 races from their start line to the cone in the middle (12 meters), takes a pass from their partner at the centre cone, controls and passes back, then continues racing to the far end. Then the waiting partner runs back. The drill promotes the combination of acceleration and passing execution under moving circumstances.

Dose: Relay continuous, 10 minutes, short break between cycles for the whole group

Coaching focus: Passing execution quality throughout & shortly after sprint - sustain technical standards under mild physical stress Objective: Combining physical speed with technical execution Improving passing skill in a state of moving and light physical loading

Exercise 10: Passing under increasing pressure – Shadow defender (10 min) Two players pass the ball to each other across 12 meters. The third player is a passive, then more aggressive shadow defender (first standing between the passers and eventually adding movement to restrict passing time and space). The passing players must adapt their body form, pass selection and passing execution speed depending on the placement of the defense.

Dosage 3 minute rotations with 30 seconds break between rotations, each player is defense once Coaching points: Body form before receiving – open to expand passing lanes; speed of execution vs. defensive pressure Aim: Enhance resilience of passing skill under competitive strain – transition from controlled technical practice to game-realistic challenges

Small-Sided Game with Technical Focus (10 minutes)

Exercise 11: 4v4 possession game – scoring points from passing (10 minutes) Two teams of 4 play in a 25m × 20m area. There are no goals. Teams are awarded points for completing 5 straight passes without the ball being intercepted or traveling out of bounds. 1 point for each completed series of 5 passes. The coach gives additional points for technically good passes – precisely weighted through balls, accurate one-touch combinations or successful passes with the non-dominant foot – to reinforce the technical goals of the session in a competitive game setting.

Dosage: 10 minutes uninterrupted play with a 1 minute respite in the middle Coaching emphasis: In-game use of passing method established earlier in the session; body form and movement to generate passing alternatives Objective: Transfer of passing technique from controlled practice to game-realistic competitive situation; speed of decision-making in passing selection.

4.2.1.5 Part 3: Cool-Down (15 minutes)

Exercise 12: Light pass combinations (5 minutes) The players go back into partnered passing at 8 meters, with steady, relaxing inside-foot passes. The tempo is conversational - the emphasis is on fluid, controlled touch, not technical perfection or speed. This mild practice with the ball helps physical recovery and reinforces favorable technical connections at the end

of the session.

Exercise 13: Static stretch circuit (10 minutes) Players carry out an organized static stretching circuit aimed at the main muscle groups recruited throughout the session:

- Hip flexor stretch – 30 seconds each leg
- Hamstring stretch – 30 seconds per leg • Quadriceps stretch – 30 seconds each leg
- Stretch calf and ankle – 30 seconds each leg
- Lower back rotation – 30 seconds right, 30 seconds left
- Adductor stretch – 30 seconds each side

Coaching note: The cool down is utilized as a time for quick technical reflection – the coach presents two or three major technical observations from the session, emphasizing good technical elements and selecting one particular technical emphasis for players to take into the next session.

Session 1 Load Summary:

Parameter	Value
Total duration	90 minutes
Warm-up duration	20 minutes
Main content duration	55 minutes
Cool-down duration	15 minutes
Primary training focus	Passing technique
Intensity level	Moderate
Estimated ball contacts per player	180–220

SESSION 2 — WEDNESDAY

4.2.2 Speed Development and Technical Integration

Main objectives: - • Speed work to increase acceleration and reaction sprint speed

• Combine passing technique with speed actions – establishing technically correct passing under high speed situations

• Use plyometric workouts to build the explosive leg strength that is the basis of acceleration •

Encourage players to preserve technical quality of passing under physical loads

Load characteristics High intensity, moderate volume, physically demanding

Total time: 90 minutes

4.2.2.1 Part 1: Warm-Up (20 minutes)

General Activation (8 minutes)

Exercise 1: Running warm-up, progressive (4 minutes) Players jog slowly around the edge of the field, gradually increasing pace every 30 seconds from easy jog to around 70% sprint pace. On the last lap participants do two 15-meter bursts of acceleration near their utmost effort followed by calm deceleration. This gradual stimulation prepares the neuromuscular system for the high intensity speed activity to come.

Dosage: 4 minutes continuous Objective: Progressive Cardiovascular and Neuromuscular Activation for Speed Work

Exercise 2: Sprint exercises mechanics 4 minutes The players do a series of running mechanics exercises over a distance of 20m:

- A-skips – high knee lift with intentional, rhythmic arm drive – 2 x 20m • B-skips – drive foot down from high-knee stance – 20 meters x 2
- High knees (fast, nonstop knee cycling at maximal rate) — 20 meters x 2
- Butt kicks – fast cycling of heel to glute focusing on hamstring activation – 20m x 2

Dosage: 8 reps total in 4 minutes Coaching emphasis Proper arm drive direction (elbows driving backwards, not across body) Upright trunk posture Purpose: To activate accurate sprint mechanics as the technical basis for the future speed training drills
speed activation (12 min)

Exercise 3 Reaction sprint – visual cue (5 minutes) Players are positioned in pairs 5 meters apart, facing each other. One player has a ball at shoulder height. When the ball is dropped, both players respond at the same time, the player who dropped the ball runs to touch a cone 10 meters behind them, while the other player tries to run and tag the first player before they reach the cone. This exercise is intended to improve response speed and acceleration in a competitive, game-like environment.

Dosage: 6 repetitions per pair, 30-45 seconds rest between repetitions Coaching focus:
Reaction time and initial acceleration mechanics – forward lean, short forceful first steps
Objective: Reactive speed and competitive acceleration drive turned on before the main speed workout block.

Exercise 4 Acceleration build-ups (7 min) Players undertake 30m progressive acceleration runs, working from 60% to 100% effort over three parts of the run: • First 10 meters – 60-70% effort, concentration on forward lean and mechanics of short stride acceleration • Middle 10 meters – 80-90% effort, switch to longer, more forceful strides • Last 10 meters – 100% peak effort, drive to max sprint speed

Dosage: 4 repeats, 2 minutes of recuperation between repetitions Coaching objective :
Transition between acceleration stages, keeping lean forward into maximum speed phase
Purpose: Build intensity gradually to prepare the neuromuscular system to run fast at peak effort.

4.2.2.2 Part 2: Main Training Content (55 minutes)

Speed Development Block (25 minutes)

Exercise 5: 10 meter standing start acceleration (8 minutes) Players do 10-meter sprints at full effort from a standing start, concentrating on explosive acceleration techniques – aggressive initial step, forceful arm drive, low forward lean of the torso.

Dose: 6 repeats each participant, 2 minutes of rest between repetitions, total volume of sprints of 60 meters Coaching emphasis: First stride length and direction – Driving the foot back and down, not up; Arm drive matching first stride Objective: Develop pure acceleration ability – the most important component of football speed

Exercise 6: Reactive sprint – change of direction (9 minutes) Players start at a centre cone. The coach calls left or right and the athlete runs as fast as possible to the appropriate cone (8 meters to each side), touches the cone and runs back to the center cone before immediately

running to the next direction named. One repetition is three successive calls of direction.

Dosage: 5 reps per participant 90 seconds rest between reps Coaching focus: Deceleration mechanics before changing direction – dropping center of gravity, shortening stride; explosive re-acceleration out of turn Purpose: To develop reactive agility, the ability to change direction quickly in reaction to environmental cues. This replicates the speed demands of defensive and offensive transitions in match play.

Exercise 7: Plyometric Circuit (8 mins) Players cycle through three plyometric stations that create the explosive leg force that underpins acceleration:

Station 1: Broad leaps – maximal horizontal distance leaps from two feet to two feet emphasizing explosive hip extension and controlled landing mechanics. 5. leaps / set

Station 2: Single-leg bounds – 15 m of alternating leg bounds with an emphasis on a forceful push-off and a steady flying phase. 2 reps/set.

Station 3: Box jumps (or similar step-up explosive leaps if equipment unavailable) – explosive two-foot jumps onto a raised platform with an emphasis on maximal vertical power production and controlled landing. 5 repetitions per set

Dosage: 2 full rotations 60 seconds rest between stations 90 seconds rest between rotations

Coaching Points: Quality of explosive effort at each station – peak power production on every rep Controlled, balanced landings to establish injury avoidance behaviors Objective: To build explosive leg strength as the physical basis of acceleration while creating safe landing mechanics

Speed and Passing Integration Block (20 minutes)

Exercise 8 Sprint receive pass sprint (10 minutes) Set up a track with cones at 0, 15 and 25 metres. At the 15-meter cone there is a ball with a feeder. Starts from 0-meter and runs to 15-meter cone, gets a pass from feeder on arrival, controls and returns pass to feeder, then continues sprinting to 25-meter end cone. The player jogs back to the start to recuperate.

Dosage: 6 repetitions per participant, 90 seconds recuperation between repetitions Coaching focus: Technical execution of the pass immediately after sprinting – maintaining proper supporting foot placement and follow through direction despite physical stress; head up before receiving to judge location of feeder Objective: Develop the ability to make technically accurate passes after explosive acceleration – an important football-specific characteristic, which is seldom practiced in isolation !

Exercise 9: Speed Dribbling & Passing Combination (10 min) Players run at full speed down

a 20-meter channel and then play a driven pass into a target zone at the end of the channel before sprinting to rapidly regain their place. The activity is done constantly in groups of 3 with players alternating between dribbling, passing and target responsibilities.

Dosage: 10 min continuous rotation, participants do roughly 4–5 repetitions each Coaching points: Transition from dribbling speed to the pass (control of deceleration, modification of body form, technical execution of the pass) in the continuous movement sequence Objective: To develop the technical ability to effectively transition from high speed dribbling to accurate passing, a common sequence in aggressive football play.

Speed Game — Transition Exercise (10 minutes)

Exercise 10: Transition game 3v3 – speed focus (10 minutes) Two teams of 3 play in a 30m × 20m zone with miniature goals at either end. Whenever a side scores or the ball goes out of play, both teams are required to sprint to touch their own end line before restarting play – demanding explosive recovery sprints and transitions that match the high-speed demands of contemporary football. If a goal is scored within 3 seconds of gaining possession of the ball then it counts double points . This encourages quickness of transition .

Dosage: 10 minutes of continuous play with 1 minute respite at the midway point Coaching focus: quickness of transition – physical acceleration and judgment quickness in getting up to speed and utilizing space straight away after winning the ball Objective: To use speed traits learned earlier in the session in a competitive, match realistic gaming environment that encourages explosive speed and swift decision making.

4.2.2.3 Part 3: Cool-Down (15 minutes)

Exercise 11: Passing movement and light (5 minutes) In groups of 3, players work on relaxing, slow-paced passing combinations, concentrating on smooth, leisurely ball circulation. This steady decrease in physical intensity allows the cardiovascular system to heal, and the neuromuscular system to recover from the high-intensity speed workout.

Exercise 12: Complete static stretching (10 minutes) Extended static stretching circuit addressing the main lower body and core muscular groups recruited in the speed training, with emphasis on hip flexors, quadriceps, hamstrings and calves. Each stretch was held for 30-45

seconds.

Coaching note: The coach uses the cool down time to give individual technical feedback on passing execution seen in the speed integration exercises – highlighting the players whose technique broke down under physical loading and pinpointing individual technical correction priorities for the next session.

Session 2 Load Summary:

Parameter	Value
Total duration	90 minutes
Warm-up duration	20 minutes
Main content duration	55 minutes
Cool-down duration	15 minutes
Primary training focus	Speed development and technical integration
Intensity level	High
Total sprint volume	250–300 meters per player

SESSION 3 — FRIDAY

4.2.3 Tactical Application and Competitive Games

Primary objectives:

- Apply passing technique and speed qualities within tactical game contexts
- Develop tactical understanding of passing patterns, movement off the ball, and pressing principles
- Provide competitive game experience that develops decision-making speed and technical robustness under pressure
- Consolidate the week's technical and physical work through game-based application

Load characteristics: Moderate-high intensity, game-based, tactically focused

Total duration: 90 minutes

4.2.3.1 Part 1: Warm-Up (15 minutes)**

Rondo Warm-Up (15 minutes)

Exercise 1: 4v1 Rondo – small (7 min) 5 player teams are placed in a circle of around 8m diameter. Four guys outside keep the ball away from the man in the middle trying to steal it. The offending player shifts to the center position if the center wins the ball or commits a mistake.

Dose: Continuous, 7 minutes Coaching focus: Speed of passing – promoting one and two touch play Body shape before receiving – opening up to view all passing possibilities

Communication between outside players Purpose: Fun warm-up to get players physically and mentally prepared for the tactical session that follows; activates passing technique, decision-making speed and competitive intensity along

Exercise 2: 5v2 Rondo – bigger area (8 minutes) 7 Player groups operate inside a 15 meter x 10 meter rectangle zone. Five players are trying to keep the ball away from two defenders. The wider area and more players involved provide more tactical intricacy – players need to read the location of defenders and all teammates to find the best passing option.

Dosage: 8 minutes continuous Defenders change every 2 minutes Coaching points: Third man running – movement off the ball to provide passing possibilities for the ball carrier; Switching play – recognising when to pass away from defensive pressure to a player in space Objective: - Developing the tactical-technical integration of passing in the context of the team possession play - preparing players for the tactical game content that follows.

4.2.3.2 Part 2: Main Training Content (60 minutes)**

Tactical Passing Patterns (15 minutes)

Exercise 3: Positional passing pattern – build-up play (15 minutes) The coach presents a certain tactical passing pattern representative of the team's targeted build-up play structure. For example, a center defender might pass to a wide midfielder, who links up with a central midfielder on a one-two before playing a forward ball to a striker on a diagonal run. The

pattern is first walked through slowly, then repeated at a moderate pace and lastly performed at a game speed.

The pattern is executed in steps:

- Phase 1 (5 minutes): Walking speed – setting up player positions, timing of movement and pass sequences

- Phase 2 (5 mins): Moderate pace – introducing genuine speed of movement while keeping technical accuracy

- Phase 3 (5 mins): Game pace with passive defenders – running the pattern against static defenders that provide spatial reference but no aggressive opposition

Dose: 3 x 5 minute periods Coaching emphasis Timing of movement relative to the ball – players have to move to receive at the correct time Pass quality under movement – keeping technical passing standards at game speed Objective: To develop the tactical-technical execution of specified passing combinations in the team's playing system — relating individual passing technique to collective tactical patterns.

Small-Sided Tactical Games (30 minutes)

Exercise 4: 5 vs 5 directional game with passing requirements (15 minutes) Two teams of 5 play in a 35 meter by 25 meter tiny goals zone. A passing requirement is imposed, requiring each team to make at least 3 passes before attempting a shot. The rule emphasizes slow, strategic passing, and discourages individual moves that ignore the team's passing structure. The second part of the workout (7 minutes) changes the condition: at least one pass must be played forward inside each series of 3 passes, building the balance between patient circulation and forward movement.

Dosing: 15 mins non-stop play, 1 min break at half time Coaching focus: Quality of pass choices (make the right pass decision not the easy one) Movement off the ball (providing passing angles and alternatives for the man on the ball) Objective: To establish a tactical team context for purposeful passing play, using the technical passing skill gained earlier in the week under competitive game situations.

Exercise 5: 6v6 pressing game – transition speed (15 min) Full small-sided game with coordinated pressuring by both sides while out of possession. When a team gets the ball back they try to push forward as fast as they can before the other team can get set up defensively. This exercise enhances passing skill under pressure of defense and quickness of transition -

linking the speed attributes learned in Session 2 with the tactical passing needs of Session 3.

Dosage: 15 minutes of continuous play, rest 1 minute at halfway Coaching points: Speed of decision making on winning the ball – finding and using space straight away; Passing quality under high pressure – keeping technical standards when time and space are at a premium Aim: To practice speed and passing skill together in the most game-like environment of the week, developing the combined traits needed to compete well in competition.

Full Game — Free Play (15 minutes)

Exercise 6: 7v7 free play (15 minutes) Free gaming without restriction and normal regulations on the whole training area. There are no set criteria – participants are allowed to use the technical and tactical information of the week as they like in the natural flow of the game. The coach watches without frequent interference, letting the players make their own judgments and see the natural implications of their technical and tactical choices.

Dosage: 15 minutes of uninterrupted free play Coaching focus: Observation of the technical and tactical application, i.e. which players effectively transfer the training material of the week into the game performance and which players fall back into old patterns under game pressure Objective: To provide a true competitive experience via free gameplay that reinforces the week's training material as a natural continuous review of the week's training efficacy and to measure the transfer from training to game performance.

4.2.3.3 Part 3: Cool-Down and Weekly Review (15 minutes)

Exercise 7: Light jog and passing (5 minutes) Players jog slowly around the field in a group, chatting freely. The physical activity of the session ends with a short amount of partnered passing at a walking speed.

Exercise 8: Static stretch 7-minute Brief static stretching circuit of major loaded muscle groups, 30 seconds every stretch.

Exercise 9: Review of the week's conversation (3 mins) The coach assembles the players for a quick, organized overview of the week's training:

- One technical positive from the week – confirming a technical improvement mentioned in all three sessions.
- One tactical takeaway from the Friday game – a good application of the

week's tactical curriculum. • Specific technical emphasis for the next week – identifying a clear priority for players to work on in the upcoming microcycle.

This short review ritual concludes the weekly microcycle with intentional reflection, linking the training experiences of the week to the continuing growth path and keeping participants aware of their individual and communal progress.

Session 3 Load Summary:

Parameter	Value
Total duration	90 minutes
Warm-up duration	15 minutes
Main content duration	60 minutes
Cool-down duration	15 minutes
Primary training focus	Tactical application and competitive games
Intensity level	Moderate-High
Game time	40 minutes

Weekly Microcycle Load Summary

Session	Day	Focus	Intensity	Duration
Session 1	Monday	Technical — Passing	Moderate	90 min
Session 2	Wednesday	Speed and Integration	High	90 min
Session 3	Friday	Tactical — Games	Moderate-High	90 min
Weekly Total				270 min

Weekly distribution of preparation types:

Type of Preparation	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Weekly Total
General Physical	10 min	15 min	5 min	30 min
Special Physical — Speed	5 min	30 min	10 min	45 min
Technical — Passing	35 min	20 min	15 min	70 min
Tactical	10 min	10 min	30 min	50 min

Type of Preparation	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Weekly Total
Competitive Games	10 min	10 min	40 min	60 min
Recovery	15 min	15 min	15 min	45 min
Total	85 min	100 min	115 min	300 min

Therefore, we can conclude weekly training microcycle of the MT-3 football group in the above preparation phase offers a cohesive, progressive and completely designed three-session training week, which methodically develops speed and passing skill as integrated, mutually reinforcing traits. Session 1 is the technical basis of controlled passing practice and increased complexity. Session 2 enhances physical speed attributes and pushes passing technique under high intensity loading situations. Session 3 combines these traits, in tactical and competitive game scenarios, to prepare players for the challenges of competitive match play. The progressive load structure over the three sessions (moderate, high, moderate-high) provides an appropriate training stimulus while limiting accumulated tiredness and maintaining quality of technical and physical tasks throughout the week. This design of microcycles is a reflection of the integrated approach to the development of speed and passing technique, a key element of the coaching philosophy provided in this certification assignment.

4.3 Training Session Plans

Mārupes Novada Sporta skola — MT-3 Football Group

TRAINING SESSION PLAN No. 1

Institution:	Mārupes Novada Sporta skola
Group:	MT-3 Football
Age group:	12–14 years
Number of players:	12
Date:	October (Autumn General Preparatory Stage)
Session duration:	90 minutes

Training venue: Outdoor artificial turf field

Equipment: 12 footballs, cones, marker poles, agility ladder, stopwatch

4.3.1 Session Objectives

Objective 1 – Technical: To learn and reinforce the right biomechanical structure of the inside foot pass at a beginner to intermediate level of difficulty with particular attention on supporting foot placement, ankle locking and follow-through direction.

Objective 2 — Physical To improve speed (acceleration and response speed) with main loading of the hip flexor, quadriceps and hamstring muscle groups via focused sprint and reactive movement activities.

4.3.1.2 Macrocycle Context

The session is designed for the General Preparatory Stage in Autumn (October, Mesocycle 2). The main aims at this level are to establish broad physical foundations and to reinforce fundamental technical abilities. The amount of training is medium to high, and the intensity is steadily rising. The technical challenge is finding the right patterns of movement at regulated rates before adding complexity.

INTRODUCTORY / PREPARATORY PART

Duration: 20 minutes

Organizational moment (2 minutes)

The coach gets players together around the center circle. The goals of the session are clearly stated: • "Today we are concentrating on two things – the right technique of the inside foot pass, and our acceleration speed. We will end up doing rapid passes after running, because these are intimately linked.

Confirmed attendance. Players informed of safety regulations — proper spacing on sprinting workouts, controlled deceleration after sprints, no contact during technical drills.

Exercise 1: Progressive jogging warm-up *Duration: 4 minutes*

Players run freely in a group around the perimeter of the field, progressively increasing speed on the coach's signal every 60 seconds: 0–60 seconds: Easy Jog, comfortable pace

- 60-120 Secs: Moderate speed, loose arms
- 120-180 seconds: Accelerating, starting to drive arms • 180-240 seconds: Two 15-meter acceleration bursts at 70% effort on coach's signal

Coaching notes: stand straight, shoulders relaxed, looking forward, arms swinging naturally

Objective: Increase of the heart rate, body temperature; introduction of movement rhythm.

Exercise 2: Dynamic stretching circuit *Duration: 6 minutes*

Players perform the dynamic stretching circuit moving across a 20-meter distance:

Exercise	Repetitions	Target Area
Walking lunges with trunk rotation	10 meters	Hip flexors, glutes
High knees walking	10 meters	Hip flexors, core activation
Lateral leg swings (each leg)	10 swings	Hip abductors, adductors
Heel-to-glute walking	10 meters	Quadriceps, knee joint
Ankle rotations (each foot)	10 circles	Ankle joint mobility
Arm circles forward and backward	10 each direction	Shoulder girdle, upper back

Coaching Points: Smooth, controlled (not ballistic) Full range of motion at each joint Purpose: To engage the key joints and muscular chains used in the passing technique and sprinting mechanics.

Exercise 3: Ball familiarization — individual juggling *Duration: 3 minutes*

Each person has a ball and does free solo juggling. Left foot, right foot, alternating, thigh or chest as they see fit. Players work at their own speed, using gentle, controlled touch with the ball.

Sets / reps: Continuous for 3 minutes Coaching points: • Juggling: Watch the ball, loosen up

the touch, soften the ankle upon contact Goal: Restore neuromuscular sensitivity and ball feel. Provide psychological comfort with ball before technical teaching starts.

Exercise 4: Paired passing — stationary, short distance *Duration: 5 minutes*

Players partner up and stand 6 metres apart. Players pass using the inside of their feet in a comfortable, controlled way. Before starting the instructor displays the essential technical features of the inside-foot pass:

Technical demonstration points:

- Approach the ball at a little slant
- Place the supporting foot beside the ball with the toes pointed to the target • Turn the kicking foot out, lock the ankle solid
- Touch the middle of the ball with the inside of the foot
- Follow through to the objective

The players are practicing all the time, while the instructor is moving about, watching each couple and giving some basic technical input.

Sets/ reps: 5 minutes, constant interchange Rest No formal rest conversational pace Coaching points: Support foot location Lock ankle Follow-through direction. Objective: Develop first technical reference point for inside-foot pass at beginning of session; offer coach with baseline observation of each player's current technical level.

MAIN PART

Duration: 55 minutes

4.3.1.3 Technical Development Block — Inside-Foot Pass

Duration: 25 minutes

Exercise 5: Inside-foot pass — supporting foot placement focus *Duration: 8 minutes*

We put a marker cone down at each passing location, showing the precise right supporting foot landing spot – alongside the ball, toes pointed toward the target. Players practice inside foot passing with the objective of stepping onto the marker with their supporting foot on each repetition.

Players play in pairs at 8 meters distance. The distance rises to 12 meters after 4 minutes.
Sets: 2 sets of 4 minutes (one at 8 minutes, one at 12 minutes) Reps: ~15-20 passes per player per set Rest interval: 30 seconds between sets for distance adjustment Coaching tips: Conscious attention to placing the supporting foot on each repetition Immediate visual and proprioceptive feedback from the marker Correction focus: Players putting foot too far behind ball (creates high trajectory) or to side (creates lateral deviation) Purpose : To develop the habit of accurate supporting foot placement via repeated focused practice with rapid visual feedback – the most prevalent technical fault in inside foot passing.

Exercise 6: Ankle locking drill — isolated practice *Duration: 4 minutes*

Players sit on the ground with legs extended. On the coach's count, players repeatedly:

1. Relax the ankle — foot loose and floppy
2. Lock the ankle firmly — toe pointed downward, foot rigid
3. Players go from relaxed to locked 10 times and hold the locked position for 5 seconds, experiencing the muscular activation necessary to maintain ankle stability.

Players next stand and execute 10 stationary passes against a wall from 5 meters concentrating only on keeping a solid grip on the ankle during the whole passing movement.

Sets: 2 sets of 10 alternate reps plus 10 wall passes Rest interval: 30 seconds between sets Points to coach: “Lock before you kick.” The ankle must be locked from the commencement of the kicking action all the way through the follow-through—not only upon impact. Objective: To develop conscious awareness and muscle habit of ankle locking – a usually disregarded technical factor which greatly impacts passing accuracy and consistency.

Exercise 7: Passing combination — triangle with follow-up movement *Duration: 8 minutes*

Three players stand at the points of a 10 meter triangle. Player A passes the ball to Player B and instantly follows the pass, going to Player B's location. Player B gets the ball, passes it to Player C and follows his pass. The action goes on constantly round the triangle.

The direction of rotation is reversed after 4 minutes.

Sets: 2 sets x 4 minutes Repetitions: Approximately 12–15 repetitions each set per participant

Rest period: Rest 1 minute between sets Coaching points: Pass quality when starting forward movement – keeping good body posture on the move at same time as passing and running

Weight of pass adequate for 10 meter distance Objective: To develop the inside-foot passing technique in a dynamic movement environment – presenting the difficulty of precise technical execution while moving, building upon the stationary practice of Exercises 5 and 6.

Exercise 8: Passing accuracy recording — wall circuit *Duration: 5 minutes*

A short monitoring exercise is included on the wall passing accuracy circuit described in Section 3.6 (Test 1). Players take 10 passes each to the designated target zones Alternating dominant & non dominant foot. Results are documented on individual evaluation sheets.

Sets: 10 passes per player, 1 set Rest interval: Players rest and partners do their evaluation

Coaching Points 1. Technical execution – exact This is both a practice exercise and a

continuous evaluation Objective: Provide quantitative accuracy statistics to support

continuous progress monitoring Maintain the link between daily technical practice and formal evaluation framework

4.3.1.4 Physical Development Block — Speed (Acceleration)

Duration: 20 minutes

Exercise 9: Standing start sprint — 10 meters *Duration: 8 minutes*

Players undertake 10m acceleration sprints from a standing start, giving a maximal effort. The players split into two groups and alternate their repetitions to provide sufficient recuperation.

Starting posture: Feet hip width apart, little forward lean, weight on balls of feet, arms ready in sprint posture.

The athlete bursts off the line at the coach's signal (whistle), pushing the first stride strongly

back and down, maintaining a low forward lean throughout the whole 10 meters.

Sets: 3 sets of 2 reps for a total of 6 reps per participant Distance: 10 m per repeat Total sprint volume: 60 m per player Rest interval: 2 min between reps (needed for complete phosphocreatine recovery) 3 min between sets Intensity: 100% peak effort, every rep Resistance application: Body weight solely - no external resistance in this macrocycle phase Coaching points: Direction of first stride - backward and downward not higher Forward body lean maintained throughout acceleration - not rising to upright posture prematurely Powerful bilateral arm drive synced with leg motion Goal: To develop explosive acceleration ability of the hip flexor, quadriceps and hamstring muscle groups via maximal intensity repetition with complete recovery.

Exercise 10: Reaction sprint — auditory signal *Duration: 7 minutes*

Players stand side by side in pairs on the start line. The coach yells “Go!” at random intervals (between 2 and 8 seconds after each reset). In each pair the two players run to a cone 15 metres away at the same time, the first to arrive wins the repeat.

The competitive aspect increases motivating intensity, reproducing the response speed requirements of match circumstances.

Sets: 2 sets of 3 repeats = 6 repetitions per player Distance: 15 meters per rep Total sprint distance: 90 m/player Rest interval: 90 seconds between reps, 2 minutes between sets Intensity: Maximum - makes you give your all in competition with a partner Coaching points: Signal — anticipation without false starts Explosive initial movement — no swaying or anticipatory motions that delay responsiveness Maintain sprint mechanics under competitive demand Objective: Develop response speed coupled with explosive acceleration — quadriceps and hip flexors engaged from a reactive, unanticipated stimulus; Develop the psychological ability to function at full speed under competitive pressure.

Exercise 11: Acceleration with direction change *Duration: 5 minutes*

Players stand around a center cone. The coach indicates left, right or forward. Players race to the assigned cone (8 meters in each direction) , touch the cone and return to center before the next direction is called after a 45 second recovery .

Sets: 2 sets x 3 direction calls = 6 total sprint actions/player Distance: 8 m per sprint action

Total sprint distance: 48 meters per participant Rest Interval: 45 sec between individual direction calls; 2 min between sets Intensity: Full effort Resistance application: Just body weight Coaching points: Lowering center of gravity before change of direction - bending at hips and knees to provide forceful push-off in new direction; short, powerful strides out of each change of direction Objective: To develop agility and multi directional acceleration – stressing the hip abductors, adductors and gluteal muscles in addition to the major acceleration muscle groups; to imitate the reactive multi directional speed demands of football match play.

4.3.1.5 Integration Block — Speed Combined with Passing

Duration: 10 minutes

Exercise 12: Sprint — receive — pass *Duration: 10 minutes*

The track is marked out with cones at 0, 12 and 20 metres. One feeder is at the 12-meter cone with several balls

Sequence:

1. Player runs from 0 meter start to 12 meter cone at maximum speed
2. Feeder makes a straightforward inside pass to the incoming player
3. Player takes 1-2 touches to control and makes an inside foot throw back to the feeder
4. Player continues running to 20 meter cone and jogs back to recover

Sets: 2 x 4 reps per player = 8 total reps Rest Interval: 60 seconds between reps (active recovery—jog back to start); 2 minutes between sets. Intensity: Sprint all-out, controlled technical effort on receiving and passing Coaching points: Deceleration control in the last 2 meters before receiving – player must shorten stride and lower center of gravity to attain a balanced, stable stance before the pass arrives Technical quality of the pass after the sprint – keeping correct supporting foot placement and follow-through direction despite physical exertion Head up before the ball arrives to locate the feeder goal: Develop the important football-specific ability to perform technically perfect inside-foot passes immediately after explosive acceleration – combining the technical goal (passing) and physical objective (speed) of the session inside a single exercise.

CONCLUDING PART

Duration: 15 minutes

Exercise 13: Light passing cooldown *Duration: 5 minutes*

Players practice in couples giving calm relaxed inside foot passes at 8 metres. The tempo is intentionally slow – passes are soft and conversational, emphasizing smooth, delicate touch rather than technical perfection or force. Players are told to breathe gently and to let their heartbeat drop naturally.

Coaching points: Relaxed, flowing movement – letting go of the muscle tension that built up in the speed workouts Objective: Gradual cardiovascular deceleration, neuromuscular relaxation and the maintenance of favorable technical associations at the completion of the session.

Exercise 14: Static stretching circuit *Duration: 8 minutes*

Players perform a comprehensive static stretching circuit targeting all primary muscle groups loaded during the session. Each stretch is held for **30–40 seconds**:

Stretch	Duration	Target Muscle Group
Standing hip flexor lunge stretch (each leg)	35 seconds each	Hip flexors — primary acceleration muscle
Seated hamstring stretch (each leg)	35 seconds each	Hamstrings — sprint and passing mechanics
Standing quadriceps stretch (each leg)	30 seconds each	Quadriceps — knee extension in sprint and pass
Seated adductor stretch	30 seconds	Adductors — direction change loading
Standing calf stretch against wall (each leg)	30 seconds each	Gastrocnemius, soleus — ankle stability
Supine lower back rotation (each side)	30 seconds each	Lumbar spine — core rotation in passing action

Coaching points: No bouncing — sustained, relaxed hold; breathe slowly and deeply throughout each stretch; never stretch to the point of pain *Objective:* Restore resting muscle length; reduce delayed onset muscle soreness; support recovery for the next training session

Exercise 15: Session review and feedback *Duration: 2 minutes*

The coach calls the players together and gives a formal wrap-up:

"Today we did two things. For passing – the main thing was foot placement assistance. The most of you really made progress with the triangle exercise. Next session we will be focusing on ankle locking so make sure you practice this at home against a wall.

For speed. You really turned on the jets on your first stride today." The top players were the ones who leaned forward and pushed their foot back on the first stride—not up.

"Something to remember for next time, when we sprint and then pass, your body has to stabilise quickly before the ball gets there. Get on that deceleration control."

Thank the players for their work and remind them of when next session will be.

Aim: Reinforce the primary learning points from the session; offer technical feedback to individuals and the group; ensure that direction and incentive for progress remain apparent.

Session 1 Complete Load Summary:

Parameter	Value
Total duration	90 minutes
Introductory part	20 minutes
Main part	55 minutes
Concluding part	15 minutes
Total sprint volume	198 meters per player
Estimated passing contacts	160–180 per player
Primary muscle groups loaded	Hip flexors, quadriceps, hamstrings, ankle stabilizers
Intensity level	Moderate — High

4.3.2 TRAINING SESSION PLAN No. 2

Institution:	Mārupes Novada Sporta skola
Group:	MT-3 Football
Age group:	12–14 years
Number of players:	12
Date:	November (Autumn Specific Preparatory Stage)
Session duration:	90 minutes
Training venue:	Outdoor artificial turf field
Equipment:	12 footballs, cones, marker poles, resistance bands, timing gates or stopwatch

4.3.2.1 Session Objectives

Objective 1—Technical: To continue to develop and refine driven instep pass at intermediate level of difficulty, emphasizing generation of power via hip rotation, accurate instep contact and precision across distances of 15–25 meters under moving circumstances.

Objective 2 – Physical: Develop explosive strength (power) as the physical basis for passing force and sprint acceleration by predominantly loading the quadriceps, gluteal and core muscle groups with plyometric and resistance-based activities.

4.3.2.2 Macrocycle Context

This session falls within the **Autumn Specific Preparatory Stage** (November, Mesocycle 3). Training has shifted from general to football-specific preparation. Volume remains moderate-high while intensity is increasing toward competitive levels. Technical work now incorporates movement and mild opposition, and physical work introduces plyometric loading and resistance-based exercises appropriate for the 12–14 age group.

INTRODUCTORY / PREPARATORY PART

Duration: 18 minutes

Organizational moment (2 minutes)

Coach shares goals and context for the session: • "Today we build the driven pass. The stronger pass that we employ across greater distances. We'll also concentrate on explosive power – the power that makes our passes and sprints strong. These two things have a clear correlation."

Plyometric Safety Briefing: Landings must be managed, players must be spaced far enough apart, and there should be no repeats while players are tired.

Exercise 1: Dynamic warm-up running circuit *Duration: 6 minutes*

Players perform a structured running circuit around a **30-meter x 20-meter** rectangular course:

Lap	Movement	Pace
1	Easy jog	50%
2	High knees	Moderate
3	Lateral shuffle (change direction at each corner)	Moderate
4	Backward jog	Easy
5	Acceleration sprint on long sides, jog on short sides	80% on sprints
6	Free pace	Gradual deceleration

Objective: Comprehensive cardiovascular and neuromuscular warm-up activating all movement planes required during the session

Exercise 2: Dynamic stretching and activation *Duration: 5 minutes*

Exercise	Repetitions	Purpose
Walking hip circles (each leg)	10 each	Hip joint mobilization
Lateral lunge walk	10 meters each direction	Adductor and gluteal activation
Inchworm walk	8 repetitions	Hamstring and core activation
Single-leg hip bridge (each leg)	10 each	Gluteal and hamstring activation
Squat jumps — sub-maximal	5 repetitions	Explosive leg activation
Ankle hops — bilateral	10 repetitions	Ankle stiffness and calf activation

Objective: Activate the gluteal, quadriceps, and core muscle groups that will be loaded during the plyometric strength block

Exercise 3: Technical introduction — driven instep pass demonstration *Duration: 5 minutes*

The coach shows the driving instep pass from several angles, illustrating the biomechanical differences from the inside-foot pass:

Main technical points communicated:

- Angle of approach: significantly more direct than inside-foot pass - ~30-45 degrees
- Supporting foot is placed significantly farther back from the ball than the inside-foot pass – allowing for a broader hip rotation
- Kicking foot: toe down, locked ankle, laces (instep) striking center of ball
- Hip rotation: the hips rotate through the ball and provide much of the force of the pass
- Follow-through: the kicking leg continues up with the follow-through, the foot rising naturally

Players watch from many perspectives. Then the coach will ask one technically advanced player to perform as the coach describes the main themes.

At 15 meters, players team up and hold still, trying to imitate the style they saw. The coach moves about, offering first personalized comments.

Sets: 1 set of 10 passes per person Rest: Free recovery on partner's turn Aim: To develop the right mental image of the driving instep pass before advancing to more advanced drills

MAIN PART

Duration: 57 minutes

4.3.2.3 Technical Development Block — Driven Instep Pass

Duration: 22 minutes

Exercise 4: Driven pass — stationary, progressive distances *Duration: 8 minutes*

The players pair off and start at 15 meters, moving up to 20 meters and eventually 25 meters over three sets. Players at each distance concentrate on producing enough force by rotating the hips to make a strong, flat pass that reaches the partner on the ground with no bounce.

Sets: 3 x 2 minutes at increasing distances Reps: 8-10 passes per player each set or so Rest interval: 30 sec between sets to establish the distance Resistance: Body weight solely - no external resistance Coaching points: The main source of force is the hip rotation - "turn your hip through the ball" Toe pointing down throughout entire contact and follow-through Straight, level ball trajectory - not high or bouncing Correction focus: Players who fall back (high trajectory) or who do not turn the hip completely (weak and imprecise throw) Goal: Through controlled, progressive repetition at increasing distances, build muscle memory for instep contact and hip rotation.

Exercise 5: Driven pass while moving — receive and pass on the run *Duration: 8 minutes*

Players work in pairs going along parallel lines 18m apart. Both players trot steadily forward trading driving passes over the 18 meter distance. The problem is the preservation of the right biomechanical structure of the driven pass in continuous forward movement — control of the approach stride and body posture in jogging action.

After 4 minutes, pick up the speed to a brisk run.

Sets: 2 sets of 4 minutes (jogging, then moderate running speed) Repetitions: Around 10-12 reps per participant every set Rest interval: 1 min between sets Coaching tips: last stride adjustment: Adjusting the last stride before contacting the ball so that the body is in the right posture to continue forward; Head up after each pass to follow the partner's movement and prepare for the next reception Objective: Transitional development of the driven passing technique from controlled stationary circumstances to dynamic movement situations – to

build the ability to perform technically accurate driven passes when in motion as necessary in match-play.

Exercise 6: Driven pass — target accuracy with movement *Duration: 6 minutes*

Two target zones (2 m x 2 m) are designated on the ground at a distance of 20 m from the passing line. Players take turns throwing the ball, trying to get it into the target area. After each pass the player follows his pass and picks the ball up, running back to rejoin the line. Players record their score as the number of successful passes out of 8 tries, adding a competitive personal challenge.

Sets: 1 set of 8 passes per player Rest interval: Natural recuperation while other players do their turns Coaching points 1. Follow-through into the target zone. The direction of the follow-through is the main factor in pass accuracy. Consistent contact point on the instep. Objective: Add an accuracy component to driven passing exercise, improving the combination of power production and directional control; give incentive competition and continuous progress statistics.

4.3.2.4 Physical Development Block — Explosive Strength

Duration: 20 minutes

Exercise 7: Squat jump series *Duration: 6 minutes*

Players start in a parallel squat stance (thighs parallel to the ground) and explode upward to maximum height, landing lightly on the balls of the feet with bent knees.

Landing mechanics are clearly instructed before take-off:

- Land on balls of feet, not heels first
- Bend knees and hips to absorb impact
- Control the landing – no collapse or too much forward lean

Sets: 3 × 6 reps Rest interval: 2 min between sets – maximal power output on each exercise requires complete recovery Resistance: Body weight only; suited for 12-14 age range; no weighted resistance at this developmental period Intensity: Going all out on each leap, trying for max height Coaching points: Deep squat before leap, not shallow squat. Explosive triple extension of hip, knee and ankle upon launch. Controlled, gentle landing each time. The main muscle groups used are the quadriceps (knee extension during take-off), gluteus maximus (hip

extension during take-off), gastrocnemius and soleus (ankle extension during take-off).

Objective: Develop explosive leg power via maximal intensity plyometric loading of the quadriceps and gluteal muscle groups to establish the physical basis for both sprint acceleration and driven pass power creation.

Exercise 8: Broad jump series *Duration: 5 minutes*

Participants execute maximal horizontal wide leaps, commencing at a two-foot takeoff and concluding with a two-foot landing, emphasizing the enhancement of horizontal distance via a pronounced forward lean at takeoff and robust hip extension.

Three sets of four repetitions Rest period: 90 seconds between sets Resistance: Exclusively body weight Intensity: Optimal exertion — maximal horizontal displacement in each leap

Guidance notes: The contribution of arm swing is a vigorous backward and forward motion of the arms during takeoff to enhance horizontal velocity; the forward body lean during takeoff is roughly 45 degrees; landing balance requires equal weight distribution on both feet, ensuring stability and control. Primary muscle groups engaged: Gluteus maximus, hamstrings (hip extension for horizontal propulsion), quadriceps (takeoff extension), core muscles (trunk stability during flight) Objective: Enhance the explosive strength of the posterior chain — specifically the gluteal and hamstring muscles — to improve sprinting acceleration and the hip extension power necessary for effective passing actions.

Exercise 9: Single-leg resistance band squat *Duration: 9 minutes*

Participants are given modest resistance bands (not at peak resistance) for the 12-14 age group and placed around both legs just above the knees. Then they complete a single leg squat on each leg making sure the knee stays in line with the second toe during the full movement .

The resistance band adds medial resistance which turns on the gluteus medius and the hip abductors. The muscles that are needed to keep the legs stable while making a passing action.

Three sets of eight reps per leg. Rest interval: 60 seconds between sets (active rest-light stretching or ambulation) Resistance: Light resistance band for young athletes. Main

resistance is body weight while band provides proprioceptive and medial stabilizing

difficulties. Coaching guidelines: Knee alignment — the knee should align precisely over the second toe throughout the movement; prevent inward collapse (valgus collapse); upright trunk — avoid excessive forward lean; controlled descent and explosive ascension. Primary

muscles worked: Quadriceps (knee extension), gluteus maximus and medius (hip extension and stabilization), core musculature (trunk stability) Goal: Develop the strength and stability of the leg on one leg, i.e., the leg supporting the body during passing operations. This is a direct exposure to the physical foundation of balance and postural control (Section 3.3), which is a key element in passing accuracy.

4.3.2.5 Integration Block

Duration: 15 minutes

Exercise 10: 4v4 driven pass game — long passing conditions *Duration: 15 minutes*

Two teams of 4 play in a 40m by 30m zone with miniature goals. One requirement is set: one of the passes in a team possession sequence must be a driving pass of at least 20 meters.

Teams are granted additional points for driven passes that are precise (hitting the target player with little movement needed) and technically well performed (flat, solid trajectory).

The condition requires players to discover and generate opportunities to make driven passes within the natural flow of the game – developing the tactical decision-making involved with long-pass selection as well as the technical execution developed earlier in the session.

Sets: 2 x 7 min. Rest between sets: 1 minute Coaching points: Identification of the right timing for a driven pass – when a teammate is available in space at distance; technical quality of driven passes under pressure in a game – keeping the proper hip rotation and follow through under time and defensive pressure Objective: To transfer the passing technique learned in controlled exercises to game-realistic competitive situations, and to combine the technical and physical goals of the session in a motivationally engaging game format.

CONCLUDING PART

Duration: 15 minutes

Exercise 11: Light technical cooldown — inside-foot passing *Duration: 4 minutes*

The players revert to comfortable inside-foot passing in pairs from 8-10 meters. The pace is comfortable and leisurely, enabling a physical slowing and a psychological shift from the intense game intensity of the integration block.

Objective: Gradual cardiovascular recovery; neuromuscular relaxation; maintenance of positive ball contact at the end of the exercise.

Exercise 12: Comprehensive static stretching *Duration: 9 minutes*

Extended static stretching circuit with particular emphasis on the muscle groups loaded during the plyometric and resistance exercises:

Stretch	Duration	Target
Deep hip flexor lunge stretch (each leg)	40 seconds each	Hip flexors — plyometric loading
Pigeon pose glute stretch (each leg)	40 seconds each	Gluteus maximus — primary plyometric muscle
Seated hamstring stretch (each leg)	35 seconds each	Hamstrings — broad jump loading
Lateral quad stretch lying (each leg)	35 seconds each	Quadriceps — squat jump loading
Calf stretch on step (each leg)	30 seconds each	Gastrocnemius — takeoff loading
Child's pose lower back	30 seconds	Lumbar spine — core loading

Objective: Restore resting muscle length following plyometric loading; reduce delayed-onset muscle soreness; support recovery in preparation for the next session

Exercise 13: Session review *Duration: 2 minutes*

Today we addressed two related traits, the driving pass and explosive strength. The crucial technical feature in the driven pass is the rotation of the hip – the strength comes from turning the hip through the ball, rather than merely kicking with the leg.

If you're after strength – the squat jumps and wide leaps provide precisely the explosive power that gives your driven pass its force and your sprint its first-step explosion.

The most crucial thing I witnessed today was that as you became fatigued in the game, your driven passes turned lofted – you stopped rotating the hip properly. This is something we need

to focus on – keeping the hip rotation even when physically demanding.”

2-3 participants who showed individual growth throughout the session get favorable remarks.

Session 2 Complete Load Summary:

Parameter	Value
Total duration	90 minutes
Introductory part	18 minutes
Main part	57 minutes
Concluding part	15 minutes
Plyometric volume	30 squat jumps + 12 broad jumps per player
Resistance exercises	24 single-leg squats per leg per player
Passing contacts	120–150 per player
Primary muscle groups loaded	Quadriceps, gluteus maximus and medius, hamstrings, core
Intensity level	Moderate-High

4.3.3 TRAINING SESSION PLAN No. 3

Institution:	Mārupes Novada Sporta skola
Group:	MT-3 Football
Age group:	12–14 years
Number of players:	12
Date:	March (Spring Specific Preparatory Stage)
Session duration:	90 minutes
Training venue:	Outdoor artificial turf field
Equipment:	12 footballs, cones, agility poles, bibs, stopwatch, assessment recording

sheets

4.3.3.1 Session Objectives

Objective 1 – Technical To develop and solidify one touch passing technique at an advanced level of difficulty with specific focus on body form prior to reception, first touch direction and weight and technical execution under defensive pressure in game realistic settings.

Objective 2 – Physical: Speed endurance – the ability to reproduce high speed actions for the length of match play. The major loading of the cardiovascular system, fast-twitch muscle fibres and anaerobic energy system via repeated sprint interval workouts.

4.3.3.2 Macrocycle Context

This workshop is scheduled in the Spring Specific Preparatory Stage (March, Mesocycle 7). This is the last window of preparation before the competitive season kicks off in April. The training intensity is at the highest preparatory level and the technical and physical requirements are quite similar to the circumstances of a competitive match . Players should be able to do advanced technical drills and to maintain high intensity physical effort during the whole session.

INTRODUCTORY / PREPARATORY PART

Duration: 18 minutes

Organizational moment (2 minutes)

Today is an advanced session – we are two weeks away from the start of the competitive season. Let's make every day feel like match conditions. The technical emphasis is on the one-touch pass, the quickest and most challenging passing talent. “Speed endurance is the physical emphasis – to sustain high speed activities for the full 90 minutes of a match.”

Safety Briefing: Adequate warm-up is required before to work at maximal intensities for speed endurance. Players must report any physical pain immediately.

Exercise 1: Rondo warm-up — 5v2 *Duration: 10 minutes*

Players begin immediately with a 5v2 rondo in a 12-meter x 10-meter area, which helps to ignite passing skills, decision-making and competitive intensity from the first moments of the practice. Two defenders try to win the ball, five outside players keep control utilizing a maximum of two touches (one touch is preferred).

After 5 minutes the zone becomes 10m x 8m, which makes the game more tough and faster. Sets: 2 sets, 5 min, different pairings of defenders Rest interval: 30 seconds between sets for short coaching input Coaching points: (1) Body shape prior to receipt – rotating the body to observe both ball and passing choices prior to ball arriving; communication – asking for ball, indicating movement; one-touch passes when body position and pass option allow for smooth execution Aim: To activate passing technique, decision-making and competitive intensity all at once. The rondo format warms up the body gradually while setting the technical emphasis of the exercise.

Exercise 2: Dynamic activation circuit *Duration: 6 minutes*

Exercise	Repetitions	Intensity
Lateral shuffle with arm drive	15 meters x 2	Moderate
Forward sprint + deceleration	20 meters x 3	Progressive to 80%
Explosive lateral step-overs (each direction)	10 each	Moderate-high
Ankle hops — single leg (each leg)	15 each	Moderate
3-cone acceleration — 5 meters each	4 repetitions	90%

Objective: Elevate neuromuscular activation to near-match intensity in preparation for the high-intensity speed endurance work in the main part; activate the fast-twitch muscle fibers that will be loaded throughout the session

MAIN PART

Duration: 57 minutes

4.3.3.3 Technical Development Block — One-Touch Passing

Duration: 22 minutes

Exercise 3: Body shape drill — open body reception *Duration: 5 minutes*

Players work in triangles of 3, sides 10 meters. The activity is aimed particularly at body contour before reception:

Player A passes to B. Before the ball gets to them, Player B must turn their body into an open position – turned so that they can view both the incoming ball AND Player C at the same time. Player B plays a one-touch pass to Player C who has been in sight all the while.

The open body posture is the requirement for efficient one-touch passing, and one-touch accuracy is essentially guessing if you don't see the following pass choice before you receive.

2 x 2.5 minute sets, rotating locations Repetitions: Approximately 15 touches per player, per set Rest: 30 seconds between sets Coaching points: Get your body open before the ball comes to you – not after; Use the verbal cue “show your chest to the field, not to the ball”; Scan the possibilities available when the ball is travelling Objective: To establish the proper habit of an open body stance as the crucial precondition for one-touch passing – the most basic requirement for excellent one-touch play.

Exercise 4: One-touch passing combination — 4-player pattern *Duration: 8 minutes*

Four players are positioned at the corners of a 12-meter square. We build a certain passing pattern:

- Player A pass to Player B (one touch, adj corner)
- Player B one-touch passes diagonally to Player D
- Player D one touch pass to Player C Player C one touches diagonally to Player A

The pattern repeats constantly . All passes are one touch . After 4 min the direction of the diagonal is reversed.

Sets: min. 2x4 Repetitions: Players will attempt 20-25 one-touch passes every set Rest interval: 1 minute rest between sets Coaching points: Weight of the one touch pass – It should be firm enough to reach the intended target accurately but not so powerful that the recipient cannot control it Appropriate surface of the foot – Inside of the foot for shorter passes to adjacent players, instep for diagonal passes Body rotation – The body must be open and turned prior to the arrival of the ball Objective: Develop the technical execution of one touch passing within a structured combo pattern – improving the accuracy, weight management and foot surface selection needed for efficient one touch play.

Exercise 5: One-touch under pressure — passing with shadow defender *Duration: 9 minutes*

Groups of 4 work inside a 15x10 metre zone. 3 v 1 possession with 1 touch versus 1 active defense. The defense may intercept passes and win the ball – realistic pressure on the passing players.

If the defender wins the ball, he joins the passing group and the player who committed the mistake becomes the new defender.

Progression after 4,5 min. The zone is decreased to 12m x 8m and this increases the strain greatly on the passing players and requires a better technical accuracy and decision speed.

Sets: 2 x 4.5 mins Rest: 1 minute between sets Coaching points: Misdirection of pass – body feints and eye contact misdirection before to one touch pass; choice of pass option to move ball away from defender's recovery position; retaining technical quality under increasing pressure Objective: Develop one-touch passing technique under active defensive pressure in game-realistic situations – the most challenging environment for technical execution and the most direct preparation for professional match play.

4.3.3.4 Physical Development Block — Speed Endurance

Duration: 20 minutes

Exercise 6: Repeated sprint series — short recovery *Duration: 12 minutes*

Players conduct repeated 20m sprint repeats with insufficient recuperation between attempts – building the ability to sustain sprint pace over several repetitions with increasing tiredness.

Protocol:• 20 meter sprint (maximum effort)

- Walk back to start (active recovery about 15 seconds)
- Sprint again immediately

Sets 4 sets of 5 reps = 20 sprints total per player Distance per rep: 20 meters Total sprint volume: 400 meters / player Rest period between repetitions: 15 seconds Walk-back recovery (incomplete recovery is deliberate) Rest period between sets: 2 minutes (partial recovery between sets) Intensity: 95-100% peak effort on each repeat. Speed endurance training can only provide the required adaptation if intensity is maintained throughout tiredness.

Resistance: Only body weight Coaching points: Sprint mechanics under stress: “when you are tired, your technique breaks down first — focus on keeping your forward lean and arm drive even on the last reps.” Mental commitment: Fighting that natural urge to minimize effort as tiredness develops. 1st physiological load: anaerobic glycolytic energy system, fast-twitch muscle fiber fatigue resistance, cardiovascular system recovery ability Aim: To develop speed endurance, the ability to undertake repeated maximum sprint efforts with incomplete recovery, to directly replicate the repeated sprint demands of elite football match play.

Exercise 7: Speed endurance circuit — football-specific *Duration: 8 minutes*

A football-specific speed endurance circuit is constructed by deploying cones in precise locations across an area of 30 m × 20 m. Players go around the circuit continuously for the time specified:

Circuit sequence (1 full circuit - approx. 45 sec):

1. Full speed sprint from cone A to cone B – 20 meters
2. Lateral shuffle from cone B to cone C – 10 meters (high intensity)
3. Backward jog from cone C to cone D – 10 meters (moderate – partial recovery)
4. Sprint from cone D to cone A – 15 meters (highest effort)
5. Stop at cone A, short – 5 seconds (little recovery)
6. Repeat

Sets: 4 full circuits per player Rest between circuits: 45 seconds Approximate total time: 8 minutes Intensity: Maximum effort on sprints, regulated effort on lateral and backward

Coaching points: Staying up to speed on the last circuit despite accumulated weariness – “the last circuit is where the real training is”; controlled deceleration before changing directions – don’t trade injury-safe movement mechanics for speed. Primary physiological loading: repeated sprint ability. Multi-directional speed endurance. Cardiovascular recovery efficiency. Objective: To develop football-specific speed endurance based upon the multi-directional movement patterns, direction changes and various intensities associated with genuine match

play – offering a more game-realistic speed endurance stimulus than straight-line sprint repeats.

4.3.3.5 Integration Block — One-Touch Passing Under Fatigue

Duration: 15 minutes

Exercise 8: Fatigued one-touch possession game — 5v5 *Duration: 15 minutes*

Immediately after the speed endurance block a 5v5 possession game is played in a 35 meter by 25 meter zone when players are physically tired. The condition: Each pass must be a one-touch pass. The side that keeps the ball 5 consecutive one touch passes gets 1 point.

This exercise is the most rigorous in the session and directly targets the essential performance characteristic of sustaining technical passing standards under physical tiredness – highlighted in Section 2.2 as one of the most significant predictors of second-half football performance.

Sets: 2 x 7 minutes. Rest: 1 min between sets Coaching focus: Body shape - keep body shape open when tired and tempted to go direct/simple; pass weight - control force on one touch passes when leg muscles are fatigued; decision speed - commit to pass option before receiving as fatigue reduces cognitive processing time available Objective: Develop the most critical and game-specific integration of the session's two objectives – technically demanding one-touch passing while physically fatigued from repeated high-intensity speed work; this exercise most directly replicates the conditions of the second half of a competitive match.

CONCLUDING PART

Duration: 15 minutes

Exercise 9: Active recovery jogging *Duration: 4 minutes)*

Players jog gently in a group around the perimeter of the field – one full lap at a totally relaxed pace. No ball, no workouts – pure cardiovascular deceleration after the high intensity demands of the integration period.

Coaching points: Slow and relaxed breathing; releasing muscle tension; shift from competitive intensity to recovery mode Objective: Enhance cardiovascular recovery; lower blood lactate levels with continuing modest aerobic exercise.

Exercise 10: Comprehensive static stretching *Duration: 9 minutes*

Extended static stretching with emphasis on the muscle groups most heavily loaded during speed endurance work:

Stretch	Duration	Target
Lying hip flexor stretch (each leg)	40 seconds each	Hip flexors — sprint loading
Seated hamstring stretch (each leg)	40 seconds each	Hamstrings — repeated sprint loading
Pigeon pose glute stretch (each leg)	40 seconds each	Gluteus — sprint power muscle
Standing quad stretch (each leg)	35 seconds each	Quadriceps — knee extension loading
Soleus stretch bent-knee (each leg)	30 seconds each	Deep calf — high sprint volume
Seated spinal rotation (each direction)	30 seconds each	Thoracic spine — rotational passing action
Supine total body stretch	30 seconds	Full body decompression

Objective: Support recovery from high-volume sprint loading; reduce delayed onset muscle soreness; restore hip flexor and hamstring length for the next session

Exercise 11: Session review and pre-competitive season motivation *Duration: 2 minutes*

“This was the hardest session before the competitive season starts. Good work.

Today's main message: your technical quality while fresh is already excellent – your one-touch passing in the first exercises was accurate and perfectly timed. The issue is to maintain that quality in the closing 20 minutes of a game when you're exhausted.

That’s precisely what Exercise 8 was about — and I observed actual effort to keep your body form and pass weight even when you were tired. That trait wins you games in April.

Two weeks to go till our first competitive match. Next session we start our last match preparation. “Come prepared.

Session 3 Complete Load Summary:

Parameter	Value
Total duration	90 minutes
Introductory part	18 minutes
Main part	57 minutes
Concluding part	15 minutes
Total sprint volume	400 meters (repeated sprint series) + circuit sprints
One-touch passing contacts	100–130 per player
Primary physiological systems loaded	Anaerobic glycolytic, cardiovascular, fast-twitch fiber endurance
Intensity level	High — Competitive

4.3.3.6 Summary of All Three Training Session Plans

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Macrocycle stage	Autumn General Prep	Autumn Specific Prep	Spring Specific Prep
Technical objective	Inside-foot pass — beginner/intermediate	Driven instep pass — intermediate	One-touch pass — advanced
Physical objective	Speed — acceleration	Explosive strength	Speed endurance
Primary muscle groups	Hip flexors, quadriceps, hamstrings	Quadriceps, gluteus, core	Cardiovascular, fast-twitch fibers
Intensity level	Moderate–High	Moderate–High	High–Competitive
Session duration	90 minutes	90 minutes	90 minutes

Prajwal_Vazhoor Praveen_
(first/last name of the student)

Short Cycle Course
(course, group)

Training/lesson plan Nr. 1

Type of sport:

_____Football_____

Group, training year: _____U13_____

Place: _____Marupe Sports Novada_____

Skola _____

Date: _____07/05/2026_____

Time: from 01/04/2026

until _____30/04/26_____

Grade: _____

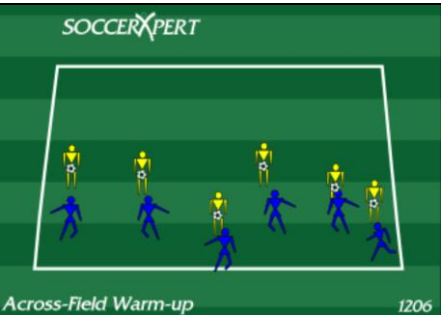
Decipherment / Full name (clarification of initials))

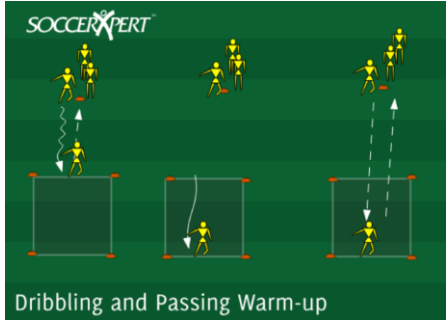
Tasks (indicate at least 2 tasks, binding to the internship base annual, monthly plan):

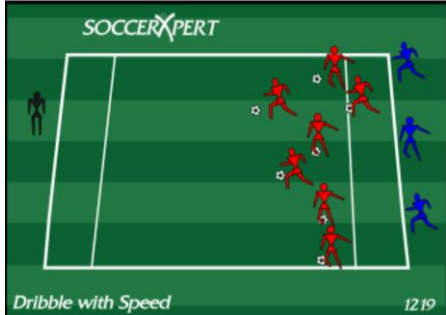
1. Teach- Passing and Speed Technical improvement
 2. Continue teaching how to Improve Passing and Speed in a better level
 3. Repeat every week
 4. Fullfill a good range of motion and environment of the game to make the right passes and use of speed.
 5. Develop (indicate physical characteristics and in which part they are developed)
- The players will be developing mentally and physically making right decisions in the pitch as well as the right way of using the lower body skills.

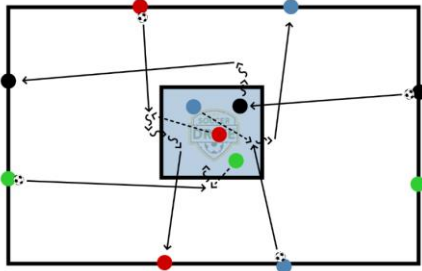
Necessary equipment: Discs, Cone, Footballs, Training sticks, Small goals,

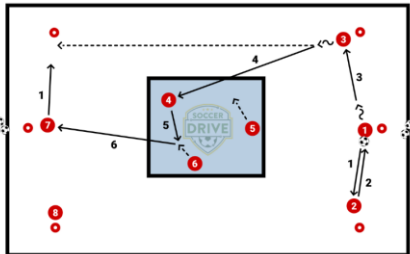
The result to be achieved in the training/class: The result to be achieved is to make the right passes with the right precision and at the right time with the best technique possible, with the usage of speed and agility being the primary technical movement.

The result to be achieved in the training/class				
Content justification	Nr.	Content (exercises, drills, games and others)	Dosage	Methodological instructions (including images, diagrams, ways of moving)
		IEVADA-SAGATAVOTĀJA DAĻA/INTRODUCTION-PREPARATION PART	min.	
Warm up- Where all the players will be having combination of movement, agility, passing and ball mastery techniques to be followed.	1.	Across the feild warm up: This soccer drill is mainly focused on technical skills during warm up. This is a great drill to do at the beginning of each game. Equipment Needed: Disc Cones, Football balls. Instructions: The player 2 holds the ball in their hands and jogs backward across the field while tossing the ball to their partner. The player 1 jogs forward and receives the ball and returns the ball to their partner. When the players reach the other touchline, the roles should be reversed and return to the other touchline. The players should work on one of the following skills each time across the field: Volley the ball back to the thrower with the inside of the foot - alternating right and left. Volley the ball back to the thrower with the instep (shoe laces) - alternating right and left. Trapping the ball with the thigh and returning it to the thrower. Trapping with the chest and	10 mins	 Good body positioning behind the ball. Controlled touches before playing the ball back. Getting a good warm-up. Variations: Reverse the direction of the thrower and the receiver where the thrower jogs forward and the receiver jogs backwards.

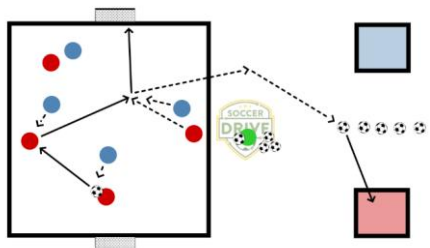
		returning it to the thrower. Heading back to the thrower – should make the receiver do jumping headers as well.		
	2.	DRIBBLING AND PASSING WARM-UP DRILL. This dribbling and passing drill is a great start to a dribbling or passing training session and will quickly get the blood pumping and players legs warm. Setup: Create multiple 8x8 grid about 8 yards from the sideline. Place a starting cone on the sidelines aligned in the center of the box. Split the teams into 3-4 players each grid. Soccer Tic-Tac-Toe Warm-up	7-8 mins	 Dribbling and Passing Warm-up The first player in line starts with the ball and dribbles to the first set of cones, cuts the ball, and returns the ball back to the next player in line. The working player then backpedals to the next set of cones. The ball is then played back to the working player who has a touch and then again returns the ball to the next player waiting. The next player then repeats the same steps as above. Repeat for 7-8 minutes or until players are warmed up.
	3)	Soccer Tic-Tac-Toe Warm-up: Soccer Tic-Tac-Toe is a fun warmup drill that focuses on making good decisions while under pressure.	10 mins	 Soccer Tic-Tac-Toe This tic-tac-toe game is designed

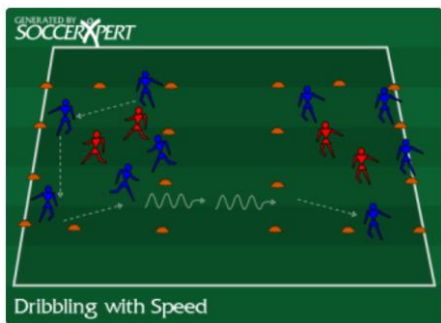
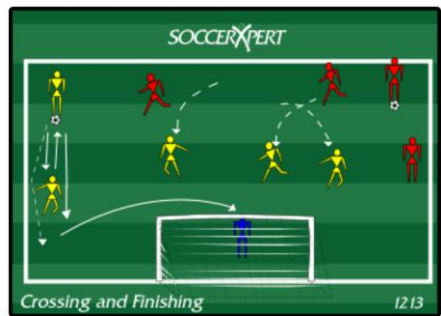
		Setup: Set two cones about 3 yards apart as the starting point. Using cones, create a tic-tac-toe board about 10 yards from the starting cones. Divide the team into two groups. Give the first three players in group one yellow pinnies, and the first three players in group two red pinnies. This will be a relay style race to win tic-tac-toe. Dribbling with Speed: This dribbling exercise that works on speed dribbling and getting the ball under control while dribbling with speed.		to allow the players to have fun, while learning to think quickly under the pressure of the other team. Think fast and be strategic in the placement of the pinnie. Variations:
	4)	Start with a 40-yard field with a 5-yard “buffer zone” on each end. Three players without balls begin at the back of the buffer zone. The remaining players start at the beginning of the buffer zone with a soccer ball each. Instructions: On the coaches command, the players with the balls dribble at full speed to the other buffer zone and get three touches on the ball in the far buffer zone. The 3 players without soccer balls attempt to stop the dribblers by stealing their ball or knocking the ball over the end LINE. If the dribbling players can control the ball in the opposite buffer zone with three touches on the ball, they get to go again	10 mins	 Not only doesn't this activity work on speed dribbling but also it's great for: Shielding, Turns, Change of pace, Change of direction, and an Excellent fitness workout.

		in the next round. If the players with the ball lose the ball, they join the defenders in the next round. The last player with a ball wins. With 15 players you can play this game 5 times to have each player have a chance starting as a defensive player and each player has 4 chances starting as an attacking player.		
Content justification	Nr.	Content (exercises, drills, games and others)	Dosage	Methodological instructions (including images, diagrams, ways of moving)
	MAIN PART			
Moving to the main part where the players will be moving and passing with more focus. The players will be focusing on improving the main technical skills. The passing and the speed is the main technical movement which the players are focusing and improving in this session.	1.	Passing, first touch and movement. PURPOSE OF SESSION: To receive passes with a focus on the direction of first touch. INITIAL SET-UP: • Players in groups of three. • One player plays centrally, with his two team mates playing outside the grid on opposite sides. • Each group has one ball each. Instructions: Central player receives the ball from outside player and passes it in turn to other outside team mate. • If the central player receives in the inner grid, his first touch must take him outside. • If the central player receives outside the inner grid,	15 mins	 Coaching points: 1. Pass and receive with intelligent first touch. 2. Be aware of the movements of your teammates. 3. Play with an open body shape and be able to play in all directions.

		his first touch must take him inside it. • Rotate players around every 90 seconds.		
	2.	Hexa Possession Passing Drill. Six cones are set up in the shape of a hexagon (see diagram) with a small zone in the center. One side of the field has players at each cone, while the other side has an open cone in a corner. Three players are stationed in the small center zone, and must stay inside of the zone during play. The drill starts with a double pass combination with Players 1 and 2. After receiving, Player 1 turns and passes to Player 3. From there the ball is transferred to the other side of the field by using the players in the central zone. One player in the central zone serves as the target for the first pass from Player 3, while the other two players support him. The target receives (Player 4), plays a back pass to a support player (Player 6), and he passes to the player on the middle cone (Player 7). Player 3 sprints to the opposite side after passing, and arrives at the empty cone in time to receive the last pass. Upon completion, the drill re-	15min	 Coaching Points: 1. Support the target player from the correct distance. 2. Support at an angle that sets up the next pass. 3. Look to make one touch passess whenever possible.

	starts in the opposite direction. 3) 3v1 Speed Passing Soccer Drills. Set up : In each grid, there are three attackers and a line of three defenders. To start the drill, the first defender plays a ball to the attacker in the opposite corner, and then runs into the grid to try and win it back. The attackers count how many consecutive passes they can make until the defender wins the ball. When the defender gets possession, he tries to dribble out of the grid. Attackers can win the ball back before he gets out. Upon completion, a new ball is immediately played in and the game restarts with a new defender. Play for two minutes, and then rotate the groups of defenders and attackers. Make grid smaller or larger depending on ability of players.	15 mins	The game gets more intense when the speed of the game will be increased which will make the players to pass quick and precise. Improvisation: 1. Width and Depth – Expand the midfield zone to create
	4) Attacking at speed. Set Up: The two teams start 4v3 in the midfield zone and 1v2 in the attacking zone. The attackers must make three passes before playing the ball in. When they do, three attackers cross over,	15 mins	

		creating a 4v2. When the attacking team makes a back pass in the attacking zone, all the defenders cross over to create a 5v4. When defenders win the ball in the attacking zone, they must work it back out into the midfield zone and re-set the 4v3. When the defenders win the ball in the midfield zone, they can play immediately into the attacking zone and go 2v1 to goal.		passing opportunities. 2. “Switching Off” – Players in the penalty area must stay involved in play and not become spectators. 3. Speed of Play – Make positive first touches to goal and attack at speed.
Content justification	Nr.	Content (exercises, drills, games and others)	Dosage	Methodological instructions (including images, diagrams, ways of moving)
	FINAL PART			
In the final part we wind up with interesting tactical games and improvising what the players have been taught in the whole session.	1.	Passing Game- The two teams play 4v4 on a small field. When a player scores a goal or when a coach wants to reward a player for effort, the player comes off to the side of the field to try and pass a ball into the other teams' zone. When the balls are gone from the middle, any ball not in a zone can be passed. Once all of the balls are in one zone or the other, the game is over. Factors to focus, 1. Use the inside of the foot for the most accuracy. 2. Follow thru towards the	10 mins	 1. Use the inside of the foot for the most accuracy. 2. Follow thru towards the target after you strike the ball. 3. Look up at the target one more time before you strike the ball. Progressions: 1. After all of the balls are in the zones, play an extra 10 minutes

		target after you strike the ball. 3. Look up at the target one more time before you strike the ball			and pass balls from the opponent's zone back into your own.
	2.	Dribbling with Speed, Recognizing When to Dribble. This dribbling soccer drill will help players recognize when to make runs and get comfortable making those runs with speed. Setup: Create two 20X20 yard grids about 12 yards apart. One grid starts with five attackers and two defenders. The other grid starts with four attackers and two defenders. The 5v2 grid will start the play.	10 mins		Carry ball at speed. Make the right decision when to dribble across the grid. Make good decisions when entering the opposite grid. Make the correct decision to keep possession. Players in the opposite grid should get wide to give space and options to the advancing attacker.
	3.	Crossing and Finishing: This crossing and finishing drill focuses on attacking within the 18 yard box. This soccer drill mainly focuses on crossing, shooting, and heading. Setup: Create five lines across the field about 5 yards from the penalty area. Place your crossing players on the outside lines and your attacking central players in the middle three lines. Instruct the middle three lines to attack a particular area of the goal (i.e...	15mins		Instruction: The first player in the crossing line steps out in front of the lines facing the crossers to become a passing player.

		back-post, near-post).		The next player in the crossing line is the crosser. The crosser passes the ball to the passing player who plays the ball back to the crosser. The crosser then plays a ball (to himself) past the passing player into the corner of the field. He then sprints past the passer and crosses his pass into the middle players who should be running onto the cross. The crosser now becomes the passing player and play repeats. Alternate the crosses from the right and left sides.
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Student's self-evaluation of the conducted training/lesson:

Succeeded	Failed
In this training session the students succeeded well understanding the technical skills such as Speed, passing and the right usage at the right time. They also understood how important are those technical skills in the football game and if used them with precision the effect in the football is great. Students also could see that when the right follow through after the pass was used they were having better passing ability as well as they could give amazing crosses which got combined with good speed and finishing which made them realize the tactical aspect of the football.	In this training session the students found it hard to find the rhythm while having attacking scenarios. In this training session the fact that using high speed of acceleration and crossing for the attacking scenarios makes the players lose balance which makes the attacking scenarios a big chance loss.

/ student's signature/

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5 SELF-ASSESSMENT OF QUALIFICATION PAPER DEVELOPMENT

The production of this certification work was a complete, hard and professionally rewarding process, requiring the integration of theoretical knowledge, practical coaching experience, research skills and reflective ability in all phases of its completion. In this self-assessment the growth process is discussed in regard to each of the primary tasks of the qualifying work, by assessing what was accomplished, what difficulties were met and what professional insights were obtained via the process of researching, preparing and writing this work.

5.1 Task 1: Description of the Sports Organization and Training Process

The first task of this qualification work was to describe the internship base in detail – Mārupes Novada Sporta skola – its history, organisational structure, legal framework, internal regulations, safety requirements and cooperation with parents and the community.

To do this assignment, it was necessary to make observations and recordings throughout the internship term and to study the official documents, rules and operating processes of the institution. The careful examination of the organisational setting of the sports school helped me to comprehend how a professional sports education institution operated outside the local training environment. Before this work, my concentration as a growing coach was concentrated mostly on the training process itself – the sessions, the exercises, the players. To write this chapter I had to widen that view, and see that good coaching practice is part of a wider organisational, legal and social context that frames and supports everything that occurs on the training ground.

One of the challenges in completing this work was sorting the amount of material about the institution into a cohesive logically constructed chapter. The solution was to approach the description in a systematic way, using the predefined structure of the qualification work template and ensuring that each required component – history, legal basis, regulations, safety, documentation and parental cooperation – received appropriate and balanced coverage.

The main professional lesson from this work was the understanding that documentation and regulatory compliance are not bureaucratic burdens, but critical professional duties that safeguard players and coaches. Understanding the legal framework for sport education and the need of good record-keeping would help me in my professional career as a trained coach.

5.2 Task 2: Research on the Development of Special Physical Qualities

— Speed

The second main aim of this qualifying work was a thorough theoretical study of speed as a distinctive physical attribute in football, followed by a practical research part of the study of the dynamics of speed growth among students of the MT-3 training group.

The theoretical aspect of this study was the most academic difficult part of the whole qualifying process. In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the concept of special physical qualities, the sensitive periods of speed development, the relationship between speed and technique, age and gender characteristics, training methods and means, load dosage principles and evaluation methods, it required extensive reading, synthesis of multiple sources and the ability to translate abstract theoretical principles into practical coaching knowledge.

I found this a tough and very satisfying exercise. Before I started this work my understanding of speed development was largely intuitive, I knew that speed was important and that sprint exercises developed it but I did not have a systematic theoretical framework to understand why specific methods work, when different training approaches are most appropriate and how the dosage of load needs to be regulated to maximise adaptation. In order to write Chapter 2, I had to deliberately design this framework and I am certain that it considerably improves my theoretical grasp of speed development.

The most useful portion of the work in a professional setting was the practical research component, which included planning and conducting the 8-week speed development program and assessing the effects of the program by means of standardised testing. This process of completing initial assessments, developing a periodized intervention, and monitoring results gave a direct, practical experience with the evidence-based coaching cycle that characterises excellent professional practice.

The study findings showed a clear and consistent increase for all three speed evaluation tools: 10-meter acceleration, 30-meter sprint and Illinois Agility Test with the group average moving from average to excellent rating category in all tests. This result offered clear empirical proof of the success of the training techniques utilised, and also supplied me with a

fair amount of professional confidence in the validity of the theoretical framework on which the program was founded.

A practical difficulty was establishing uniformity in testing between the first and final evaluations such that settings, timing processes and player preparation were standardised enough to compare findings meaningfully. In future studies I would pay more systematic attention to recording the specific circumstances of each testing session in order to increase the trustworthiness of the comparison analysis.

The most interesting discovery was that Player 6 showed below-expected progress in all the speed tests. Instead of viewing this as a failure of the training program, I came to interpret it as a reflection of the individual variability in biological maturation and developmental readiness that characterises youth sport, and as a reminder that effective coaching requires individualised attention in addition to group programming. This understanding will have a huge impact on how I will analyse and design training for individual athletes in my future coaching practice.

5.3 Research on Technical Preparedness — Passing Technique

The second main aim of this qualifying work was a thorough theoretical study of speed as a distinctive physical attribute in football, followed by a practical research part of the study of the dynamics of speed growth among students of the MT-3 training group.

The theoretical aspect of this study was the most academic difficult part of the whole qualifying process. In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the concept of special physical qualities, the sensitive periods of speed development, the relationship between speed and technique, age and gender characteristics, training methods and means, load dosage principles and evaluation methods, it required extensive reading, synthesis of multiple sources and the ability to translate abstract theoretical principles into practical coaching knowledge.

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5.4 Task 4: Training Work Planning

The fourth task was to design a comprehensive training planning system that included an annual macrocycle plan, a detailed weekly microcycle plan, and three separate training session plans covering the full range of session objectives, exercises, dosage parameters, and coaching points.

This was the most practically-oriented part of the qualifying process, and it meant that all the theoretical and research information that had been accumulated in the previous chapters had to be merged into tangible planning papers that could be implemented. When developing the annual plan I had to think of the whole training year as a coherent developmental journey. I systematically considered the way in which different training periods build on each other, how physical and technical goals are sequenced and balanced over months and how competitive demands shape the distribution of training content and load.

The most time-consuming part of the planning work was the preparation of comprehensive session plans. In my coaching career, I had never before done the level of planning accuracy required to draft plans that specified the exercises, the order of the exercises, the precise number of sets and repetitions, the rest periods, the resistance parameters, the coaching points, and the developmental objectives for each exercise. In this process I learnt that the quality of a training session is very much pre-determined before it ever starts – by the amount of thinking that has gone into organising it. I believe that the planning principles used to create these session plans will greatly enhance the quality of my future coaching practice.

One challenge of the planning task was to ensure that the three session plans were sufficiently diverse in terms of the technical objectives – inside-foot passing, driven instep passing and one-touch passing – at suitably differentiated levels of difficulty to match the different macrocycle stages in which each session was embedded. Developing my capacity to plan concurrently on many levels included a diligent cross-referencing of the yearly plan, weekly plan and individual sessions, linking the session content specifically to the applicable macrocycle stage.

5.5 Overall Reflections on the Qualification Work Development Process

Considering the qualifying work as a whole, there are certain general conclusions that will have a big impact on my growth as a professional football coach.

The relevance of theoretical basis Before starting this job, I underestimated the extent to which profound theoretical knowledge improves the quality of practical coaching. Studying the theoretical foundations of speed development, motor learning, technical acquisition, biomechanical analysis and periodisation has given me an intellectual platform for making more informed, consistent and justifiable coaching judgements. Now I know not just what works in the practice of coaching, but why it works. This knowledge helps me to adapt and problem-solve better when typical tactics don't provide the desired outcomes.

The value of evidence-based practice The practical research part of this work introduced me to the discipline of evidence-based coaching – designing training interventions based on theoretical principles, measuring the results through standardised assessment, and using the results to evaluate and improve future practice. I want to use the cycle of plan – implement – evaluate – reflect – adapt as the benchmark of professional coaching practice throughout my career.

Integration of physical and technical development A key focus of this qualifying study is the profound, two-way interrelationship between physical attributes and technical abilities in football. Previously I had a tendency to see physical conditioning and technical training as relatively different realms that could be planned and handled separately. This work has revolutionised that view, and I now think of both dimensions simultaneously in the design of every training drill – not only asking “does this develop the physical quality I am targeting?” but also “does this develop the technical skill in a physically meaningful context?”.

Individual differences and differentiated coaching The consistent trend for both study components – some players improved greatly and others exhibited more moderate increases – highlighted the vital necessity of individualised coaching attention within group training programs. The group plan is the framework, but the quality of each athlete's growth depends on the coach's ability to see, evaluate and react to individual requirements within the group.

Problems faced The main problem during the preparation of the qualifying work was the amount and difficulty of the material that is necessary to be presented in all chapters concurrently. The need for uniformity of language, theoretical foundation and practical

examples throughout a publication of this length necessitated meticulous organization and constant revision. In future professional writing, I would pay more systematic attention to generating a precise content plan before writing, to guarantee stronger structural coherence from the onset.

Areas for additional growth This qualification work has shown numerous areas where I see the need for continuing professional learning. These include increased knowledge of sports nutrition and recovery as supporting factors in physical development; better understanding of tactical periodisation and how technical and physical preparation can be more fully integrated within tactical frameworks; and greater competence in video analysis tools for technical assessment, which I intend to develop through practical application during my future coaching work.

5.6 Conclusion of Self-Assessment

The elaboration of this qualification work has been a transforming professional experience that has improved my knowledge, my analytical ability and my practical competence as a football coach to a great extent. The systematic study of speed development and passing technique – from theoretical foundations, through practical research to training planning – has provided me with a body of knowledge and a set of professional tools that will directly contribute to the quality of my coaching practice from the earliest stages of my professional career.

I am especially pleased of the practical research aspect where tangible, quantifiable proof proved that the training techniques and ideas examined theoretically in this study lead to actual, significant progress in real athletes in a real training environment. This clear link between theory and practice is the most significant professional lesson I take from the completion of this degree work.

I submit my work with the understanding that it fulfils the essential requirements of the certification programme and with the commitment to further improve the professional knowledge and practical skills that successful youth football coaching entails.

6. EVALUATION OF THE QUALIFICATION PAPER

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DECLARATION OF HONOR

I, Prajwal Vazhoor Praveen declare,

that the internship documentation for the qualification “Sports Coach” prepared by me is my own work and is not plagiarism.

Signature: _____

Date: 22/05/2026

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