

Effects of Mental Skill Training Programme on Direct Free Kick of Grassroot Footballers in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract : The direct free kick is considered a great opportunity to score a goal but this is not always the case amidst Nigerian and other elite footballers. This study, therefore, examined the extent to which an 8 weeks mental skill training programme is effective for improving accuracy in direct free kick in football. Sixty (n-60) students of Pepsi Football Academy participated in the study. They were randomly distributed into two groups of positive self-talk group (intervention n-30) and control group (n-30). The instrument used in the collection of data include a standard football goal post while the research materials include a dummy soccer wall, a cord, an improvised vanishing spray, a clipboard, writing materials, a recording sheet, a self-talk log book, six standard 5 football, cones, an audiotape and a compact disc. The Weinberge and Gould (2011) mental skills training manual was used. The reliability coefficient of the apparatus following a pilot study stood at 0.72. Before the commencement of the mental skills training programme, the participants were asked to take six simulated direct free kick. At the end of each physical skills training session after the pre-test, the researcher spent at least 15 minutes with the groups exposing them to the intervention. The mental skills training programme alongside physical skills training took place in two different locations for the different groups under study, these included Agege Stadium Main bowl Football Pitch (Imagery Group), and Ogba Ijaye (Control Group). The mental skills training programme lasted for eight weeks. After the completion of the mental skills training programme, all the participants were asked to take another six simulated direct free kick attempts using the same field used for the pre-test to determine the efficacy of the treatments. The pre-test and post-test data were analysed using inferential statistics of t-test, while the alpha level was set at 0.05. The result revealed significant differences in t-test for positive self-talk and control group. Based on the findings, it is recommended that athletes should be exposed to positive self-talk alongside their normal physical skills training for quality delivery of accurate direct free kick during training and competition.

Keywords : accuracy, direct free kick, pepsi football academy, positive self-talk

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