METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO INCREASING STRESS RESISTANCE AND DECISION-MAKING SPEED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS

Karabayev Shukhrat Shokirzhanovich
Coach of the Namangan Football Academy
332shsh@gmail.com

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Abstract. *In modern football, the result depends not only on an athlete's physical and technical fitness but also on their mental stability, ability to focus, and quick decision-making. This thesis addresses the issues of evaluating and developing the psychological readiness of 11-12 -year-old football players. This involves the use of Stroop and Multitasking tests, as well as the application of a six-week special training program..*

Keywords. *football, young athletes, psychological preparation, stress resilience, attention, quick decision, Stroop test, multitasking.*

During a football match, the athlete must quickly assess the situation, observe the movements of opponents and partners, and make the right decision under pressure. Therefore, success depends not only on physical strength or technical skill but also on stress resistance, attention stability, and quick thinking.

During the period of 11-12 years, significant changes occur in the physical and psychological development of children. At this stage, it is necessary to consistently develop skills for adapting to game situations, managing emotions, and focusing on the task despite distractions. Therefore, it is advisable to include situations close to real game pressure, signal-based tasks, and group problem games in the sessions.

Stroop and Multitasking tests were used to assess the psychological readiness of football players. The Stroop test is based on distinguishing between the name of a color and the color in which it is written. It allows for the concentration of attention under the influence of distracting factors and assesses the speed and accuracy of the response. Results are measured by execution time and the number of errors made.

In the multitasking test, the player remembers the numbers the coach says while dribbling and then repeats them. This task tests the ability to simultaneously perform ball control, auditory, and memory tasks, i.e., distribution of attention and psychomotor compatibility.

At the beginning of the study, the indicators of 32 football players in the experimental and control groups were studied. In the Stroop test, the average result for the experimental group was 32.1 seconds, while for the control group, it was 32.8 seconds. In the multitasking test, the experimental group averaged 6.0 points, while the control group scored 5.7 points. Preliminary indicators indicate the need for further development of players' ability to concentrate, respond quickly to stressful situations, and coordinate multiple tasks. The high variability in multitasking results also indicates that there are individual differences between the preparation of players.

Based on the tests, a six-week program of special psychological exercises was developed for the experimental group. During the program, the complexity of workloads and tasks is gradually increased. The exercises cover the following areas:

- Rapid response to visual and auditory signals;

- Distribution of attention between several tasks;
- quick thinking and decision-making in accordance with the game situation;
- continuing the task under the influence of distracting factors;
- controlling emotional state under pressure.

Incorporating exercises into football training brings them closer to the playing conditions. For example, a player can change direction based on a coach's signal while carrying the ball or resolve a problematic situation with their teammates. Such tasks require observing surrounding information and making quick decisions while maintaining technical mobility.

In conclusion, the preliminary test results demonstrated the importance of the targeted development of psychological readiness in 11–12-year-old football players. The Stroop test serves to assess stress resilience and attention stability, while the Multitasking test serves to assess the ability to distribute attention and coordinate multiple activities.

The step-by-step complexity of the training program based on these tests is aimed at developing young players' skills in quick thinking, self-control, and accurate decision-making in game situations. Regularly incorporating psychological exercises into football training helps athletes adapt to the pressure of the game and enhances movement stability.

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