

## **THE PERFORMANCE OF SIERRA LEONE YOUTHS IN THE EXECUTION OF THE TECHNICAL SKILLS OF SOCCER**

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### **Abstract**

The development of football in Sierra Leone is dependent upon the availability of players with the tactical, technical and mental capacity to exhibit the appropriate skills and techniques when required. The study focuses on the technical component of the skills and techniques required. Technical ability and technical performance of skills like shooting, heading, passing and dribbling were major components of this research. Youths within the age bracket of 13-18 years were used as respondent or participants to the research. Relevant literatures were reviewed to ascertain how useful they are to the present research. The participants were drawn from all the districts within the country and all the areas of player were also taken into consideration. The stratified and simple random sampling and after the data was collected, the statistical package for social sciences was used to make analysis of the findings. Although age is considered as a factor that will aid players in executing those skills during the research, however, the results proved that different age limit has specific area were they performed better than the other areas.

**Keywords: skill performance, technical skill, shooting, dribbling, heading, individual difference**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. BACKGROUND**

Performance in soccer is a theory demanding a countless of skills but is exceedingly reliant upon a subtle blend of players' physical, tactical, technical and socio psychological abilities. At professional levels, the pursuit for success continuously leads practitioners, researchers and sports scientists to explore different means to assess and increase these main areas of performance, both singly and, more impactfully, in combination. As one of these indices, match analysis provides a factual record of game events underpinning both individual and team performance in competition.

Moreover, match analysis provides a means of evaluating both the outcome and process of completion ability through quantification of the many characteristics of team play and the demands specific to individual playing positions (Carling, Williams, & Reilly, 2005). It is, in part, the basis for making informed judgments on performance and the provision of feedback, provided that data collection processes employ methods that are accurate, objective and reliable. Information gleaned from analyses of competition is used to guide decision-making as part of the coaching process and can help determine effective strategies for optimising the technical, tactical and physical skills specific to soccer.

Students benefit from positive sport experiences in physical education. If designed well, sport provides a social avenue for physical activity and strengthens student achievement in psychomotor (e.g., motor skill), cognitive (e.g., competition ability), and affective (e.g., personal and social responsibility) learning domains. Unfortunately, not all students receive quality sport instruction and many students fail to have positive sport experiences in physical education

While there is underlying theoretical framework for long term youth development in Sierra Leone, much of the details regarding the influence of the demands of the game remain unclear, therefore assessing tactical or technical ability of the upcoming players is becoming important for coaches, youth players and researchers as well.

Soccer is a dynamic and intense multi-dimensional intermittent sport, which requires a very high level of decision-making. It demands specific qualities or characteristics before the game, during the game and after the game.

The game of soccer may be characterized by the opposition between two teams with identical aims – to score goals, and to avoid goals from the opposite team. In this relation both teams need to coordinate their players (intra-team coordination) through a collective strategy that considers the opposition of the other team (inter-team coordination) in an evolving content.

## **HISTORY OF FOOTBALL IN SIERRA LEONE**

The Sierra Leone national football team is the national team of the Republic of Sierra Leone was controlled by the Sierra Leone Football Association (SLFA), The team is affiliated to the West African Football Union of CAF and they have never qualified for the World Cup.

Football is the most popular sport in Sierra Leone. The governing body is the Sierra Leone Football Association (SLFA). The SLFA was formed in 1960 and has been affiliated with FIFA beginning the same year. There has been and continues to be trouble within the sport in Sierra Leone. In the past, however, the country has achieved a modicum of success in international competition

Sierra Leonean teams, as well as those of other African countries, have to compete with European football, especially the English Premier League, for the hearts of fans. The country is home to the one of the largest Manchester City supporters club outside of the UK. In 2009 and 2010, fans and supporters of Manchester City raised funds to send a second-hand bus to Sierra Leone to provide transport for away games.

The Sierra Leone national football team is popularly known as the Leone Stars and represents the country in international football competitions. Though the team has never qualified for the FIFA World Cup, they did participate in the 1994 and 1996 African Cup of Nations. On 3 September 2016, the national team had a chance to qualify for the Africa Cup for the first time in 20 years if they could defeat Ivory Coast, but could only manage a 1-1 draw in an away match.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

During FIFA's competitions, the Republic is always grouped to take part in the rounds of qualification. Though the country did well during the Zone two tournament that was held before the country was plunged in a deadly civil war that lasted for eleven (11) years, since the end of the war Sierra Leone is yet to rise again. As a country, we cannot boast of renounce players in

the world football stage, nor can we count with boastfulness the number of players that we have in the top leagues around the world.

Helping players understand the timing, flow and rhythm of the game is now very difficult because players don't watch or think about the game very often. From my little interaction with youth players, most of them seem never to understand when to pass and when to dribble and this has led to their level of understanding the game been limited

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research will bring out these faults and let the youth player realizes that rapid perception is essential for rapid action. The research will make the youth player realizes that to see is one thing but to act accordingly is another and that it is highly desired of all players.

It is also significant because it will make the player realizes that their ability to make good decision is based on his ability to absorb or take in information from the flow of the game, act upon the information in a positive manner technically and tactically and process the information quickly.

Seeing the zealously of the youth of today in football, it is therefore paramount for the present youths to be tested as try to understand their various level of understanding in the specific component of soccer ability. As youth soccer is in its improvement stage in Sierra Leone, many a time youth players make certain mistakes in decision making ranging from tactical to technical. As a result of the constant changing of the game and its rules, this has generated another field of thought as coaches are quest to see their players achieve professionalism with optimal skills.

## **1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **AIM:**

This research focuses on examining the technical ability of these youth players ranging from ages 13 -18 years.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this research shall be

- Accessing the technical awareness level of the youth player
- Examine which skill is best executed by the various age groups.
- Determine the level of understanding of the youth player's technical consciousness
- To provide better solutions and recommendations on how the concept of technical skills will be used to develop both the youth player and the game of football in Sierra Leone.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In professional soccer internationally, the foundations for contemporary practice and competition are no longer based solely on simple personal views of how well players perform, or on traditional subjective analytical methods passed from one generation of coach to another.

Over recent years, a more comprehensive approach to coaching through science is providing the applied practitioner and player with greater control, preparation, accountability and, most

importantly, measurable progress (Meyers, 2006). Of course, the translation of knowledge and expertise gleaned from data derived from match analysis into a form that is usable and applicable in training and competition is paramount if it is to have a meaningful impact on performance. Yet, it is only in the last decade or so, however, that formal match analysis has gained widespread acceptance among soccer practitioners at professional standards of play (James, 2006). Reflecting this evolution, most professional clubs now formally employ match analysis in one form or other. A greater understanding by contemporary practitioners of the potential benefits of science and analytic processes has aided in bridging the gap between research and practice. In turn, this has led to the development of more evidence-based practice frameworks for optimising completion ability and match preparation.

Within any evidence-based framework for professional sports performance, knowledge of the physical requirements of play is necessary to aid in the design and application of adequate fitness training strategies in preparation for contemporary competition (Bradley et al., 2009b). Indeed, research in male professional soccer has shown that the physical characteristics of players (Nevill, Holder, & Watts, 2009) and the fitness demands in official competition have substantially evolved over recent decades (Cazorla, Zazoui, Boussaidi, Zahi&Duclos, 2009; Strudwick& Reilly, 2001). The main purpose of any contemporary strength and conditioning process is thus to equip players with the optimal blend of fitness-related skills to respond to the ever-evolving demands of soccer competition. These demands refer to a wide range of characteristics that are essential in assisting players in competing for possession of the ball, reacting quickly and optimally to continually changing game situations, and maintaining high performance levels throughout the entire duration of games and across the competitive season

(Reilly, 2007). Accordingly, a thorough understanding of the youth player requirements specific to match-play and factors potentially affecting competitive performance can ensure that objective and realistic decisions are taken for structuring the physical conditioning elements of training programmes.

Generally speaking, the framework structure of any physical conditioning regimen should ensure that an appropriate and complementary combination of fitness components is provided to cope with the particular requirements of play. Indeed, the physical development framework in soccer refers to the various elements underpinning the conditioning programme: developing work capacity and endurance, speed, strength, power and recovery (Svensson&Drust, 2005). A challenge for conditioners is to provide a systematic approach to integrate, develop, and fine-tune this multitude of physical qualities. Accordingly, a primary step underpinning the conditioning process of these fundamental fitness elements is the monitoring of exercise intensity in competition to objectively quantify the contemporary characteristics of performance and position-specific demands of the sport (Reilly, 2003b). Unfortunately, institutional rules and regulations currently forbid both the wearing of any electronic device to record movement and the sampling of physiological responses to exercise in official professional soccer competition. Monitoring physiological responses during exercise must always be socially acceptable, non-invasive and not interfere with performance (Drust, Atkinson, & Reilly, 2007); factors which are currently unfeasible with contemporary professional soccer rules. Consequently, information on exercise intensity via measures such as heart rate, lactate concentrations, oxygen uptake and body temperature are unavailable at the highest levels of play although recently, promising work has been conducted in an attempt to estimate the energy cost of physical activity using analysis



of player movements on video recordings (Osgnach, Poser, Bernandini, Rinaldo, & di Prampero, 2010). The evaluation of physical performance in match-play via motion analyses within a professional football club setting and its applicability to fitness testing, training and preparation for elite competition are the reason of the present doctoral thesis. This document presents, discusses and evaluates the content and contribution of a selection of published papers from a larger body of research produced over the course of my work in youth soccer clubs.

Making a reliable evaluation on a collegiate strength and conditioning program will consist of many variables that are measurable and some that are not measured in this study. Programs are evaluated primarily on measurable variables that can be quantified, but to make an accurate yet reliable evaluation of a program, the coach has to consider the intangible portion of a program. The “intangibles” are non-measurable characteristics that a good strength and conditioning program must have in order to be successful. Examples of the “intangibles” are knowledge of the game, heart, and motivation. The “intangible” characteristics will not all be investigated in this study.

### **2.2.2. PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF SOCCER**

Soccer has several conditioning challenges. The dimensions of the rectangular playing field must lie between 90m – 120m long and 45m – 90m in width (FIFA, 2005). Considering this and given that the duration of the game is of two continuous forty five-minute halves, the long performance time and large playing area would suggest a need for elite soccer players to be highly-trained aerobic endurance athletes. Despite the endurance nature of soccer, high intensity anaerobic

work, such as sprints, jumps or tackles, are involved in the most interesting and the most significant events of match play.

It has been reported that aerobic metabolism accounts for 90% of the energy cost in soccer play (Bangsbo, 2006). While Astrand and Rodahl (2003) estimated that the value of aerobic metabolism value may be as high as 98% with only 2% anaerobic. Thus the physiological requirements of elite soccer comprise elements of both the aerobic and anaerobic systems

### **2.3. TECHNICAL SKILLS AND ITS DEMAND IN SOCCER.**

Everything a player does to control the soccer ball is technical skills. Many examples are discussed below. Movements and choices that a player makes in relationship to the other players on the field are tactical skills and these can be both with and without the ball. In fact most tactical strategies are what are being done away from the ball. Here are the basic technical skills:

#### **2.3.1. Dribbling (ball control)**

The ability to change the path of the ball very sharply to the left or right or backwards is really where it is at for teaching. Kids pretty much know how to dribble straight ahead. Changing ball direction decisively with the inside of the foot, outside of the foot, and the bottom of the foot should be practiced at every practice! Many ball movement drills can be used and demonstrated. This is where all the 'moves' of soccer are taught

#### **2.3.2. Passing**

Instep strike with 90 degree bent and locked ankle. This is perfect for the short 3-20 yard range but often lacks sufficient power for passes that will travel over 20 yards for the youth player. To

correctly move the ball in one direction the entire body needs to be turned (like aiming a gun). This is the kick for all U-14 players to attempt to master.

### **2.3.3. Shooting (power shots)**

This is for power when attempting to score from over 15 yards away from goal is desired. Hit it with the laces! Knee over the ball, head down looking at the ball, ankle fully extended and locked when the ball is struck driving it low and fast. On the top of the foot there is a “sweet” spot that is slightly different for each player but is generally is right on the laces. Toe pointed to get it out of the way and strike the center of the ball. The power and ball speed that can be generated is awesome but be prepared for it to take a year or two for kids to hit it consistently on the sweet spot. Even the pros miss the spot under high defensive pressure. The correct age to teach this varies

### **2.3.4 Heading**

The older the players the more important this becomes. Because of health concerns we do not support heading the ball in recreational soccer. As my study starts from age 13, it will be wise to start with age 14 with the real soccer ball. I therefore will not encourage coaches to use FIFA approved ball. There are ways to teach younger kids using volleyball or a beach ball but I do not think it is worth your time as a coach in this program. .

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is critical to employ sound scientific principles of physical conditioning and coaching in order to enhance sports performance. As part of the coaching process, empirical information from

analyses of performance in competition is essential to provide a platform upon which objective decisions for training and preparation can be made

Decision making is an important issue in soccer, which has been investigated deeply enough by other researchers in other parts of the world. This research proposes a probabilistic approach to decision making. The proposed methodologies will be based on the maximization of a game situation score function, which generalizes the concept of accomplishing different game objectives as passing, scoring, clearing the ball, dribbling, etc. the methodology includes a quantitative for evaluating the game situation score.

### 3.2. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants for the research came from clubs all over the country from the sixteen districts that are not playing top division league. These subjects for the research purpose included a total of four hundred (400) participants that were drawn from all the age groups. Selection by age group and area of play is shown in the table below. All these are youth soccer players who have not got a professional playing experience of over ten (10) years

<b>SELECTION TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS FOR RESEARCH</b>					
<b>AGE GROUP YEARS</b>	<b>GOAL KEEPERS</b>	<b>DEFENDERS</b>	<b>MID FIELDERS</b>	<b>ATTACKERS /STRICKERS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>13 TO 15</b>	18	73	36	73	200
<b>16 TO 18</b>	18	73	36	73	200
<b>TOTAL</b>	36	146	72	166	<b>400</b>

### 3.3 Data Collection:

In a bid to measure, assess and evaluate the technical ability of these set of participants in different component of abilities, the appropriate data collection methods will be used that has relevant to the specific components that we have to measure

### 3.4 Instruments:

Appropriate instruments were selected on the basis of their relevance to the research objectives and that has meaningful role to the end result.

To achieve that, the following instrument was used to collect data.

Participants were asked to demonstrate the skills of ball control, passing, shooting, dribbling and heading.

<b>TECHNICAL ABILITY GAME SITUATION TEST</b>	
<b>The following areas will be assessed by the expert</b>	
<b>Ball Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving ball at top speed</li> <li>• Control and secure the ball</li> </ul>
<b>Passing/ Shooting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing short and long passes</li> <li>• Shooting for a goal at a distance of 25 meters</li> </ul>
<b>Dribbling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribble with precision between obstacles spaced 1.5 meters apart within a time of 15 seconds.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to head at goal after crosses</li> </ul>

<b>Heading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>heading high, wide, and deep for defensive clearances,</li> </ul>
<p><b>KEY</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (0 – 25)</li> <li>SATISFACTORY (26 – 50)</li> <li>GOOD (51 – 75)</li> <li>EXCELLENT (76 – 100)</li> </ol>	

#### 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This component of the study looks into the ability of the athletes to be able to show his level of competition ability in demonstrating both in a game situation that is with pressure and out of game situation how he can display skills like dribbling, shooting, attacking, defending, passing both short and long passes. It also focuses on how these skills are used to complement each other while playing. In the game of soccer everything a player does to put the ball under control are technical skills. During my research, I looked into some of these component and there outcomes discussed below

##### 4.2 PASS ABILITY

**Table 1: PARTICIPANTS PERFORMANCE IN 25 METERS PASS**

			PASSES IN 25 METERS				Total
			EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	
AGE IN 13 YEARS	Count		14	11	13	17	55
YEARS	PASSES		15.6%	11.1%	12.3%	16.2%	13.8%

14	Count	20	17	23	18	78
YEARS	PASSES	22.2%	17.2%	21.7%	17.1%	19.5%
15	Count	14	17	13	23	67
YEARS	PASSES	15.6%	17.2%	12.3%	21.9%	16.8%
16	Count	16	17	16	13	62
YEARS	PASSES	17.8%	17.2%	15.1%	12.4%	15.5%
17	Count	11	16	20	19	66
YEARS	PASSES	12.2%	16.2%	18.9%	18.1%	16.5%
18	Count	15	21	21	15	72
YEARS	PASSES	16.7%	21.2%	19.8%	14.3%	18.0%
Total	Count	90	99	106	105	400
	PASSES	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

During this stage, participants were given three chances to make a shot. This was done to see how accurate they will be when in a game situation. A team mate was placed at the other end of the 25 meters spot to receive the pass with an opponent in between. At the close of this exercise, 25.8% of those in age 16 did excellent in passes while age 13 with an average of 25.5% was next in the excellent category. Going to the good category, age 18 excelled over the others with an average accurate pass of 29.2%. The age group with exceptional performance in the not too good and not too bad category called the average category is age 17 years. 30.3% of their shots fall within this category followed by age 14 years with a 29.5% shots that were average. 13 years did extremely badly in this category as 30.9% of the passes were bad and also 17 years did not perform well with 28.8% of their passes bad.

### 4.3 SHOOTING

**Table2: PARTICIPANTS PERFORMANCE IN SHOOTING SKILL**

		EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	TOTAL
13	Count	13	13	23	6	55

YEARS	% (SHOOTING)	13.4%	13.8%	23.0%	5.5%	13.8%
14	Count	22	13	13	30	78
YEARS	% (SHOOTING)	22.7%	13.8%	13.0%	27.5%	19.5%
15	Count	21	16	13	17	67
YEARS	% (SHOOTING)	21.6%	17.0%	13.0%	15.6%	16.8%
16	Count	13	15	16	18	62
YEARS	% (SHOOTING)	13.4%	16.0%	16.0%	16.5%	15.5%
17	Count	14	20	16	16	66
YEARS	% (SHOOTING)	14.4%	21.3%	16.0%	14.7%	16.5%
18	Count	14	17	19	22	72
YEARS	% (SHOOTING)	14.4%	18.1%	19.0%	20.2%	18.0%
Total	Count	97	94	100	109	400
	% (SHOOTING)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Everybody can shot but in soccer shooting is deemed a skill that will enhance goal scoring.

Therefore it was used in this research to see how talented these youths in shooting are.

Three chances were accorded to all of them. After the exercise, age 14years had an excellent grade of 27% followed by age 15 years with 21.6%. Ages 17 and 18 both had a scoring percentage of 14.4. Alongside the good category, age 17 years excelled with a21.3% good shots taken by those in that category. Age 18 years was next in line with 18.8% while age 15 scored 17.0%. However, those whose scores in shooting skills fell in the average category were better off for those of ages 4 and 15 years. They only have 13% of their members whose shots were on the average while age 13 has 23% of their members shots were average. Age 18 years also have 19% of their members' shots in this category.



#### 4.4 HEADING

**Table 3: PARTICIPANTS PERFORMANCE IN HEADING SKILL**

		<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>BELOW AVERAGE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
13	Count	15	18	8	14	55
YEARS	(HEADING)	15.6%	17.1%	9.3%	12.4%	13.8%
14	Count	22	18	14	24	78
YEARS	(HEADING)	22.9%	17.1%	16.3%	21.2%	19.5%
15	Count	19	15	15	18	67
YEARS	(HEADING)	19.8%	14.3%	17.4%	15.9%	16.8%
16	Count	14	14	18	16	62
YEARS	(HEADING)	14.6%	13.3%	20.9%	14.2%	15.5%
17	Count	9	19	15	23	66
YEARS	(HEADING)	9.4%	18.1%	17.4%	20.4%	16.5%
18	Count	17	21	16	18	72
YEARS	(HEADING)	17.7%	20.0%	18.6%	15.9%	18.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>400</b>
	<b>(HEADING)</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Heading is another skill that is required by soccer players. There are times when players are expected to head either for defense or for attack. Therefore these young players were not exempted from such a drill. To accomplish this task, they were placed in between two goal posts that were 18 meters apart. By the end of the task, age 14 years did better as their score was 22.9% of the total score. Age 15 years also did well with an average of 19.8% to be followed by age 18

with a percentage score of 17.7%. In the good category, age 18 years excelled with a score of 20% while age 17 scored 18.1% and ages 13 and 14 scored 14.4% each. In the average category, age 13 performed extremely well as it has the least of member whose performances were average. They had 9.3% score while age 16 had 20.9% of their execution of the skill in this category. Age 18 years also did not perform well in this category as its members scored 18.6% followed by ages 17 years and 15 years both with 17.4%.

#### 4.5 DRIBBLING

**Table 3: PERFORMANCE OF PARTICIPANTS IN DRIBBLING**

		<b>EXCELLEN T</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>AVERAG E</b>	<b>BELOW AVERAG E</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
13	Count	19	11	8	17	55
YEARS	% (DRIBBLING)	18.8%	10.9%	8.7%	16.0%	13.8%
14	Count	19	18	22	19	78
YEARS	% (DRIBBLING)	18.8%	17.8%	23.9%	17.9%	19.5%
15	Count	13	19	14	21	67
YEARS	% (DRIBBLING)	12.9%	18.8%	15.2%	19.8%	16.8%
16	Count	15	15	16	16	62
YEARS	% (DRIBBLING)	14.9%	14.9%	17.4%	15.1%	15.5%
17	Count	19	17	11	19	66
YEARS	% (DRIBBLING)	18.8%	16.8%	12.0%	17.9%	16.5%
18	Count	16	21	21	14	72
YEARS	% (DRIBBLING)	15.8%	20.8%	22.8%	13.2%	18.0%
Total	<b>Count</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>400</b>
	<b>% (DRIBBLING)</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Dribbling in soccer is a technique worth knowing as it is the pivot of the game; therefore it was also pivotal in this research. Participants were asked to dribble in between cones and the time spent recorded. Each was given three chances and at the end calculated. The researcher however realised the age brackets and with the technical knowledge of the coaches, their timing were specified by the coaches according to group levels.

However, at the end of the exercise 19 from ages 13years, 14years and 17years were graded excellent in their dribbling skills as compared to 16 from age 18Years, 15 from age 16 years and 13 from age 15 years. In the good category, 21 of the participants from age 18 scored good, 19 from age 15 years also scored good. With those that performed average, those from age 13 years had only 8 of their members unlike ages 14 with 22 of their members in this category and age 18 years with 21 of its members not performing good but average.

## **5.0: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives a comprehensive analysis of the entire work that has been done. Respondents were required to respond to various issues and perform specific skill to be able to assess their competition ability. Those involved in the survey were players ranging from 13 years to 15 years in the first group and players ranging from 16 years to 18 years in the second group. Before the survey, one was with the opinion that soccer has grown in our country because of the interest these young players show in the English leagues. One could not say that the expectation was not met but we are far from changing the present situation of soccer in Sierra Leone.

## 5.1: CONCLUSION ON TECHNICAL SKILLS

When players are assessed in isolation, some of them proved better in performing some of the skill but fall back when they are assessed as a group. As demonstrated in short pass drill in the age bracket of 13-15 years, there excellent score was a total of 24% while there good score was 22.4%. The 16-18 years category had just 21.1% for the excellent category and 26.9% of the good. The ability to make a better pass in a game situation between these two groups fall within the confine of the age 16-18 years. The age bracket 13-15 years scored better in the excellent category but fall below in all the other components. Collectively, ages 16-18 had a cumulative percentage of 48 in the good and excellent categories and scored 52% in the average and below average categories. However, the performance in totality does not seem well as only 90 athletes making 22.5% did get an excellent score, while 99 of them bringing it to 24.8% scored good. 105 athletes representing 26.5% scored average and the balance 105 athletes got a score of 26.2%. From this perspective, 47.3% of the total athletes scored between good and excellent while 52.7% had a score ranging between average and below average.

Assessing the competition ability of these two groups in their quest to make accurate long passes, the following was observed that collectively the age bracket of 16-18 years performed better with 54% while 13-15 years scored 46% in the average column, 17 years did well having scored the lowest percent of 12.6, followed by 15 years with 13.6%. In this group also and the below average category, 16-18 years did better than 13-15 years. The age bracket of 16-18 in an overall performance of long passes got 50.2% whereas the age brackets 13-15 score 49.8%.

In the shooting drill, collectively, in the excellent category, the age bracket 13-15 excelled with an average score of 57.7% whereas the age group 16-18 years scores 42.3%. In the good level,

the age group 16-18 years made 65.4% accurate shot as compared to ages 13-15 who scored 34.6%.the last two categories, that is those of average and below average, the lesser percent you score the better your performance. Though in the groups of average and below average ages 13-15 did better than ages 16-18 this did not change the final performance of the two groups. Ages 13-15 scored 49% in the average category and 48.6% in the below average while ages 16-18 years scored 51% and 51.4% respectively. Putting the entire performance in the shooting drill, ages 16-18 ended having 52.5% whereas 47.5 was earned by ages 13-15.

The age group of 13-15years during the dribbling exercise did extremely well as a group in the excellent column as they had a total of 58.3% while ages 16-18 scored 41.7%. In the good column, ages 16-18 score 51.5% and 48.5% was scored by ages 13-15. In the average sector, again ages 16-18 got 57% while ages 13-15 got 43% meaning ages 13-15 got fewer players who fall within this category. Similar is seen in the below average category were less players from ages 13-15 years fall within this category resulting to 49.5% from ages 13-15 and 50.5% from ages 16-18. However, the overall performance in the heading group was accorded to the age bracket of 16-18 as they scored 50.5% while ages 13-15 scored 49.5%

As the focus of this research is to compare the two groups and assess their competition ability, their performance are also assessed in the categories of excellence, good, average and below average. In the excellence column ages 13, 14, and 17 got 19 participants each that made excellent score. These groups of participants represent 18.8% each. 18 years got 16 of its members who were able to make an excellent make representing 15.8% of its members. 16 years had 15 of its members that make the excellent mark also representing 14.9%. Age 15 only had 12 of its members to make the excellent mark score and its represents 12.9%. in the good category,

age 18 had 21 of its participants scoring 20.8% while age 15 had 19 of its representing 18.8%. 14 years had 18 of its participants making a good dribble which also represent 17.8%. Those in the 17 years category, 17 of them made the good level representing 16.85. Ages 16 and 13 had 15 and 11 participants respectively scoring points representing 14.9% and 10.9%. In the average category 13 years had only 8 members that made that make representing 8.7% followed by age 17 that had only 11 participants in this group also representing 12.0%. Next in the line is age 15 which had only 14 participants in the group also representing 15.2%. age 16 had 16 of its participants in the group accounting for 17.4% while age 18 had 21 participants that made the average score also representing 22.8%. Last in the list is age 14 that has 22 participants in this group representing 23.9%. the below average level has age 18 years with 14 of its members representing 13.2% followed by age 16 with 16 of its participants scoring below average and representing 15.1%. 13 years had 17 members representing 16.0%, 14 and 17 years both have 19 participants that made this grade also representing 17.9% for each. Age 15 having got the highest number of participant is this category is seen not to do well with a percentage mark of 19.8%

Of the 29 participants who fall within the excellent category of the technical analysis of the skills and fitness components, 7 of them representing 24.1% came from age 18 years followed by ages 15 and 13 years all having 6 participants each from their groups also represent 20.7% for each group. Age 14 also had 5 of its participants representing 17.2% while ages 17 and 16 had 3 and 2 participants representing 10.3% and 6.9% respectively. In totality, the age bracket of 13-15 had 17 participants in this group of 29 representing 57.9% while the age bracket of 16-18 years have 12 participants in the excellent category also amounting to 42.1%. in the good category 306 participants are in this group, 57 of them representing 18.6% came from the group age 18 years

whereas 55 came from age 14 with 18.0%. 52 came from age 17 representing 17.0%, 55 from age 14 representing 18.0. Age 16 had 48 participants representing 15.7% and age 13 with the least participants of 44 representing 14.4%. The age group 16-18 having the highest number of participants amount to 157 and representing 51.3% is seen to have done better. The 149 from the age group of 13-15 had a percentage representation of 48.7%. in the average level, ages 16-18 also did better because it had fewer participants in the category. Of the 65 participants in the category, 13-15 years had 34 participants representing 52% of the total while ages 16-18 had 31 participants that scored average representing 48%. In the technical component of the research, the age bracket of 16-18 performed better than the age bracket of 13-15 years though in some areas those in 13-15 did extremely well.

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