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Research article

## Effects of a 12 Week SAQ Training Programme on Agility with and without the Ball among Young Soccer Players

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of a 12 week conditioning programme involving speed, agility and quickness (SAQ) training and its effect on agility performance in young soccer players. Soccer players were randomly assigned to two groups: experimental group (EG; n = 66, body mass: 71.3 ± 5.9 kg; body height: 1.77 ± 0.07 m) and control group (CG; n = 66, body mass: 70.6 ± 4.9 kg; body height: 1.76 ± 0.06 m). Agility performance was assessed using field tests: Slalom; Slalom with ball; Sprint with 90° turns; Sprint with 90° turns with ball; Sprint with 180° turns; Sprint with backward and forward running; Sprint 4 x 5 m. Statistically significant improvements ( $p < 0.05$ ) between pre and post training were evident for almost all measures of agility, with and without the ball, with the exception being the Sprint with backward and forward running. This suggests that SAQ training is an effective way of improving agility, with and without the ball, for young soccer players and can be included in physical conditioning programmes.

**Key words:** speed, specific agility, change of direction, SAQ.

### Key Points

- SAQ training appears to be an effective way of improving agility with and without the ball in young soccer players
- Soccer coaches could use this training during pre-season and in-season training

- Compared with pre-training, there was a statistically significant improvement in all but one measure of agility, both with and without the ball after SAQ training

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