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**STATISTICAL STUDY ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF CORNER KICKS
IN JUNIOR FOOTBALL PLAYERS THROUGH SPECIFIC MEANS**

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Abstract:

The article aims to improve the technical execution of hitting and passing the ball from the corner of the field with enough precision and force to reach a teammate in the opposing box. The study was carried out in the *Luceafărul Bucovina Club*, where players from the midfielder position, forwards and defenders were used. The experimental group is engaged in the Under 15 county football championship, while the control group does not participate in any official competition. The experiment was carried out over a period of 3 weeks, and 3 specific exercises were applied to improve the execution of corner kicks.

Introduction:

The technique represents the set of motor skills specific to the game, carried out based on the physical abilities of the players, in order to satisfy some requirements of the defense or attack tactics. [1] Currently, "technique is the main factor of the football game" without which football would not be what it is. [2] The playing technique of attacking footballers must contribute to solving a series of complex tasks, to increasing the effectiveness in the exploitation of force, to increasing the speed and precision of actions in the conditions of ever-changing situations. [6,7] In the game of football, kicks from the corner of the field are frequent, as a result the organization through the placement, but especially through the movement of the attackers in front of the goal to occupy the most advantageous areas, are decisive for scoring goals.[4] Considering that the off-side rule does not apply at the time of the corner kick, the players will place (move) according to this advantage (parallel to the goal line, but also penetrations by surprise perpendicular to the goal - headers or by kicking. [9.10] Both forwards and defenders fight to get close to the ball from the corner, between the opponent and the goal. Tall players who are good at "aerial battle" for the ball have an advantage. [3, 5] The defenders will have to mark, strictly, each attacker (two defenders to one attacker are contraindicated). [8]

Methods - materials:

The methods used in the creation of the article are the study of specialized literature, the observation method, the research method. In the research we used three means of improving corner kicks. The players in the experiment are part of the *Luceafărul Bucovina Suceava* club and they were given three specific exercises to improve hitting the ball from the corner of the pitch. Those in the experimental group are involved in the Under 15 county football championship, while the athletes in the control group do not participate in the championship.

The experiment was carried out in the pre-competitive period and was applied for a period of three weeks after the end of the competitive period. The experimental group was given specific exercises to improve corner kicks at each training session (3 training sessions/week), while the control group trained as planned for this training period. Two tests were carried out, the initial one immediately after the end of the Under 15 championship, and a final test after the three weeks, where the players in the experimental group benefited, during training, from specific methods and exercises to improve hitting the ball from the corner.

Exercise number 1 is carried out as follows: to improve the accuracy of corner kicks, but also of the shot at the goal, players number 9 and number 10 establish with the executors (alternatively) of corner kicks, number 7 and number 11, the place (direction) approximately of the future position in which they will meet the ball to shoot effectively at goal. Corner kicks are executed, generally with the trajectories required by the finisher.

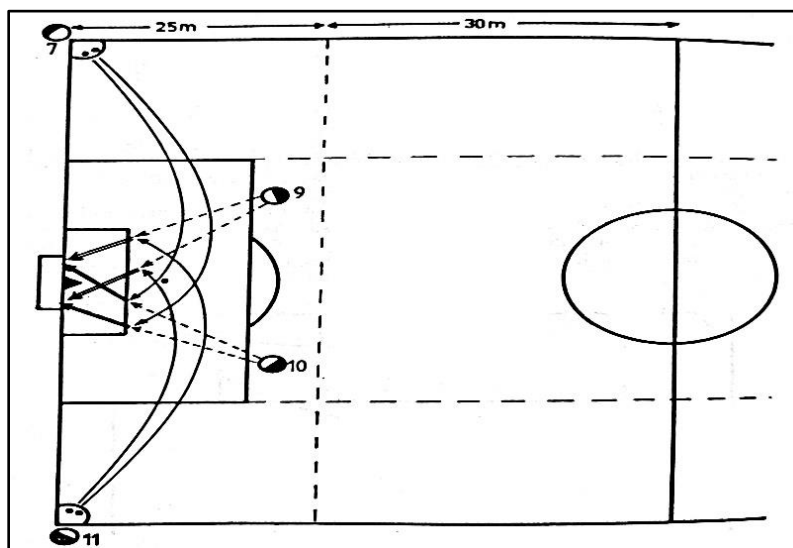


Fig.1 Exercise no. 1

Methodical instructions: aim to hit the ball accurately with the trajectory established in advance by the finisher. The ball is placed at an optimal distance from the pennant at the corner of the court so as not to disturb the execution. The striker must be positioned in such a way as to facilitate his finishing easily with either his head or his foot.

Drill number 2 goes like this: the number 8 and number 6 forwards set off from the corner, prompting the straight backs, number 2 and number 3 to follow them through tight marking.

Player number 7 takes the corner kick into the area vacated by the departure of the pair of forward number 8 and defender number 3. Forward number 9 enters that area and shoots at goal, with or without a takeover. The same method can be used with a corner kick from the other side of the box.

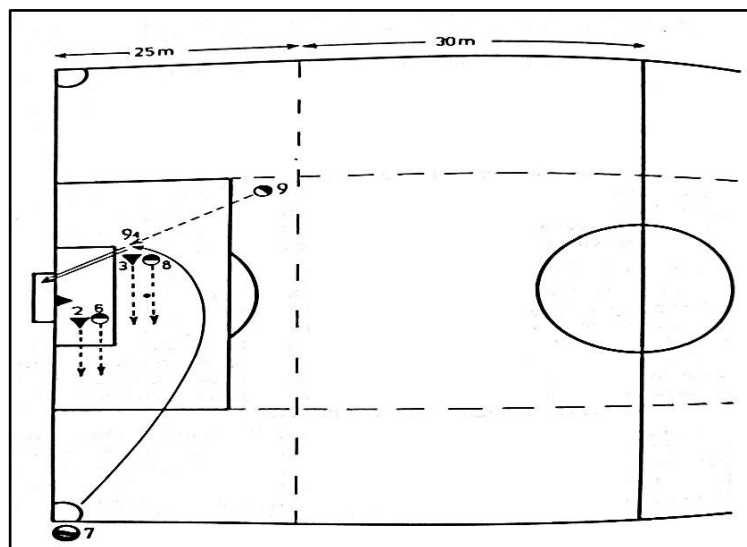


Fig.2 Exercise no. 2

Methodical instructions:

To increase the complexity of the exercise, 1, 2 attackers and defenders with precise tasks can be introduced. The exercise is performed under conditions identical to the game, in terms of effort and number of participants. Apart from the striker, who finishes, all other teammates strictly marked by defenders sprint simultaneously and convincingly in the direction of where the ball is coming from.

Exercise number 3 is carried out as follows: this method of execution of corner kicks can be executed through multiple repetitions (corrections), implicitly increasing the effort capacity, perfecting corner executions, such as the accuracy of takeovers or volley shots. Thus a line is arranged at the corner of the court, each player having a ball. Players number 7 and number 11 drive towards the goal. Depending on the trajectory of the ball sent from the corner by the number 10 player, the number 7 or number 11 player takes the ball or volleys a shot at goal, under the protection of the number 9 teammate who blocks the defender directly. If the ball has reached the striker number 5, who is strictly marked, he will pass by deflection to one of the teammates number 7 or number 11, depending on their timing and placement. The one with the most favorable position in front of the goal and in adverse conditions, shoots at the goal with his foot or finishes with a header.

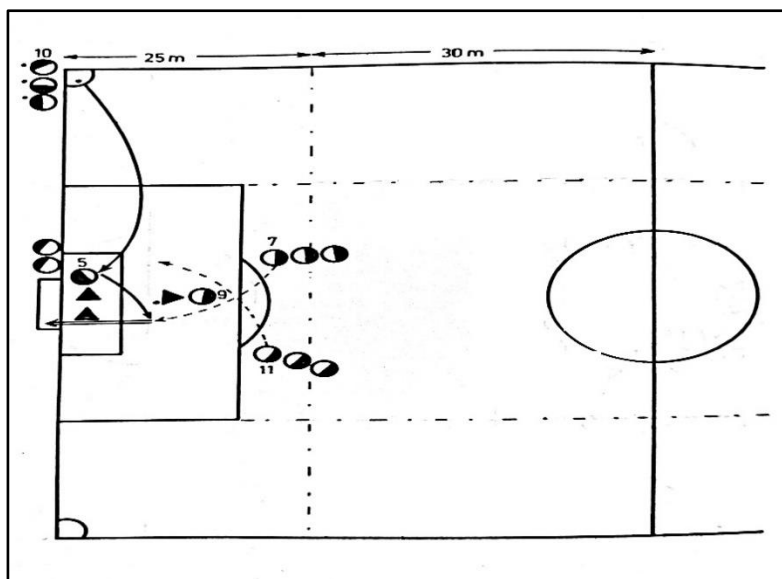


Fig.2 Exercise no. 2

Methodical instructions: players number 7 and number 11 have three to four teammates behind them. After each completion the next two players will perform the same exercise. The defenders will act according to the coach's instructions and they will be replaced by the forwards. The exercise can be performed simultaneously at both gates.

Results:

Following the 10 repetitions applied to the experimental groups, at the final test an improvement in the number of completions towards the goal was observed in the experimental group (target group).

The exercises were applied for three weeks, one exercise per week. During training, the methods were applied for 30 minutes at each training session (3 training sessions/week), with a number of 10 repetitions.

Table 1. Results week 1/exercise 1

Initial testing		Final testing	
Control group	5	Control group	5
Experimental group	7	Experimental group	10

Table 2. Results week 2/exercise 2

Initial testing		Final testing	
Control group	4	Control group	5
Experimental group	6	Experimental group	8

Table 3. Results week 3/exercise 3

Initial testing		Final testing	
Control group	4	Control group	5
Experimental group	6	Experimental group	7

Discussions:

The article is important to identify more easily the means and methods of improving corner kicks in junior children. The results obtained can be applied and compared within children's and junior clubs. In all tests applied, an improvement in results can be observed between the initial testing and the final testing in the experimental group. Following the application of the methods and exercises specific to the improvement of the corner kick, it is observed that the score obtained in exercise number one is higher than the score obtained in the other methods. This fact is due to the lack of the opponent in fulfilling the proposed objective.

Conclusions:

Following the applied tests, an improvement in the executions of the players in the experimental group was observed. The methods and exercises for improving the corner kicks applied to the experimental group, during the training, contributed to a better action of the participants, in terms of execution but also completion in limited space and time conditions.

The research was applied to junior footballers from the *Luceafărul Bucovina Club*.

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