

SMALL-SIDED GAMES PRESENT AND EFFECTIVE TRAINING STIMULUS IN GAELIC FOOTBALL

Collins, K. 1), Doran, D.A. 2) & Reilly, T.P. 2)

1) Institute of Technology Tallaght, Dublin, Ireland

2) Research Institute for Sport and Exercise Science, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

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Introduction

Small-sided games (SSG's) provide effective physiological training stimuli in soccer, however, of the efficacy of SSG's for other codes particularly Gaelic football conditioning remains unknown.¹ The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of SSG's training on the physiological performance of sub-elite Gaelic footballers.

Methods

Seventeen sub-elite (club) Gaelic football players (Mean± SD: age: 26 ± 4 yrs; stature: 180 ± 6.8 cm; body mass: 79.3 ± 9.0 kg) participated in the study. The intensity of exercise was monitored by means of heart rate (HR) response (Polar Team System, Polar Electro, Finland). The training involved small-sided games (4 vs 4) of 6 x 4 min (performed at 85-95% HRmax), with 3 min active recovery (performed at 50–60% HRmax) performed over an eight-week period (a total of 20 SSG sessions undertaken). The playing area was 80 x 20 m. The sessions were incorporated into the normal weekly programme of the players. Performance measurements were taken pre- and post-intervention which included a counter-movement jump (CMJ), sprint speed over 5-, 10- and 20-m; and a multi-stage shuttle-run test to estimate $\dot{V}O_{2max}$.²

Results & Discussion

Results from the experimental period show that sprint speed over 5 m (1.14 ± .08; 1.08 ± .05 s) ($F_{1,32}=6.237$; $p=.018$) and estimated $\dot{V}O_{2max}$ (56.9 ± 1.9; 59.4 ± 2.2 mL.kg⁻¹min⁻¹) ($F_{1,32}=12.631$; $p=.001$) was significantly improved. Whereas CMJ height (43.1 ± 6.5; 45.4 ± 7.8 cm) ($F_{1,32}=.866$; $p=.359$) and sprint speed over 10- (1.91 ± .09; 1.86 ± .08 s) ($F_{1,32}=3.003$; $p=.093$) and 20-m (3.19 ± .12; 3.13 ± .11 s) ($F_{1,32}=1.881$; $p=.180$), improved but not significantly. The evidence in the current study demonstrated that an eight-week SSG training intervention did significantly improve Gaelic football 5-m sprint speed and endurance performance.

Conclusion

It is concluded that SSG's training can present an appropriate physiological training stimuli and therefore an effective training mode to enhance performance in sub-elite Gaelic football players.

References

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2. Ramsbottom et al., 1988: Br J Sports Med, 22, 141–144.