

Football Fitness:

I have received a number of messages regarding the fitness of our players. It is important they remain active and work hard to come back as close to game fitness as possible but it is even more important that the work they do is actually relevant to the fitness needed to be at prime condition to compete over the course of a full game. The following information is from one of the most accomplished Football fitness trainer who has worked with the likes of Manchester City and Barcelona.

Please consider this information when coming up with ways for players to maintain their fitness. Please reach out if you have any questions and please share this document with the players. The end of this document has the definition clubs use to define 'Football Fitness'

Football fitness;

Everyone who has played football in the past has the experience of doing so-called 'football fitness training' in which he had to do exercises which had nothing to do with football. Running around the pitch, sprinting between cones or even uphill, jumping over hurdles or ... How can something be called 'football fitness' but the players are doing everything except playing football? This is yet another symptom of a world without clear terminology and definitions. The solution is simple. Let's define football fitness.

Communication, decision making and execution of decision

The characteristics of a football action have previously been described. The first thing a player has to do is to collect information by (non-)verbally communicating with the surrounding: the ball, teammates, opponents, lines on the pitch, etc. Based on this information, the player has to make a decision. And after making a decision, the player has to execute this decision. Therefore, the chronological sequence within every football action is: 1) communication, 2) decision making and 3) executing the decision.

Usain Bolt

Sprint athletes like Usain Bolt only have to do this once. The person with the starting gun communicates to the athletes when they are allowed to start. After the sprinters hear the starting signal they decide to sprint. And finally they will execute this decision by sprinting for 100 meters. So, for Bolt and his colleagues it's also a matter of 'communication – decision making – executing decision'. But after one action they are finished. Football

players have to repeat this action hundreds of times: 'communication – decision making – executing decision' over and over again.

More football actions per minute

In the first half of the game, players must be able to play with a high tempo if necessary. This requires the ability to perform more actions per minute. Football players must be able to communicate, make decisions and execute decisions as frequently as possible. So, the first football fitness characteristic is 'more football actions per minute'.

Maintain good football actions

In the second half, players must be able to maintain this high tempo for 90 minutes if necessary. This requires the ability to maintain both the quality and quantity of football actions. Maintaining the quality of actions in the second half means still 100% communication, decision making and executing decisions even in the last part of the game. So, the second football fitness characteristic is 'maintaining good football actions'.

Maintain many football actions per minute

To maintain a high tempo for 90 minutes a player should not only maintain the quality but also the quantity of actions. In other words, even in the last few minutes of the game a player must be able to perform many actions per minute. In other words, even when a player gets tired he must still be able to communicate, make decisions and execute decisions frequently. This third football fitness characteristic is called the ability to 'maintain many football actions' per minute.

Football fitness definition

Based on the above philosophical analysis of the game we can now define football fitness in football action language: 1) communication, 2) decision making and 3) executing decisions, as frequently as possible (higher tempo) and for as long as possible (90 minutes). Based on this reference and definition, training exercises can only be labeled as football fitness training if the exercises correspond with this football fitness definition. Exercises that do not fit in this football fitness reference should not be labeled as football fitness training but as non-football fitness training.