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Evaluation of Selected Fundamental Technical Requirements in Football as a Basis for Talent Identification

- تقييم بعض المتطلبات الفنية الأساسية في كرة القدم كمدخل لاختيار اللاعبين الموهوبين.

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the characteristics of youth football players in the Algerian context within the local sporting environment and to establish normative levels for selected skill performance requirements. To achieve this purpose, a descriptive research design was adopted. The study sample consisted of 80 players, deliberately selected due to their participation in sports clubs in M'sila Province, representing the under-16 age category. Data were collected using skill performance tests as the primary research instrument. Following data collection and statistical analysis, normative levels for the technical attributes of the study sample were established. Based on these findings, the study recommends the standardization and regulation of the player selection process, emphasizing the necessity of adopting objective and scientifically grounded selection criteria

Keywords: Evaluation**,** Football, Talent Identification, Technical

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Introduction:

The remarkable development and continuous increase in physical performance levels observed in football competitions highlight the importance of adopting scientific and objective approaches in the planning and implementation of training programs. The structure and progression of such programs primarily depend on accurate assessment of players' actual ability levels through standardized testing, followed by systematic evaluation of physical fitness. Physical fitness constitutes a fundamental component of athletic performance and directly influences technical and tactical efficiency. It represents a cornerstone in the long-term development of football players.

Relying exclusively on subjective observation during matches to assess players' physical and technical performance lacks precision and objectivity. Consequently, the application of valid and reliable measurement tools and tests grounded in scientific principles has become indispensable. These tools enable coaches and educators to evaluate performance accurately and to guide training and talent development processes effectively.

Evaluation refers to the process of determining the value of a given attribute based on quantitative scores derived from measurement and testing. Its purpose is to assess the extent of change resulting from training programs and to determine athletes' adaptation to exercise intensity and content. Moreover, evaluation serves as a key indicator of training effectiveness and requires comprehensive interpretation of test results **(Al-Bassati, 2001).**

Several Algerian studies have focused on establishing normative levels for skill-based selection in football, highlighting the importance of objective and standardized evaluation tools.

From previous studies, we find a study Ben Haiba Taj Eddine and Nougal Mohamed (**2025**) aimed to determine normative levels for a set of football skill tests used in selecting U19 players. Using a descriptive research design and a sample of 60 players, the study identified four normative performance levels, with most players demonstrating an average skill level. The findings emphasized the effectiveness of normative standards in improving the accuracy of the player selection process.

Similarly, Bouqchich Mouloud (**2023**) developed a standardized skill performance test to determine normative levels for U17 football players. The study involved 201 players from professional clubs in western Algeria. Statistical analysis confirmed the validity and reliability of the test, and the resulting normative levels were recommended as a scientific reference for talent selection. Both studies underline the necessity of adopting standardized skill criteria to enhance fairness and objectivity in youth football selection.

Lastly, the present study seeks to address the following research question**: Can normative levels be determined according to the normal distribution of selected technical skill test results among young football players in the school environment?**

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1. Research Hypotheses

1.1 General Hypothesis

It is hypothesized That normative levels can be established based on the normal distribution of results obtained from selected technical skill tests among the study sample.

2. Research Objectives

- Establish normative levels for selected technical skill requirements to support the identification of young football talents.
- Regulate the talent selection process and reduce reliance on random or subjective methods.

3. Methods:

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed, as it is suitable for identifying characteristics of a population and analyzing relationships between variables. Descriptive research extends beyond mere data collection to include interpretation and explanation of findings in relation to the research problem **(Ibrahim, 2002).**

3.2 Research Population and Sample

It is all the individuals, events or things that are the subject of the original research **(Kamel Al-Maghribi, 2011, p. 147).** Our study community was some clubs in the state of M'Sila, and the sample included 80 players in the under-16 age category.

3.3 Spatial and Temporal Scope

- Spatial **scope :** Stadium in M'Sila Gouvernorat.

- Temporal **scope :**

  - **Pilot study** : January 10, 2025 (pré-test) and January 20, 2025 (post-test).

Main study : Fromm February 25, 2025, to April 1, 2025

Participants:

It consists of players from some of the teams of M'Sila (the rising stars, generational connections, the star of Ouled Dradj, Mouloudia M'Sila) whose number reached 80 players under 16 years old.

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3.4 Skill-based tests were used, including:

Data were collected using standardized technical skill tests:

*Stationary shooting accuracy test.

*Ball dribbling test between cones.

3.5 Statistical Methods

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 23. Z-scores were calculated to determine normative levels and to verify the normality of distribution for the selected skill tests. Standard Levels of Skill Requirements for the the under-16 age Category (2009–2010), where n = 80

- Results and Discussion

Table 1

Shows the number of players and the corresponding percentages for each standard level, as well as the percentages assigned to them according to the normal distribution in the stationary shooting test.

Levels	T-Score	Raw Score	Percentage	Percentage in Normal Distribution	Frequencies
Excellent	**70–80**	**45.09–49.10**	**7.5%**	**2.14%**	**6**
Very Good	**60–70**	**41.07–45.08**	**5%**	**13.59%**	**4**
Good	**50–60**	**36.99–41.06**	**18.75%**	**34.13%**	**15**
Average	**40–50**	**32.96–36.98**	**31.25%**	**34.13%**	**25**
Acceptable	**30–40**	**28.88–32.95**	**25%**	**13.59%**	**20**
Weak	**20–30**	**24.86–28.87**	**12.5%**	**2.14%**	**10**

From the above table, we interpret the most prominent value as follows: The results of the average level showed 25 repetitions with a percentage of 31.25%, which is higher than the percentage assigned to it in the normal distribution (34.13%) from a statistical comparison perspective, with raw scores ranging between [32.96–36.98]. This corresponds statistically to the average level with T-scores (40–50). It represents the highest percentage among the previously defined levels, enabling the researcher to conclude that the athletes' level falls within the standard average level, with a total sample size of 80.

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Table 2

shows the number of players and the corresponding percentages for each standard level, as well as the percentages assigned to them according to the normal distribution in the ball rolling between cones test.

Levels	T-Score	Raw Score	Percentage	Percentage in Normal Distribution	Frequencies
Excellent	70–80	13.54–11.82	7.5%	2.14%	06
Very Good	60–70	14.11–13.55	15%	13.59%	12
Good	50–60	15.23–14.12	16.25%	34.13%	13
Average	40–50	16.98–15.24	55%	34.13%	44
Acceptable	30–40	16.87–16.99	6.25%	13.59%	03
Weak	20–30	18.20–16.88	0%	2.14%	02

We observe that the values of these levels are determined according to the ideal levels associated with the values of the normal distribution, based on the frequencies and the rank of each level itself. The **excellent level** fell within the defined ranges of actual values in the *ball rolling between cones test*, where the number of players included in this level was **6 players**, representing **7.5%**, which is lower than the percentage assigned to it in the normal distribution (**2.14%**). This falls within the raw score range **[13.54–11.82]**, which corresponds to the T-score range (**70–80**) in the normal distribution.

The **average level** achieved **55%**, which is higher than the percentage assigned to it in the normal distribution (**34.13%**). This was determined within the raw score range **[16.98–15.24]**, corresponding to the T-score range (**40–50**). It represents the highest percentage among the previously defined levels, enabling the researcher to conclude that the athletes' level falls within the **standard good level**, with a total sample size of **80**.

Results

The analysis of results indicated that the majority of players were classified within the average normative level for both technical skill tests. In the stationary shooting test, the highest frequency corresponded to the average level (T-scores between 40 and 50). Similarly, results of the dribbling test between cones revealed that most participants fell within the average category, with percentages exceeding those expected under a normal distribution.

Discussion

The findings suggest that the technical skill performance of young football players in this study generally falls within acceptable normative levels. These results align with previous research indicating that school-based football programs provide a foundational level of technical competence. However, the dominance of average performance levels also reflects

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limitations in current talent identification practices, which often rely on subjective judgment rather than standardized assessment tools.

The results support the research hypothesis and emphasize the importance of integrating scientific evaluation methods into the talent selection process, particularly at early developmental stages.

4. Conclusions and suggestions

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that Algeria possesses a substantial reservoir of young football talent. Nevertheless, the processes of talent identification and selection in school and club settings remain largely unsystematic. Establishing normative levels for technical skills represents a crucial step toward improving objectivity and effectiveness in talent selection.

Scientific athlete selection is a fundamental pillar in developing football players and achieving competitive excellence, as it aims to recruit players based on objective criteria grounded in scientific principles, rather than relying solely on coaches' personal experience or subjective judgment. In this context, At-Taleb (**2015**) emphasizes that sport selection is a methodical process guided by cognitive and scientific strategies, which allows for accurate prediction of players' future performance and facilitates their placement in training programs tailored to their individual capabilities. The absence of scientific foundations in the selection process, the study argues, leads to suboptimal player development and a potential wastage of human resources within sports clubs.

Moreover, recent research highlights that the effectiveness of scientific selection Is closely linked to coaches' awareness and knowledge of talent identification criteria. At-Taleb (**2023**) found that many Algerian coaches lack sufficient familiarity with scientific and standardized selection methods, which constitutes a significant barrier to identifying and nurturing young talents, especially in youth categories. These findings underscore the necessity of implementing structured, science-based selection programs and providing coaches with appropriate training, ensuring objectivity and fairness in the selection process, while contributing to enhanced developmental outcomes in football academies and clubs

5. Recommendations

1. Standardize talent identification and selection procedures in school football and sports clubs.

2. Utilize objective measurement and evaluation tools in assessing technical skills.

3. Integrate modern technologies and data-driven methods in the talent development process.

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