

Professional paper

THE FOOTBALL PLAYER OF THE FUTURE

UDK 796.332.012.1; 796.332.015.136

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Abstract: A quick and balanced match is based on speed movement, thinking speed, the swiftness of playing the game, vision speed, and speed in changing place, all in a game of “shallow” and “narrow” formation. All this is best carried out by experienced, brave, and sociable individuals with a high IQ and with good eyesight and who are maximally devoted to the task at training and in matches.

Everything that players do at training sessions and matches is subject to constant control, by means of recording and analysing the achieved results. This constant control and self-control, from loads (following the movement of the pulse), the control of player passes, kicks, receiving the ball, returning the ball backwards, precision and carrying out breaks and throw-ins into the game by the goalkeeper is subject to constant control from which, with a pedagogical approach and a well-time pointing to good and bad moves, improves the game of the individual as well as the work of the whole team. Thus we can say: control is the mother of exactness.

Key words: *game tactics, manoeuver, shallow and narrow formation, game break, game aim, playing the ball backwards, carrying out a break, ball possession, kicking the ball clear with feet and hands, statistics and analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

A football game is played on a standard field the size of 8,250m². One player physically “covers” 1m², twenty two players “cover” 22m². This means that some 8,228m² remains uncovered. Some empirical findings claim that one player can successfully “defend” around 30m². This means that twenty two players “defend” 660m², and still there remains 7,590m² of undefended field. The only way to successfully “cover” and defend all the parts of the field is movement. This is called a manoeuver in military terminology. Tactics have been applied in the football game

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for about 160 years, while military tactics have been applied for more centuries. Thus, it is logical that football tactics rely on applicable military tactics. Also, a manoeuver is one of the most important military feats, and the following definition applies: “The manoeuver is an organized and coordinated movement of strength and resources in the preparation and carrying out of war activities on land, sea and air, in order to attain the planned aim by way of the most optimal grouping and effect at the right time and the right place.” (Vojna enciklopedija, 1973). Therefore, this feat, applied to the tactics of a football game, can be of great help for the improvement of the tactical game of individuals, the line and the entire team.

All the ways of improving a football game indicate to players and coaches that a game must be rational and precise, and all that is effective and applicable in football is borrowed from other sports and activities. What can be “taken” from volleyball is jump skills, blocking and securing the co-player, returning the ball to the back and conveying the focus of the game from one side to the other from basketball, a strong duel game from handball, planning and performing in advance from chess, etc. Also, when the ball is passed to the co-player, it must be predicted whether the co-player can successfully continue to pass the ball on, without the right to go wrong.

It is time to coordinate the loads in the training process with the time of rest and the way of building in the loads into the training process, and for them to get their right place in planning. Experts claim that “the smallest amount of training load must be found for the players to be completely psycho-physically ready, in order to successfully endure the upcoming efforts in the match”.

If progress wishes to be made, this approach to improving the tactical and technical as well as psychophysical readiness of the football player of the future must be applied to all the factors in the sport of football, from the youngest to the older and more experienced football players.

Vision is very important for football players, as motor reaction speed (Dukić, 2007), along with very high cognitive qualities, depends on eye sight. Various game combinations, game-playing, quick decision-making, timely carrying out of tactical or technical skills – all this depends on good eye sight. Courage, decisiveness, developed moral and strong willpower are features which the football players of the future should possess. Also, pain endurance, especially pain coming from fatigue, must be endured by the football player. All this can only be tolerated by psychologically strong individuals, which can through the training process improve all these features, repeating every activity many times over until it is embedded in the brain.

In this appraisal of developing the features of each player individually, we speak about some segments of the game at the matches which can be raised to a higher level. Newest research deals with the following in the given text:

- The significance of playing the ball backwards, as a technical and tactical activity, which enables the ball to be kept longer in possession, which in turn makes the players and the team more successful. This tactical activity is used increasingly at matches. Before, and often nowadays as well, it is said that

this is a debasing of the football game. But this new tactical approach has a justification. Returning the ball backwards eliminates errors in passing, the ball is kept in possession longer, and the player to whom the ball is returned has a good visualization of the arrangement of all the players, co-players and opponents in front, which is very important in making a decision on how, when and whom to pass the ball to in order for the game to continue in the eventual attack of the opposing goal. Keeping the ball in possession, along with the participation of the sweeper in defending the goal and the goalkeeper, has shown to be very effective.

- The relevance of returning the ball to the goalkeeper during the match and the need for cooperation between the players and the goalkeeper during the carrying out of the technical and tactical activities which in effect shifts the focus of the game from one side of the field to the other, which in turn helps realize better results at the matches.
- The significance of throwing in the ball backwards, during the throw-in.
- Throwing in the ball into the game via a penalty after a game break, kicking the ball clear with the foot or hand to the constantly “free” co-player realizes a better tactical training of the team, that is, players at certain positions in the team.

Some 320 matches played in Serbia and the world were recorded, in all categories of players, club and national game matches, where 1x, 2x, 3x, 4x, 5 and more times the ball was carried out, and after a return of the ball played backwards. Some national teams, such as for example the teams of Brazil, Spain and Argentina, and the clubs Barcelona, Manchester United, kept the ball in their possession for a long time, playing over ten passes after returning the ball played backward.

In this segment of the football game, it is significant to see how tactically trained certain teams are across the world, which is inevitably reflected on top results at matches. According to this research, which started on September 17, 2005 with the match between Obilic and Hajduk (K) 0:1, some 210 teams won, several successful passes were carried out, and 54 teams won when they had the ball in possession for a short time. Some 60 teams, on the other hand, played with a tie when they had the ball in their possession for a longer time. The national team of Brazil on June 15, 2010 at the match with South Korea played 150 balls backward and beat the opponent 2:1.

The national team of Serbia played over 100 passes of the ball backwards in seven matches (Dukić, 2005-2012):

15.11.2006	Serbia-Norway	2:0	played 128 balls backwards
22.08.2007	Serbia-Belgium	2:3	played 127 balls backwards
21.11.2007	Serbia-Poland	2:2	played 113 balls backwards
07.09.2008	Serbia-Faroe Islands	2:0	played 114 balls backwards
10.02.2009	Serbia-Cyprus	2:0	played 132 balls backwards
11.08.2009	Serbia-Israel	1:0	played 112 balls backwards

07.04.2010	Japan-Serbia	0:3	played 126 balls backwards
01.04.2006	Partizan-C. Zvezda	0:0	C. Zvezda only 11 balls backw. Partizan 54 balls backwards
29.10.2005	C. Zvezda-Javor	2:0	played 111 balls backwards
01.04.2007	C. Zvezda-Mladost (A)	2:0	played 138 balls backwards
28.08.2007	C. Zvezda –Rangers	0:0	played 106 balls backwards
28.10.2007	C. Zvezda-Napredak (K)	1:1	played 110 balls backwards
21.05.2011	C. Zvezda-Borac (C)	0:2	played 134 balls backwards, Borac only 43 balls backwards

The national team of Brazil played 101, 145 and 151 balls backwards in three matches, and in all three matches it was more successful in its results than the opponent. The Barcelona team in seven matches played more than 100 balls backwards: 112, 113, 117, 120, 121, 137 and 139, and it was more successful than its opponent. The Chelsea team in five games played more than 100 balls backwards: 105, 108, 109, 117 and 157, and was also more successful than its opponent.

Lost balls occurred mostly in the first pass and the second pass - as much as 50% of the total played balls after the ball returned backward. This is the largest problem in this segment of the game and there is not much space here for progress in the game, which must be built in more successfully in the training process of football players.

Returning the ball to the goalkeeper

Returning the ball to the goalkeeper during the match is a tactical activity, which preserves the ball in possession and often in this way, the focus of the game is shifted from one side of the field to the other, which creates conditions for success over the opponent. This research produced the statistical fact that 1,773 balls were returned to the goalkeeper and passed to co-players, but that 1,678 balls were kicked onto the field without any control, that is, these balls were most often taken over by the defence of the opponent.

22.01.2006	Manchester United goalkeeper - from 14 returned balls, he passed 5 to his co-players, and 9 balls were kicked without control.
27.07.2006	C. Zvezda goalkeeper - from 10 returned balls, he passed 1 to his co-players, and 9 balls were kicked without control.
19.08.2007	Manchester United goalkeeper - from 18 returned balls, 11 were passed to co-players, and 7 were kicked without control.
03.10.2007	Chelsea goalkeeper - from 13 returned balls, he passed 5 to his co-players, and 8 balls were kicked without control.

08.01.2008	Tottenham goalkeeper - from 13 passed balls, 3 were passed to his co-players, and 10 kicked without control.
16.04.2008	Zemun goalkeeper - from 15 returned balls, he kicked all of them without any control.
21.09.2008	Villa Real goalkeeper - from 23 returned balls, he passed 5 to his co-players, and 18 balls were kicked without control.
11.10.2008	Serbian national team goalkeeper – from 23 passed balls, 12 balls were passed to co-players, and 11 were kicked without control.
10.02.2009	Serbian national team goalkeeper – from 25 returned balls, he passed 15 to his co-players, and 10 balls were kicked without control. (Dukić, 2005-2012).

Of 320 matches, at 21 matches not one ball was returned to the goalkeeper. The conclusion is that this research offers experts something to think about: how much and how this segment of the game, which is without doubt an opportunity for progress in the football game, can be included in the training process.

The significance of throwing in the ball backwards

Carrying out a game break is a tactical activity which should be one hundred per cent successful, as it is carried out by hand, under the condition that the ball is passed to the co-player. Usually, the ball is passed to the co-player who can be found in the direction of the opposing goal. Most often this player is surrounded by his opponents, and the sideline is also an ‘opponent’, so the chances that the ball is received and passed to the co-player are small. It is tactically sound that the ball is thrown into the game towards the “free” co-player, these being midfielders or most often the sweeper, who is free and can be found near his own goal, in comparison with the player throwing in the ball into the game from the sideline. He can successfully pass a ball thus received to his co-players, as almost all the co-players and players are his opponents in the central field, as well as enact a precise shifting of the game focus from one side to the other, and in this way successfully take part in organizing an attack of the opposing goal.

In this research, some 2,760 throw-ins were recorded by throwing in the ball backwards during 320 played matches. At 42 matches, not one throw-in was carried out, which means that the mentioned data is valid for only 272 played matches (Dukić, 2005-2012):

- at one match 16 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 3 matches 13 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 4 matches 12 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 11 matches 11 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 12 matches 10 backward throw-ins were carried out,

- at 28 matches 9 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 39 matches 8 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 40 matches 7 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 52 matches 6 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 80 matches 5 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 85 matches 4 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 89 matches 3 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 98 matches 2 backward throw-ins were carried out,
- at 54 matches 1 backward throw-in was carried out.

It is a fact that the ball is thrown in when it is out of play most often from the front, even though everyone understands that this does not improve the game of football. Thus coaches and players must bear in mind that the ball will be retained for longer in the possession of the co-players if it is passed backwards from the sideline, which creates a prerequisite for the successful carrying out of an attack of the opposing goal.

Throwing in the ball from the penalty area, kicking the ball clear with the foot or hand

A game break which occurs while throwing in the ball from the penalty area is frequent – occurring every two to three minutes during the game. Due to this, this tactical element of the football game must have an appropriate place in the tactical preparation of the team. A good kicking the ball clear secures a good start of the attack. Thus often it can heard that “a good and organized attack starts from the goalkeeper”, whether the ball is hit by the foot or the hand, it is a still or moving ball. In tactical preparations of football players and teams, the exercise must be carried out so many times that it is well-balanced, precise and quick, as this is the way for it to become embedded in the brain of each player taking part in the training session. Along with the preparation of the goalkeeper, the side players and the midfielders must also be prepared, and in fact, so must a minimum of 3-4 players “offering” themselves to the goalkeeper to play the game.

The game break has been statistically and analytically processed, so there should be no dilemma about the relevance of its application on training. Statistics were kept at matches for all rankings, national and club teams and teams of different age groups. Indicators clearly point out that this game segment has no adequate weight in application, from planning to realization at training sessions.

It is high time for experts (coaches) to work a little more on game tactics, where this break would be better built into the training process. In our review of the game, goalkeepers are the most important. They must physically

and especially mentally be included and think about their contribution, and attempt to lose as small a number of balls as possible after this break.

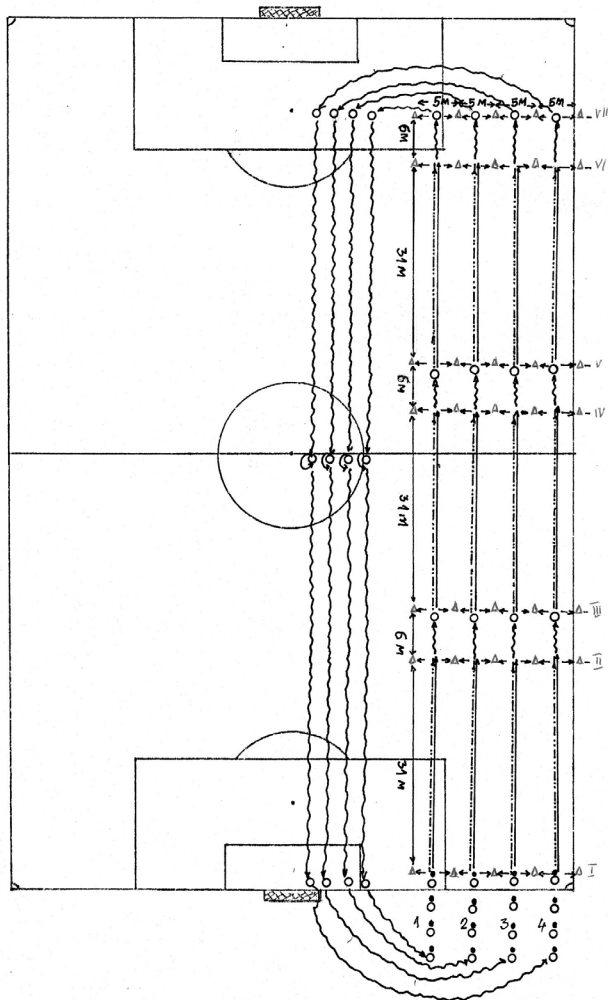
The above indicators point to another problem in playing the game. As there are many game breaks at matches, sometimes even more than 50, and some 30 seconds for carrying out is used at every break, this means that these breaks take sometimes over 25 minutes from effective game playing. If something were to be done about this, most probably there could be a way to diminish the loss of time for this break, which would extend the effective match duration from the current approximately 60 minutes by at least 10 minutes extra time, which would mean much for the sport of football.

The idea of improving the game cannot be carried out if something is not changed in the training process. In training, all the activities (tactical, technical, psycho-physical) must be subjected to a more successful control in the very training process. The exercise given at the end of this text will be of a great help for coaches, as well as the players, to, by training the game elements, obtain the correct data on how precisely and quickly which activities are carried out in the tactical and technical exercises.

The following statistics clearly prove the prior claims (Dukić, 2005-2012):

			Host surrendered			Guest surrendered	
			correct	no kontrol		correct	no kontrol
15.05.2007.	C. zvezda – Vojvodina	2:0	8	3	11:10	6	4
23.05.2007.	Milan – Liverpool	2:1	8	5	13:16	8	8
11.06.2007.	Serbia – Italy	1:0	3	7	10:15	3	12
07.07.2007.	Venezuela – Uruguay	4:1	6	9	15:20	11	9
22.07.2007.	Spain – Greece	0:0	12	4	16:19	9	10
22.07.2007.	Serbia – Germany	2:3	11	12	23: 9	9	0
01.08.2007.	C. Zvezda – Lavandia	1:0	14	6	20:17	3	14
08.08.2007.	Lavandia - C. Zvezda	2:1	9	9	18:25	7	18
23.09.2007.	Policajac - Borac (L)	2:0	8	11	19:22	9	13
21.11.2007.	Serbia – Poland	2:2	14	2	16:16	3	13
12.12.2007.	G. Rangers – Lyon	0:3	10	7	17:19	5	14
26.03.2008.	Teleoptik – Policajac	5:0	6	10	16:39	16	23
19.06.2008.	Croatia – Turkey	1:3	2	11	13:15	4	11
12.07.2008.	Spartacus – CSKA	5:1	8	12	20:10	6	4
21.09.2008.	V.Real - Manchester U.	0:0	15	18	33:14	7	7
10.02.2009.	Serbia – Cyprus	2:0	15	10	25:29	15	14
28.06.2009.	Brazil – America	3:2	10	5	15:20	6	14
25.10.2009.	Sindjelić – Kovačević	2:0	6	13	19:30	12	18
18.11.2009.	C. Zvezda – Partizan	1:4	9	20	29:14	10	4
12.12.2009.	Liverpool – Arsenal	1:2	4	7	11:23	9	14
21.03.2010.	Sindelić – Hajduk	1:0	8	21	29:16	3	13
25.04.2010.	Hajduk (K) - C. Zvezda	0:1	6	19	25:16	9	7
14.06.2010.	Japan – Cameroon	1:0	10	16	26:27	18	9
22.06.2010.	France - S. Africa	2:1	13	11	24:27	18	9
02.07.2010.	Uruguay – Ghana	1:1	11	8	19:30	15	15
18.10.2010.	Blackburn - Sunderland	0:0	7	12	19:18	4	14
03.11.2010.	Partizan – Braga	0:1	7	12	19:18	8	10
18.05.2011.	Porto – Braga	1:0	14	8	22:29	10	19
23.08.2011.	Malme - Dinamo (Z)	2:0	8	0	8:24	7	17

Picture 1. *Physical preparation – moving with the ball and precision of passing the ball according to direction and by depth*



Sixteen players (more if possible) take part in the exercise (Picture 1), arranged in four columns, four players in each column. All the players are in possession of the ball. The front players in all four columns are inside the field of play, set at around 1m from the sideline, at a 5m distance. Six cones are set in a line, parallel with the sideline. Each of the seven set lines, with five cones each, represents the field of play, where players move from one to the next line, along the depth of the field. The lines, with cones set along the depth, represent the 5m wide corridors, within which the players move, conquering the space and carrying out the exercise. The distance between the first and second cone lines by depth is

31m. The distance between the second and third lines along the depth is 6m. The distance between the third and fourth cone line is 31m. The distance between the fourth and fifth lines along the depth is 6m. The distance between the fifth and sixth line of cones along the depth is 31m, and the distance between the sixth and seventh cone line is 6m. Each player moves with the ball along the proportion of his own corridor, overcoming 111m in various lines. The task of the training, as is the topic of this paper, is the improvement of the physical readiness of the players and the precision of passing the ball along the depth.

At a sign from the coach, all the front players pass the long ball along the depth of the corridor, but this is done in such a way that they reach it at the other gate, receive it, and then lead it 6m along the alignment of the corridor. When they reach the third cone line, they again pass the long ball along the ground, with such strength that it can be sent to the fourth cone line by sprinting. There it is received, and led to the fifth cone line. From that line, the ball is led 31m to the sixth cone line, then immediately a sprint is carried out, in order for the ball to be received and led to the seventh cone line. As soon as the seventh cone line is reached, the ball is led to the left, out of the last cone line along the depth, from where the ball is led by rolling on the left side. When the middle side line is passed, the players rotate by about 180° around their axis and continue to lead the ball by rolling it in the former direction, only now by the right side and using the opposite foot in regards to the previous one, to the starting position, for the beginning of the exercise.

When the front players during the exercise reach the sixth cone line, the exercise has begun by the other players of these four columns, in the way their predecessors had done. All the players carry out the exercise in the same way and when they are finished, it can be said that the exercise was carried out for the first time in the first series.

Exercises improve the explosive strength based on the start, stop, change of tempo and movement direction. The speed, speed endurance and endurance during a longer repeating of the exercise is improved, as well as coordination in working with and without the ball. In working with the ball, good coordination is necessary during the leading of the ball, and especially during ball rolling, passing and taking over the ball, and during rotation in leading. Sprinting with the ball, with the obligation for the ball to stop in a certain space where it must be controlled, as the ball starts from the player, demands good coordination. Thus, this greatly improves coordination.

In the technical sense, the leading of the ball and rolling it is improved, as well as passing the ball through the posts and controlling it (when it is reached), and the precision of passing the ball through the posts, the precision of passing a depth ball through the posts and the precision of passing the depth ball at a certain distance, as well as bending the ball quickly.

In the tactical sense, the tactical passing of the ball by depth is improved, by leading the ball in a disciplined way, as every running out and lagging behind

in carrying out exercises makes the task hard to achieve. A precise and timely playing of a depth ball is a good prerequisite for playing a counterattack or shifting the focus of the game from one to the other side of the field.

During these exercises, the players must incessantly be mentally engaged, eternally active with movements and game playing in order for every activity to be synchronized, and for there not to be a lagging behind in the realizing of the planned activities. Especially relevant here is a collective carrying out of activities, as only in this way will an exercise be carried out well, and the effect of the exercises will be positive for all. The delay in starting the planned activities will disrupt the success of carrying out tasks for each player individually, as well as the entire group (all players in exercises or at the match may disrupt a good realization of the exercise). Along with full mental engagement, an expected progress in the game should be expected, which is the result of a well carried out training process.

The exercise is carried out in series. The number of series, the number of repeats in one series, a break between series and in the series itself, depends on the age category of the players, their training, the period of the training process, the season, the weather conditions, and the aim and purpose of training.

Planning the training process will have an effect on playing the game, if that plan is realized. At the end of this text, a table is given which shows the loads for each player individually, and for all the players together, for one exercise carried out. Some 3,752.4 meters were run during an exercise.

Table 1. *A review of loads of players in an exercise*

player	sprint	Leading the ball by rolling it	Leading the ball	Change of direction and movement tempo	Total
I k 1	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	6,2 = 38,4	142 x	217,6
o 2	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	6,2 = 38,4	142 x	217,6
l 3	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	6,2 = 38,4	142 x	217,6
o 4	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	6,2 = 38,4	142 x	217,6
n a	322,4m	394,4m	153,6m	568 x	870,4m
II k 1	13,1 = 81,2	14,9 = 92,4	9,1 = 56,4	155 x	230,0
o 2	13,1 = 81,2	14,9 = 92,4	9,1 = 56,4	155 x	230,0
l 3	13,1 = 81,2	14,9 = 92,4	9,1 = 56,4	155 x	230,0
o 4	13,1 = 81,2	14,9 = 92,4	9,1 = 56,4	155 x	230,0
n a	234,8m	369,6m	225,6m	620 x	920,0m
III k 1	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	12,0 = 74,4	169 x	253,6
o 2	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	12,0 = 74,4	169 x	253,6
l 3	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	12,0 = 74,4	169 x	253,6
o 4	13,0 = 80,6	15,9 = 98,6	12,0 = 74,4	169 x	253,6
n a	322,4m	394,4m	297,6m	676 x	1014,4m
IV k 1	13,0 = 80,6	15,8 = 98,0	14,9 = 92,4	203 x	271,0
o 2	13,0 = 80,6	15,8 = 98,0	14,9 = 92,4	203 x	271,0
l 3	13,0 = 80,6	15,8 = 98,0	14,9 = 92,4	203 x	271,0
o 4	13,0 = 80,6	15,8 = 98,0	14,9 = 92,4	203 x	271,0
n a	322,4m	392,0m	369,6m	812 x	1084,0m
	1202,0m	1504,0m	1046,4m	2676 x	3752,4m

CONCLUSION

The football game is constantly being developed and improved. Following the development of all sports achievements and their application in the sport of football, the standard of the football game is being raised. The focus point of all the events in the game of football, the football player of the future, must be subjected to all research novelties in the technical, tactical and general-physical aspect, along with a maximal focus on the psychological, physiological, mental and other features.

The training processes of football players change, as is also the case with demands in the game of football game. If not trained by experts, players are sure to lag behind in expertise. Physical readiness is carried out with the ball, by way of improving the technical and tactical demands. Why would a player run without a ball? At the same distance, cyclical and acyclical movements differ in the number of steps by about 30%, in favour of acyclical movements. The distance of running with the ball, along with situational moving, demands a maximal control of the ball. Mental engagement is maximal, as moving with the ball in a group demands a strict control of the ball, which will affect positively all those taking part in the exercising.

Tactical exercises must use proper load dosing, in order to improve all forms of psychophysical readiness. The ball in the training process is a huge motivation for work, in which fatigue is endured more easily.

All the statistical data from the research *Statistics for playing the ball backwards in a match*, which uses exact data properly and analytically processed and presented, conveys an unambiguous message, what and how to improve a game of football on an individual and team plan.

The given tactical exercise is a combination of tactical and technical training and the psycho-physical readiness of all the participants, which can also give an assessment of the training status of each player in situational conditions.

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