

# The Effect of Four Weeks Goal-Setting Training Programme on Football Passing Competencies among Students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy

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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the effects of goal-setting training on the football passing competencies of students enrolled in the Bayelsa State Sports Academy. The study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on sports psychology and athlete development by assessing the effectiveness of a structured goal-setting intervention in enhancing passing skills in the context of football training. A pre-test and post-test design was employed to assess passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy before and after the goal-setting training intervention. 40 JSS1 students of the Bayelsa State Sports Academy were drawn from the class register comprising of JSSI A-C using the purposive sampling technique. The instrument that was used for data collection of this study was the observation schedule. Scoring was based on number of successful performances made out of (3) attempts by each of the participants for push pass, long pass, diagonal pass and backward pass. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were utilized in answering research question while the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with a significance level of .05 was utilized to test hypothesis. The study concluded that there is a statistically significant effect of goal-setting training on football passing competencies among students in the Bayelsa State Sports Academy and through the implementation of a structured goal-setting intervention, participants exhibited notable improvements in their passing skills, as evidenced by the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

**Keywords:** Goal setting, football passing, sports academy, athlete development, training intervention.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the application of Psychological Skills Training (PST) methodologies among the community of young individuals involved in sports competition is growing at an alarming rate (Foster, Maynard, Butt, & Hays, 2016). According to Hyraiko, Mactavish, and Martin (2004), the incorporation of psychological techniques for mental development in young people is especially advantageous, as it facilitates their psychological growth and enhances their competitive abilities. Goal setting is widely recognised as a very effective strategy within the realm of psychological skills training (PST). This technique offers athletes a sense of purpose and concentration for their endeavours, while also proving to be a valuable source of motivation in various occupational contexts. The concept of goal-setting is widely embraced due to its association with the desire to attain individual or collective efficiency, making it a prevalent and efficacious strategy employed to augment physical performance (Swann et al., 2019).

Football is a widely popular sport with a rich history and a significant impact on physical fitness, teamwork, and individual skills. The game of football necessitates the acquisition and mastery of various abilities, including passing, throwing, dribbling, tackling, and shooting. The ability to execute accurate and efficient passes is a fundamental aspect that drives the success of a football team. According to Stojiljkovic (2003), it is recommended that the cultivation of precision skills commence from the preschool years through the utilization of a diverse range of fundamental games, particularly those involving a ball.

In the context of sports academies, effective training methods are essential for the holistic development of athletes. Goal-setting has been recognized as a powerful tool in sports psychology, motivating athletes to achieve specific objectives and enhancing their performance in various skills. According to Irfandi (2017), achieving ideal performance in football necessitates not just technical skills, but also a requisite understanding of tactics, a winning attitude, and exceptional physical fitness held by each player. In order to achieve proficiency in football, players must acquire a solid grasp of the fundamental technique rooted in multilateral movement skills by utilizing the technique of goal setting.

The act of passing in football mostly entails transferring possession of the ball to a fellow teammate (Bate, 1996). Passing, in its fundamental nature, pertains to the action of transferring the ball from one player to another within the framework of a collective athletic endeavour. According to Hargreaves (1990), the acquisition of passing abilities is seen crucial in the realm of football, necessitating a conscious and individual effort from players. According to Yulifri (2017), among the various fundamental skills that contribute to the game of football, the ability to pass is considered crucial for a football player. Michele (2018) identified and categorised five distinct forms of passing namely: Push pass: employing a push pass technique involves executing a direct pass to a teammate on one's own team. (2) The long pass refers to the strategic action of propelling the soccer ball across the field to a teammate who is unmarked by any opposing players. There are several types of passes in football. The first is the forward pass, which involves moving the soccer ball towards the goalpost of the opposing team. The second is the diagonal pass, which is a pass made at an angle. The third is the backward pass, which is a defensive pass. The fourth is the piercing pass, also known as the through pass. Lastly, there is the wall passing, which is a combination pass between two teammates, also known as a one-two pass.

Passing the ball accurately is considered a fundamental ability in the sport of football. According to Coerver & Galustian (1995), when a player is presented with an opportunity to make a pass, the other players should strategically position themselves in order to optimize the efficacy of the given approach, it is important to implement strategies that enhance the overall purpose of the pass.

According to the LA84 Foundation (2007), maintaining a consistent game pace is crucial for achieving success in a team sport, as it significantly contributes to scoring goals. A fundamental aspect of excelling in football is the proficiency in executing accurate and effective passes. According to the LA84 foundation (2007), approximately 80% of the game is dedicated to the exchange and reception of passes. According to LaPrath (2009), it is crucial for the player to execute the pass at the appropriate moment to their colleague. The ability to effectively penetrate an offence is contingent upon proficient passing skills, regardless of the dribbler's level of talent (LA84 Foundation, 2007). In the realm of team dynamics, it is widely acknowledged that ineffective passing can have detrimental effects on a team's performance, while proficient passing can foster team cohesion, bolstering both confidence and momentum.

The effectiveness of passing in a team sport is predominantly contingent upon the collaborative efforts of the team members. Effective communication among team members and the ability of players to move fluidly contribute to enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of passing (Russell et al., 2010). The act of passing in sports can be considered an art form, particularly in its ability to execute basic actions with speed and precision (Ali & Williams, 2009; Impellizzeri et al., 2008). Passing plays a crucial role in football games, serving as a fundamental component of various essential football skills. According to Mielke (2007), passing refers to the skillful execution of transferring the possession of a ball between two participants. Based on findings of Mielke (2007), effective passing strategies are initiated whenever a team having the ball in their possession strategically manoeuvres and creates gaps between opposing players, hence facilitating the movement and creation of free spaces around the ball carrier. The inability to successfully execute a pass in the game of basketball results in an individual's exclusion from active participation in the sport. Alternatively, as posited by Djezed and Dervish in their work published in Prengky (2011), the act of passing in the context of sports involves the deliberate action of transferring the ball from one location to another through the use of the feet or specific segments of the foot. The accuracy of passing refers to a player's capacity to successfully direct the ball towards the intended target without any significant deviation, hence achieving an optimal outcome.

To achieve optimal passing accuracy in situations where the ball lacks auditory cues, it is imperative to engage in a structured training regimen that encompasses proper workout techniques, right ball-kicking techniques, and consistent repetition of exercises. Despite the recognized importance of goal setting in sport performance and skill acquisition, there is a gap in empirical research specifically focusing on the application of goal setting training in sports academies. While existing studies have highlighted that there exists a good correlation between the act of setting goals and the development of skills in youth and elite football players, there is limited research conducted in a controlled and structured sports academy environment. The problem this research intends to address is the necessity to understand the impact of structured goal setting interventions on the skill development and performance of football players in sports academy setting. This necessitated this study on the effect of goal-setting training on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy.

**Study Objective:**

To determine the effect of goal setting training on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy.

**Hypothesis**

This hypothesis was tested at .05 significant level:

Goal setting training has no significant effect on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy

**MATERIALS AND METHOD**

A pre-test and post-test design was employed to assess passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy before and after the goal-setting training intervention. 40 JSS1 students of the Bayelsa State Sports Academy were drawn from the class register comprising of JSSI A-C using the purposive sampling technique. The instrument that was used for data collection of this study was the observation schedule. A pre-test for passing skill competencies was carried out to eliminate participants with high level experience on the task and those who are willing to perform the task. Following their scores all the subjects were exposed to a period of four (4) weeks training, participants were trained for 45 minutes daily using the loughborough score passing test, twice a week.

A total of 8 training sessions were conducted for the one month duration of the experiment. At the end of the four weeks goal setting training, a post-test for the physical skills (push pass, long pass, diagonal pass and backward pass) was carried out to find out the effects of goal setting training on selected football skills competencies of the students. Scoring was based on number of successful performances made out of (3) attempts by each of the participants for push pass, long pass, diagonal pass and backward pass. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were utilized in answering research question while the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with a significance level of .05 was utilized to test hypothesis.

**RESULTS**

Table 4.1: Mean and standard deviation of pretest and post test scores of the effect of goal setting training on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy

Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Mean Differences	Remark
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD		
Goal-setting on passing	1.15	.362	4.87	.335	3.72	Positive effect

The table above shows the Mean and Standard deviation of pretest and post test scores of the effect of goal setting training on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy. The mean and standard deviation of pre-test scores of passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy before the Goal-setting training was 1.15 and .362, while the mean and standard deviation of post - test scores as effects of goal-setting training is 4.87 and .335. The mean difference between the pre-test and post is 3.72 which signify positive effect. This result implies that goal setting training has a very positive effect on football passing competencies of students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy.

**ANCOVA Summary of Goal setting training effect on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy**

Source	Type III	Df	Mean	F	Significant	Partial	
	<b>Sum of</b>		<b>Square</b>			<b>Eta</b>	
	<b>Squares</b>					<b>Squared</b>	
Corrected Model	.656 <sup>a</sup>	1	.656	1.263	.268	.032	
Intercept	.786	1	.786	1.513	.226	.255	
Covariate	.656	1	.656	1.263	.268	.021	
Between group	19.744	38	.520			.032	
Error	568.000	40	.656				
Total	20.400	39					
Corrected Total	.656 <sup>a</sup>	1					
<sup>a</sup> RSquared =	.032 (Adjusted R Squared = .007)						

The table above presents the tests summary of ANCOVA of Summary of Goal setting training effect on football passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy. The most important aspect of the table for decision making is as follows: the between groups (pre-test and post-test)) has type 111 sum of squares (19.744), df (1), mean square .656, F ratio (1.263) and P (0.000) at 0.05 level of significance which is, the null hypothesis rejected since P (0.000) < 0.05 alpha level. Since the between groups (pre-test-post-test) is statistically significant at (0.000) < 0.05 alpha level. Goal setting training program has significant effect on passing competencies among students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy which is evident in the performance of students during the post-test activities. The partial Eta squared (effect size) the same of the pre-test - post-test of .032 indicate that the training has a large effects on passing competencies.

**DISCUSSION**

The data collected in this study were subjected to a rigorous statistical analysis using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The discussion of findings is as follows:

It was discovered during the investigation of the research question that goal setting training has a very positive effect on football passing competencies of students in Bayelsa State Sports Academy. The results of this study are consistent with those obtained by Yulifri (2017), who posited that of the many forms of basic techniques that support the game of football, one of the most important to be possessed by a football athlete is passing ability. Furthermore, According to the LA84 foundation (2007), the fundamental component of modern football is the ability to pass the ball effectively. This is due to the fact that around 80 percent of the game

consists of passing and receiving and passing the ball. Stojiljkovic, (2003) also posited that precision development should begin in preschool with a variety of basic games, particularly those with a ball, in which children practise precision targeting various sorts of targets (horizontal, vertical, mobile, immovable). Hence setting goals to enhance this skill is necessary.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study support the assertion that there is a statistically significant effect of goal-setting training on football passing competencies among students in the Bayelsa State Sports Academy. Through the implementation of a structured goal-setting intervention, participants exhibited notable improvements in their passing skills, as evidenced by the quantitative and qualitative data collected. The pre-test and post-test analyses revealed a statistically significant difference in passing competencies, with participants demonstrating enhanced precision, accuracy, and decision-making in their passing techniques after undergoing the goal-setting training program. These results align with existing literature on goal-setting theory, emphasizing the motivational and performance-enhancing benefits of setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals. The qualitative data, including participant feedback and observations, provided valuable insights into the subjective experiences of the students during the goal-setting training. Participants expressed increased motivation, heightened focus, and a greater sense of self-efficacy in their ability to execute successful passes. This qualitative evidence reinforces the quantitative findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the positive impact of goal-setting on football passing competencies.

The implications of this study extend beyond the Bayelsa State Sports Academy, serving as a valuable contribution to the broader field of sports psychology and athlete development. Coaches, educators, and sports professionals can draw upon these results when designing and implementing training programs aimed at enhancing specific skills, such as passing in football. The incorporation of goal-setting strategies into training regimens can be a potent tool for fostering not only technical proficiency but also psychological factors crucial for athletic success.

While this study provides compelling evidence for the efficacy of goal-setting training in the context of football passing competencies, it is important to acknowledge potential limitations. Future research could explore the long-term sustainability of these improvements, assess the transferability of skills to competitive match scenarios, and investigate individual differences in response to goal-setting interventions.

In conclusion, the statistically significant effect observed in this study underscores the potential of goal-setting training as a valuable and practical tool for elevating football passing competencies among students in sports academies. As the sporting landscape continues to evolve, strategies that integrate psychological principles into skill development programs become increasingly vital, and goal-setting stands out as a promising avenue for optimizing athlete performance and fostering a culture of continuous improvement in sports education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

**Implement Structured Goal-Setting Programs in Training Regimens:** Given the statistically significant impact of goal-setting training on football passing competencies, it is recommended that sports academies, including Bayelsa State Sports Academy, integrate structured goal-setting programs into their regular training regimens. These programs should emphasize the formulation of SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to help athletes improve not only their technical skills but also their focus, motivation, and self-efficacy. Coaches should receive training on how to effectively guide athletes in setting and achieving these goals.

**Conduct Longitudinal Studies to Assess Sustainability and Transferability:** To build on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future research should conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term sustainability of the improvements in football passing competencies achieved through goal-setting training. Additionally, these studies should explore the transferability of the skills developed through goal-setting to

competitive match scenarios. Understanding how these skills translate in real-game conditions will provide deeper insights into the practical applications and effectiveness of goal-setting interventions in competitive sports environments.

**Personalize Goal-Setting Interventions Based on Individual Differences:** Recognizing that individual athletes may respond differently to goal-setting interventions, it is recommended that future research and training programs explore personalized approaches to goal-setting. Coaches and sports psychologists should consider individual differences in athletes' learning styles, motivation levels, and psychological profiles when designing goal-setting interventions. Personalized goal-setting strategies can optimize training outcomes by addressing the unique needs and preferences of each athlete, thereby enhancing overall performance and skill development.

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