

**THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE GAMES IN IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL FITNESS
OF YOUNG STUDENT FOOTBALL PLAYERS IN GENERAL EDUCATION
SCHOOLS**

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Annotation: This article discusses the importance of active games in improving the physical fitness of young football players in preschool and general education schools, stimulating their interest in football, and enhancing their health status through increased motor activity. It also describes methods for teaching technical elements such as ball handling, passing, receiving the ball, and shooting. In addition, recommendations are provided on methods for developing children's physical abilities in parallel through football activities.

Keywords: general education school, football technique, football tactics, passing, technical elements, positional approach, game, method, motor activity, physical qualities, health.

At present, under the leadership of our Head of State, great attention is being paid to the development of physical education and sports. In particular, the Resolution No. PQ-3031 dated June 3, 2017, "On Measures to Further Develop Physical Education and Mass Sports," and the Decree and Resolution No. PF-5368 dated March 5, 2018, "On Measures to Radically Improve the System of State Administration in the Field of Physical Education and Sports," emphasize issues related to strengthening the health of the population of our country, improving physical fitness, and forming a healthy lifestyle.

Through physical education, national and active games play a significant role in strengthening the health of young people, increasing their level of physical fitness, developing their readiness for labor and defense of the Motherland, as well as in the development of young football players. Various national and active games are of great importance in educating young people to be well-rounded and healthy, and in developing their physical qualities.

The preschool and school education process is indeed based on paying close attention to children's physical development and individual needs. Through the work of physical education instructors and teachers, it is possible to develop children's motor skills, as well as to better understand their individual characteristics by observing their agility, strength, and coordination. This method helps educators develop appropriate approaches for each child and increase their achievements.

In addition, by creating a child development map, it becomes possible to continuously monitor and improve the educational process. One of the advantages of this system is that by individualizing the educational process, teaching methods that meet children's needs can be selected, thereby enhancing their success. Continuation of this approach helps improve children's overall development and prepares them for life.

It is necessary for children to gain experience in the following types of activities, including performing exercises aimed at developing physical qualities such as coordination and flexibility. These activities contribute to the proper formation of the musculoskeletal system, the development of balance, coordination of movements, and the development of both gross and fine motor skills of both hands. They also help to form correct, safe basic movements that do not harm the body (walking, running, jumping, turning in different directions), provide initial understanding of certain sports, and enable children to master active games along with their rules.

In addition, it is essential to develop goal orientation and self-regulation in the field of physical activity, as well as to form the values of a healthy lifestyle and to master its basic norms and rules, including developing healthy habits in nutrition and physical activity.

Motor activity is the successful development and improvement of young children's physical and mental abilities. It represents a combination of various types of physical movements carried out through independently performed physical exercises, together with the movements performed in everyday activities. Movement is considered an integral part of the human body as a living organism.

In educational institutions specializing in physical education and sports, one of today's pressing issues is the development of new pedagogical technologies within the process of analyzing training sessions based on national and active games. These tasks include increasing students' levels of speed, strength, and endurance; studying the impact of training loads on the body; and ensuring the effectiveness of exercises.

In the system of physical education and sports, educating the younger generation to be healthy and well-rounded is considered one of the priority tasks. In particular, promoting football at the preschool and general education levels is of great importance in ensuring children's physical development. Proper organization of training sessions at the initial stage of young football players' preparation and fostering their interest in sports are among the key aspects of the pedagogical process.

In determining the effectiveness of active games in improving the physical fitness of young football players, the following tasks are required to be carried out:

- identifying the role of national and active games in developing children's physical qualities;
- using game-based methods in teaching technical elements during football training sessions;
- studying and analyzing the impact of active games on children's motor activity and health.

Active games correspond to the age-related characteristics of children's bodies and satisfy their natural need for movement. Active games used in football training sessions contribute to the development of physical qualities such as agility, speed, strength, and endurance.

Through game exercises performed with the ball, football techniques—passing, receiving the ball, shooting, and dribbling—are effectively mastered. Games organized on the basis of a positional approach develop children's tactical thinking in football and strengthen cooperation within the team.

In addition, regular physical activity strengthens children's cardiovascular and respiratory systems, improving their overall health. Through active games, training sessions are organized in an engaging and effective manner.

Games represent collective or team activities, which differ from other sports in that an athlete in individual sports competes for every meter, kilogram, or second in order to achieve personal success or to master a perfect form of movement. At first glance, the role of playing methods in sports games may seem less significant, and sports games themselves may appear highly emotional and mainly aimed at team building. However, this view is incorrect. Modern sports games are multifaceted activities that, along with a high level of ball-handling technique, require endurance, willpower, and the ability to think strategically.

It is impossible to train an athlete without developing these components during competitions. No matter how interesting and varied training sessions may be, they eventually become tiring and monotonous. Therefore, the phrase "It is necessary to use interesting active games during training" is attributed to the famous football player Pelé.

In training sessions for sports games, alongside specialized exercises, active games are also used to help solve tasks related to athletes' physical, technical, and tactical preparation. Many coaches recommend that learners perform ball exercises in a game-based format during the training

process. At the same time, by gradually increasing the complexity of active games and incorporating elements of competition and physical challenge, athletes are taught to make independent decisions. Such movement activities, conducted in conditions close to real competition, help improve skills and provide opportunities to consolidate the necessary abilities. The technical and tactical components of various sports games are largely similar to one another. Therefore, activities such as intercepting the ball from the opponent, moving with the ball during the game, and acting together with teammates can be applied equally successfully in games such as basketball and football, including activities like distance or linear and opposing relays, and games such as “Ball to the Center” and “Do Not Pass the Ball to the Playmaker.”

At the same time, each active game has its own specific methods and technical variations. For example, basketball is characterized by competition for a rebounded ball, hockey involves individual physical duels using strength, volleyball requires the ability to block at the net, and football involves playing the ball with the head and feet, and so on. In this context, the selection of auxiliary exercises depends on the specific characteristics of each sport.

Below, we present several specialized active games used in football and football training sessions:

“Kicking the Ball Against the Wall” Game

Preparation for the Game. The playing area is divided into two halves by a center line. A line is drawn on the wall at a height of 1.5 meters from the floor. The space or zone from the floor up to this line serves as the goal. The players are divided into two teams of 5–8 players each. Each team chooses any side of its own half of the court.

Description of the Game. The ball is tossed between two players to start the game. When the ball crosses to one side of the court, the players pass the ball to one another, waiting for a suitable moment to strike the target. The team without the ball organizes defensive play in the zone where the ball is located, forming a “wall” and using one-on-one defense. If the attacking team manages to direct the ball into the goal zone (the front line of the court), they score a point. After that, the opposing team takes its turn, passing the ball among themselves and attempting to complete the attack. The ball may be controlled with the feet and body and returned using the head.

The game lasts 10 minutes, after which the teams switch sides of the court. The team that scores the most points within 20 minutes is declared the winner. The game may also be played using two balls.

Rules of the Game:

1. Crossing the center line and touching the ball with the hands are prohibited.
2. If the ball kicked by the attacking team rebounds off the wall and returns to the court without touching any defenders, possession of the ball is awarded to the opposing team.
3. If the ball is touched by hand or if one player defends the “goal” line three times consecutively, a penalty shot is taken from the center line of the conditional goal.

“Jugglers” Game

Preparation for the Game. Players take turns throwing a volleyball or football above their heads. By leaning the head and body backward, bending at the waist, and tensing the back and neck muscles, they then make a sharp forward movement of the body and strike the ball with the head. At the moment of heading the ball, the knees, which are slightly bent, straighten. When the ball touches the ground, the player finishes the attempt. Each player is given three attempts. The player who heads the ball the greatest number of times within these three attempts is declared the winner.

Pedagogical Significance. This game develops coordination, balance, agility, and speed. It teaches each player to feel responsibility to the team for the task assigned to them. It also helps football players master the technique of playing the ball with the head.

“Passing Two Balls” Game

In this game, players participate in pairs. They position themselves opposite each other in a corridor four meters wide, at a distance of 5–7 meters apart. The corridor is marked with ropes or flags. Each player in the pair has one ball. At the instructor’s whistle, they simultaneously pass the balls to each other and then kick back the rolling ball.

If the balls collide or if one of the players steps outside the corridor, the pair is eliminated from the competition. The pair that completes the exercise more times than others without mistakes is declared the winner. Depending on the physical fitness level of the participants, the rules may be simplified. For example, the width of the corridor can be increased, or players may be allowed to stop the ball before passing it.

Pedagogical Significance. This game develops the skill of kicking the ball with the foot, which helps players master football ball-handling techniques. It also strengthens leg power and improves concentration, thinking, and the ability to act accurately and quickly.

“Agile Goalkeeper” Game

Preparation for the Game. Teams of three to four players compete alternately. The team that starts the game lines up one player at a time. Two mats are placed lengthwise five meters ahead, and the players position themselves three meters away from the mats.

Description of the Game. At the sound of a whistle, players take turns rolling forward, standing up, and catching the ball thrown by the instructor. If a player catches the ball, one point is added to their team’s score. Each player performs the exercise three times, after which the game ends for that team. The opposing team then performs the same exercise. The team that scores the most points is declared the winner.

Pedagogical Significance. The game develops a goalkeeper’s attention, precision, agility, speed, and self-control. It also trains the skill of catching the ball while rolling forward. The main movement in the game is rolling forward to catch the ball.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the use of active games in preschool and general education schools for improving the physical fitness of young football players is highly effective in enhancing children’s motor activity, physical fitness, and overall health. These games help develop children’s physical qualities, form football technical and tactical skills, and promote a healthy lifestyle, laying the foundation for the future emergence of prominent football players.

Practical Recommendations

1. Organizing Football Training: Conduct training sessions at least 3–4 times a week, based on active games and light physical loads.
2. Teaching Technical Elements: Develop specific exercises for each technical element alongside specialized active games.
3. Motivation: Increase children’s interest in training through reward systems and engaging tasks, and provide regular encouragement.
4. Health Monitoring: During training, monitor heart rate, general physical condition, and physiological state, while organizing interesting competitions.

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