



Key Focus Areas

Acceleration and Sprinting

Short-distance sprints (typically 5–20 metres) should focus on powerful, efficient pushes and rapid acceleration. These efforts reflect game actions such as chasing, breaking away from defenders, or closing space quickly. Sprint work should prioritise quality over quantity, ensuring athletes are able to produce near-maximal effort on each repetition.

Change of Direction and Agility

Change of direction drills develop chair control, spatial awareness, and the ability to react quickly under pressure. Activities such as slalom drills, turning sequences, and forward–backward transitions replicate common game movements. Introducing reactive elements (e.g., visual or auditory cues) can further enhance agility and decision-making.

These drills can also be adapted to target aerobic conditioning when performed continuously or with shorter rest periods, making them a versatile tool for both physical and technical development.

Deceleration and Control

The ability to slow down efficiently and safely is just as important as accelerating. Controlled braking drills help reduce injury risk, improve movement efficiency, and support better positioning during play. This is particularly important given the high loads placed on the upper limbs during repeated stopping and turning actions.

Technique and Efficiency

Throughout all anaerobic training, emphasis should be placed on pushing technique, posture, and hand placement. Efficient mechanics allow athletes to generate greater force with less strain on the shoulders and upper limbs, supporting both performance and long-term injury prevention.

Rest and Recovery Considerations:

To effectively develop anaerobic capacity, appropriate rest between efforts is essential. High-intensity work relies heavily on the ATP-PCr energy system, which requires sufficient recovery to allow repeated high-quality efforts.

In practice:

Short accelerations (5–10 m):

- ~30 seconds rest between efforts
- *Longer sprints or repeated efforts (15–20 m):*
- ~60 seconds rest to allow partial recovery

Repeated sprint or agility drills:

Rest periods should be long enough to maintain speed and technique, but short enough to reflect game demands

Although full recovery of the ATP-PCr system may take several minutes, this is rarely practical in a training environment. Instead, controlled rest intervals are used to balance performance quality with conditioning demands.

Coaching Considerations

- Anaerobic training should be performed when athletes are relatively fresh to ensure high-quality output.
- Poor technique or excessive fatigue may increase injury risk and reduce training effectiveness.
- Change of direction drills can be manipulated to target either anaerobic power or aerobic conditioning depending on intensity and rest periods.
- Progressions should be gradual and appropriate to the athlete's experience and physical capacity.

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