



## Effects of Using Qualitative Exercises on Some Tactical Patterns and Complex Technical Performances as Phases for Building Up Attack for Both Places of Back Defenders in Soccer

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### Abstract:

The current research aims to design a recommended training program using qualitative exercises and to identify its effects on improving some tactical patterns and complex technical performances for junior soccer players. The researcher used the experimental (one-group design) approach with pre- and post-measurements. The research sample was purposefully selected from junior soccer players (less than 19 years old) from Qualioub Youth Center (Qualiubia Football Zone) during the 2023-2024 season. The research community included (33) junior players, out of which (3) were excluded for injury and (10) were recruited for the pilot sample. The main sample included (20) junior players. Results indicated that:

- The recommended qualitative training program induced statistically significant differences between the pre-and post-measurements of tactical patterns as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements.
- The recommended qualitative training program induced statistically significant differences between the pre-and post-measurements of complex technical performance as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements.
- Qualitative exercises had positive effects on improving some tactical patterns and complex technical performances of junior soccer players less than 19 years old.

**Keywords:** Qualitative Training – Tactical Patterns – Complex Technical Performance – Soccer

### Introduction:

Soccer has three components: technical performance – tactical performance – physical fitness. Therefore, the lack of physical fitness affects technical performance negatively, especially by the end of the match. Thus, if the player's performance is not



close to ideal, working on tactical performance, regardless of its easiness, is a waste of time and effort (**Ress et al, 2003**).

Some technical performances depend mainly on technique and style, while other skills depend on the player's ability to respond to external stimuli related to others in real competitive situations. This is the case in soccer as we can notice that some players show superior technical performance during training, but they fail to maintain the same level in matches due to their failure to respond correctly to different game situations (**Abu Abdo 2015**).

Sports training is one of the major forms of regular athletic practice in fulfilling its objectives especially those related to developing all aspects of physical, technical, and tactical levels to reach athletic achievement both on the individual and the team levels (**Abd El-Aziz 2007**).

Sports training is the basic part of athletic preparation for all players in all age groups as it is the special physical and educational process that is based on using specific qualitative exercises to improve all qualities required for the athlete to achieve the highest possible level in a specific form of sports activities (**Abd El-Fattah 2012**).

To achieve the highest possible level of performance during matches, the soccer player should receive an integrated technical preparation in the light of practicing modern soccer that requires a high level of physical and technical efficiency so that the player can fulfill tactical tasks assigned to his/her effectively along the match (**Abu Abdo 2017**).

Soccer training aims to achieve integral preparation of all physical, technical, tactical, mental, and psychological aspects of the player in pursuit of integral performance. In modern soccer, tactical work includes individual and team tactics to initiate meaningful and economic moves for a group of players either in attack or in defense (**Abu Abdo 2021**).

When applied, qualitative exercises lead to a giant leap in performance as it is the highest level of specialization in improving technical performance quantitatively, qualitatively, and in time according to the instant use of working muscles during technical performance (**Al-Fateh 2016**).

They are assisting exercises that aim to prepare and improve specific skills for a type of athletic activity in a try to build and form the body according to the requirements of these skills. Exercises are the tools for a coach to induce a training effect to elevate the physical and technical fitness levels. Qualitative exercises are tools for simplifying the movement because they are simpler in structure. Therefore, it is easy to gradually acquire movement patterns and improve and sharpen them. The base for developing and improving performance is to increase the qualitative aspect of performance and then



maintain the performance level to achieve higher efficiency and results out of the training process (**Hymoty 2000; Ala El-Din & Al-Sabbagh 2007**).

Qualitative training has positive effects on improving muscular power as using exercises that resemble the skill using the same muscles in the required motor performance has positive effects on the speed of motor learning. Several trends indicate the importance of exercises where the timeframe of powers in working muscle groups during exercises is similar to the timeframe of actual performance with the same positions assumed as the form of the final movement (**Paul 1999; Kristy 1998**).

Accordingly, tactical preparation is based on technical preparation tactics that are tested for the player's skills and physical fitness in a certain situation. As a sports term, a plan refers to the use of basic motor skills in individual or team movements and maneuvers that aim to fulfill the main aim of the game; which is to win the match. Through a review of soccer-related literature (**Abu Abdo et al 2022; Awad 2022; Abd El-Aziz 2007; Al-Nady 2006; Hamza 2002**), the researcher noticed that several studies dealt with many aspects of the training process (tactical – technical – physical – psychological). These aspects were treated in most programs and many training types, while qualitative training didn't receive the same amount of attention. In addition, most researchers didn't pay more attention to qualitative training as one of the best specific training methods that contribute to improving the physical, tactical, and complex technical aspects as it includes specific exercises suitable for the nature of soccer performance. This can be an indicator for soccer coaches and training specialists to consider the resemblance between training and competitive situations as training should resemble the physical aspects of players so that they can effectively fulfill their technical duties and win the match according to soccer rules and regulations. This research tries to improve the tactical and complex technical performances of junior soccer players.

#### **Aim:**

The current research aims to design a recommended training program using qualitative exercises and to identify its effects on improving:

1. Some tactical patterns for junior soccer players.
2. Some complex technical performances for junior soccer players.

#### **Hypotheses:**

1. There are statistically significant differences between pre-and post-measurements of some tactical patterns for junior soccer players less than (19) years in favor of post-measurements.
2. There are statistically significant differences between pre-and post-measurements of some complex technical performances for junior soccer players less than (19) years in favor of post-measurements.



## Methods:

### Approach:

The researcher used the experimental (one-group design) approach with pre- and post-measurements.

### Participants:

The research sample was purposefully selected from junior soccer players (less than 19 years old) from Qualioub Youth Center (Qualiubia Football Zone) during the 2023-2024 season. The research community included (33) junior players, out of which (3) were excluded for injury and (10) were recruited for the pilot sample. The main sample included (20) junior players.

**Table (1): mean, median, SD, and skewness of participants on growth, physical, tactical, and complex technical variables (n=20).**

Variables		Measurement	Mean	SD±	Median	Skewness
Growth	Age	Year	18.51	0.40	18.5	0.44
	Height	Cm	175.75	4.77	176.5	0.24
	Weight	Kg	69.45	5.55	69.5	0.26
	Training experience	Year	4.95	0.33	4.90	0.20
Physical	30m running test	Sec	5.15	0.10	5.12	0.49
	Hurdle running test	Sec	8.08	0.11	8.05	0.67
	3x50m running test	Sec	33.10	0.99	33.15	0.15
	Ball kicking with head and foot (1 min)	Time	9.55	0.51	10.00	0.21
	Vertical jump test	Cm	23.70	4.09	24.00	0.94
	Trunk flexion test	Cm	56.55	4.89	55.00	0.19
Tactics	Long pass accuracy	Point	40.66	50.00	50.00	-1.43
	Ball control during running	Sec	35.7	35.00	35.00	0.241
	Passing and position exchange	Sec	34.36	35.5	35.5	-5.61
	Mid-field complex performance	Sec	22.7	23.00	23.00	0.387
	Overlap	Sec	24.13	25.5	25.5	0.069
	Control then direct pass	Sec	7.56	8.5	8.5	0.477
Complex technical performance	Receiving dribbling then passing (ground-high)	Sec	7.82	8.15	8.15	0.654
	Receiving, running, passing then receiving	Sec	17.40	17.65	17.65	-0.775
	Receiving then passing (ground)	Sec	5.84	0.33	5.93	0.37
	Receiving, running then passing (ground)	Sec	6.61	0.36	6.69	0.33
	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (ground)	Sec	9.51	0.51	9.33	0.16
	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (ground)	Sec	10.60	0.46	10.69	0.23
	Receiving then passing (high)	Sec	6.67	0.25	6.73	0.66
	Receiving, running then passing (high)	Sec	8.60	0.23	8.62	0.04
	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (high)	Sec	9.75	0.18	9.78	0.07
	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (high)	Sec	10.54	0.23	10.52	0.74

Table (1) indicates that skewness values for all variables under investigation are between ( $\pm 3$ ). This indicates data normality and homogeneity for these variables.

### Data collection tools and equipment:

#### 1- Tools:

Football field – soccer balls – hurdles, cones, and plastic plates – spears – whistles – tags for tests – cloth strips to divide the field – a restameter for measuring heights (cm) – a medical balance for measuring weights (kg) – measuring taps – stop-watch \*1/10 sec).



## 2- Tactical and Complex Technical Variables:

According to a review of the literature (Abu Abdo et al 2022; Abu Abdo et al 2018; Abu Abdo et al 2016. El-Sayed 2012; Awad 2022; Abd El-Aziz 2007; Al-Nady 2006; Hamza 2002), the researcher identified the following:

- Tactical patterns:** According to experts' opinions with an agreement percentage of (80%), the researcher included (8) tactical patterns.
- Complex technical performance:** According to experts' opinions with an agreement percentage of (80%), the researcher included (8) complex technical performances.

### Pilot Studies:

The first pilot study was performed to verify the validity and reliability of tests. Validity was verified through distinction validity while reliability was verified through the test/retest procedure. (10) Players from the same research community and outside the main sample performed the tests as a pilot sample.

**Table (2): Reliability and Validity of Tactical Patterns Observation Form (n=10)**

S	Variables	First analysis	Second analysis	Reliability	Validity
1	Long pass accuracy	17	19	1.00	1.00
2	Ball control during running	4	5		
3	Passing and position exchange	1	1		
4	Mid-field complex performance	-	-		
5	Overlap	-	-		
6	Control then direct pass	1	1		
7	Receiving dribbling then passing (ground-high)	-	-		
8	Receiving, running, passing then receiving	-	-		

Table (2) shows the differences among tactical patterns. This indicates the reliability and validity of tests.

**Table (3): Mean, SD, and (t) value for distinct and non-distinct groups on complex technical variables (n=10)**

S	Variables	Measurement	Distinct Group		Non-distinct group		(t)
			Mean	SD±	Mean	SD±	
1	Receiving then passing (ground)	Sec	0.067	5.18	0.14	5.79	7.74
2	Receiving, running then passing (ground)	Sec	0.26	5.66	0.11	6.33	6.57
3	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (ground)	Sec	0.12	8.24	0.48	9.78	7.26
4	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (ground)	Sec	0.51	9.70	0.45	10.80	3.86
5	Receiving then passing (high)	Sec	0.22	5.37	0.22	6.77	4.48
6	Receiving, running then passing (high)	Sec	0.18	7.57	0.18	8.71	2.42
7	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (high)	Sec	0.210	8.31	0.18	9.84	6.26
8	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (high)	Sec	0.29	9.37	0.22	10.69	8.45

(t) table value on  $P \leq 0.05$  and freedom degree (8) = 2.305

Table (3) shows that differences in complex technical performance were in favor of the distinct group. This indicates test validity.



**Table (4): Mean, SD, and (R) value for testing and retesting on complex technical variables (n=10)**

S	Variables	Measu rement	Test		Retest		R
			Mean	SD±	Mean	SD±	
1	Receiving then passing (ground)	Sec	5.79	0.14	5.78	0.14	0.97
2	Receiving, running then passing (ground)	Sec	6.33	0.11	6.30	0.10	0.98
3	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (ground)	Sec	9.78	0.48	9.72	0.50	0.97
4	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (ground)	Sec	10.80	0.45	10.74	0.51	0.95
5	Receiving then passing (high)	Sec	6.77	0.22	6.74	0.23	0.95
6	Receiving, running then passing (high)	Sec	8.71	0.18	8.70	0.18	0.97
7	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (high)	Sec	9.84	0.18	9.81	0.18	0.97
8	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (high)	Sec	10.69	0.22	10.64	0.30	0.90

*(R) table value on  $P \leq 0.05$  and freedom degree (8) = 0.632*

Table (4) showed statistically significant correlations between test and retest on  $P \leq 0.05$  for complex technical performances. This indicates the tests' reliability.

A second pilot study was performed to try some training units of the recommended program and to:

- Verify the suitability of unit content for the duration and time distribution of units.
- Identifying training loads) volume – intensity – rest intervals) to canonize training loads according to players' abilities through planning the recommended training program.
- The researcher canonized training loads using percentages.
- Validate the suitability and tools and equipment used in initiating training loads.
- Verify the understanding and acceptance of junior players to training units with full determination to reach a higher level.

### **The recommended Training Program:**

#### Aim:

The recommended training program aims to identify the effects of qualitative training on improving some complex technical performances for junior soccer players (less than 19 years old).





#### Program Bases:

- Units were ordered from easy to hard (volume – intensity – density) to be suitable for the age group and technical level of participants.
- The recommended training program took (8) weeks.
- The program was administered in the form of (2) units a day, (3) days a week.
- Total number of units =  $6 \times 8 = 48$  units.
- Each unit duration was set from 95 to 120 minutes (mean = 95.8 min) without warmup or cooldown. The warmup duration was 15 minutes while the cooldown was set to 5 minutes.
- Low/high interval training was used.
- The weekly load cycle was set as (1:2). This means one week with low loads followed by two weeks with high loads.

#### Selection of suitable exercises:

- A schedule was set for distributing training loads to improve complex technical performances (under investigation).
- Exercises were gradually ordered from easy to hard, from simple to complex, and from general to specific along the program.
- Exercises of one training unit were gathered in one week with consideration of differences among exercises and their duration from one unit to another during the same week to facilitate and maintain participants' performance of exercises.
- Individual differences among participants were considered.

#### Identification of training load levels:

**Table (5): Training Load Levels.**

Type of load	Minimum limit	Maximum limit	Level
Light	0.5	1.4	1
Moderate	1.5	2.4	2
High	2.5	3.4	3

(Al-Wakkad 2006; Abu Abdo 2021)

#### Content Distribution of the Program:

The program included exercises for improving physical, complex technical, and tactical aspects of soccer (under investigation).

**Table (6): Time Distribution and Percentages of Aspects of the Program**

Preparation	Percentage	Time (min)	Sum
Physical	30.1%	1386 min	2695 min
Technical	28.5%	1309 min	

**Main Study:**Pre-measurement:

Pre-measurements of the experimental group (n=20) were taken from 7-8-2024 to 9-8-2024.

Main application:

The recommended training program for improving physical and technical variables under investigation was applied to the experimental group for (8) weeks starting on 11-8-2024 and ending on 16-9-2024.

Post-measurement:

Post-measurements of the experimental group were taken from 17-9-2024 to 18-9-2024 following the same protocol of pre-measurements. The data collected was organized and prepared for statistical treatment.

Statistical treatment:

The researcher used SPSS software to calculate: Mean – Median – SD – Skewness 0 Correlation Coefficient – (t) test – Improvement Percentage.

**Results:****Table (7): Difference Significance and Improvement Percentages Between Pre- and Post-measurements on Tactical Patterns Level. (n=20)**

Tactical Pattern	Measurement	Unit	Mean	SD±	Difference means	(t)	Percentage (%)
Long pass accuracy	Pre-	Point	40.66	15.06	7.96	2.067*	16.37
	Post-	Point	48.63	14.31			
Ball control during running	Pre-	Sec	35.73	2.94	1.37	2.345*	3.83
	Post-	Sec	34.36	1.39			
Passing and position exchange	Pre-	Sec	34.36	1.13	3.06	8.595*	8.90
	Post-	Sec	31.30	1.54			
Mid-field complex performance	Pre-	Sec	22.70	2.32	3.47	5.802*	15.286
	Post-	Sec	19.23	2.24			
Overlap	Pre-	Sec	24.13	1.87	4.47	8.740*	18.52
	Post-	Sec	19.66	2.03			
Control then direct pass	Pre-	n/sec	7.56	1.17	4.24	8.480	35.93
	Post-	n/sec	11.80	2.10			
Receiving dribbling then passing (ground-high)	Pre-	Sec	7.83	1.51	2.78	7.354*	35.50
	Post-	Sec	5.05	1.37			
Receiving, running, passing then receiving	Pre-	Sec	17.32	2.31	3.61	6.412*	20.84
	Post-	Sec	13.71	1.97			

(t) table value on  $P \leq 0.05 = 2.01$

Table (7) indicated statistically significant differences in tactical patterns as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements.





**Table (8): Difference Significance and Improvement Percentages Between Pre- and Post-measurements on Complex Technical Variables (n=20)**

S	Variables	Unit	Pre-		Post-		(t)	Improvement percentage (%)
			Mean	SD±	Mean	SD±		
1	Receiving then passing (ground)	Sec	<b>5.84</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>4.91</b>	<b>0.56</b>	9.25	18.90
2	Receiving, running then passing (ground)	Sec	<b>6.61</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>5.67</b>	<b>0.53</b>	5.52	16.50
3	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (ground)	Sec	<b>9.51</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>8.13</b>	<b>0.28</b>	4.51	14.30
4	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (ground)	Sec	<b>10.60</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>9.50</b>	<b>0.46</b>	6.59	11.50
5	Receiving then passing (high)	Sec	<b>6.67</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>5.43</b>	<b>0.24</b>	5.43	22.40
6	Receiving, running then passing (high)	Sec	<b>8.60</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>7.48</b>	<b>0.19</b>	5.16	16.20
7	Receiving, maneuvering, and passing (high)	Sec	<b>9.75</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>0.20</b>	7.20	16.80
8	Receiving, maneuvering, running, and passing (high)	Sec	<b>10.54</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>9.35</b>	<b>0.22</b>	7.19	12.90

(t) table value on  $P \leq 0.05$  and freedom degree (19) = 2.093

Table (8) indicated statistically significant differences in complex technical performances as phases for building up attack for back defender positions in favor of post-measurements.

### Discussion:

According to Table (7), there are statistically significant differences in tactical patterns as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements. Improvement percentages ranged from (3.83%) to (35.93%). This indicated that the recommended program had positive effects on tactical patterns. The researcher thinks that this is due to training both back defenders on some tactical patterns to improve their attack through some attack tactics in addition to considering scientific bases of planning and applying training programs to achieve integrated improvement of all physical, technical, and tactical aspects.

Previous studies (Abu Abdo et al 2016; Al-Sayed 2012) indicated some differences in tactical performances for elite teams between attack and defense tactics. These results asserted that training programs using game-like qualitative exercises that are similar to soccer performance do improve various physical abilities as they concentrate on scientific bases of preparing training programs and selecting exercises that work on the same path of the skills. These programs train players on various game-like situations that are faced in the field and this improves complex technical performances and provides participants with technical requirements that improve their game performance. The researcher tried to gather the two types of individual and team performances as previous studies (Awad 2012; Abd El-Aziz 2007; Al-Nady 2006) indicated that training should focus on mastering complex skills that reflect the distinct



performance of players especially if this performance is adjoined with the agreed-upon passes or effective shots through team training in addition to technical/tactical performance under competitive pressure and game situations. Attack tactics are characterized by flexibility and should consider the direction change from left to right and vice versa while depending on short-to-long and diagonal-to-forward passes and this was asserted in a previous study (**Abu Abdo 2021**).

One of the most important objectives of sports training is to improve the physical and technical abilities of the athlete to the maximum level allowed by the athlete's abilities. Therefore, sports training practitioners need more information about methods of training and evaluation due to their effects on the athletes' performance (**Helmar 1994**).

The researcher thinks that these improvement percentages are due to the success of the training process as (8) weeks of training are enough to induce changes in the performance levels of participants. The researcher thinks that cross balls in modern soccer play an effective role in improving attack and ending it successfully under the conditions of improved defense. Considering the different number of players, the researcher thinks that it is not rational to depend on a fixed number of players in all attack situations as the number can increase or decrease according to the conditions of each attack as the attack starts differs and so is the tactical situation and the attack method itself if it is organized or counterattack as all this can affect the tactics agreed upon during training and how it is initiated in the field. This proves the first hypothesis.

According to Table (8), there are statistically significant differences in complex technical performance as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements. Improvement percentages ranged from (12.90%) to (22.40%). This indicated that the recommended program had positive effects on complex technical performances under investigation. The traditional way focuses on knowing the so-called basic skills without concentrating on how to use them. So, it is important to use these skills in various play situations in the context of the training process (**Brooker et al 2000**). The player's skills, knowledge, and perspectives can be improved faster through playing matches, compared with learning these skills individually (**Belka 2004**).

It is important to improve complex technical performances and technical performance that ends with passing. Training on tactics to open spaces and use them individually has improved individual tactics of attack in participants of the experimental group in favor of post-measurements. This asserts the positive effect of the recommended program on improving complex technical performance as phases for building up the attack for both back defender positions. The program also improved some specific physical and technical variables of the participants (**Abu Abdo et al 2022; Abu Abdo et al 2018; Awad 2012**).



Qualitative exercises had positive effects on improving specific physical abilities and some technical performances of junior soccer players as the use of recommended motor performances improved the speed and accuracy of ending the attack in the attack third part of the field. (Abd El-Aziz 2007; Al-Nady 2006).

Technical; performance plays a significant role in team positive results and directly affects the mastering and success of the play way for the team. This confuses the opponent and drives him to lose control over the field due to the high level of skills that made teammates take good positions that facilitate attack and reach for the goal area and score (Abu Abdo 2021).

This is in agreement with previous studies that indicated the effectiveness of qualitative training programs in inducing positive effects over physical and technical variables as well-controlled programs that consider individual differences among players lead to improvements in their various technical and physical abilities. In addition, using free weights, rubber cords, and other training tools had positive effects on improving such variables (Al-Sayed 2012; Abd El-Aziz 2007; Hamza 2002).

Accordingly, the recommended training program contributed to improving complex technical performances under investigation in junior soccer players. This proves the second hypothesis.

### Conclusions:

According to this research aim, hypotheses, methods, and results, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The recommended qualitative training program induced statistically significant differences between the pre-and post-measurements of tactical patterns as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements. Improvement percentages ranged from (3.83%) to (35.93%).
2. The recommended qualitative training program induced positive effects on the following tactical patterns: accuracy of long pass – ball control during running – quick pass – position exchange along the field – complex performance from midfield – repeated overlap – control than direct pass – receiving, dribbling then passing (ground/high) – receiving, dribbling, passing then receiving.
3. The recommended qualitative training program induced statistically significant differences between the pre-and post-measurements of complex technical performance as phases for building up attack for both back defender positions in favor of post-measurements. Improvement percentages ranged from (12.90%) to (22.40%).



4. The recommended qualitative training program induced positive effects on the following complex technical performance: ground receiving then passing – ground receiving, dribbling then passing – ground receiving, maneuver then passing – ground receiving, maneuver, dribbling then passing – high receiving then passing – high receiving, dribbling then passing – high receiving, maneuver then passing – high receiving, maneuver, dribbling then passing.
5. Qualitative exercises had positive effects on improving some tactical patterns and complex technical performances of junior soccer players less than 19 years old.

### Recommendations:

According to these conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

- Using qualitative exercises to improve complex technical performances of junior soccer players less than 19 years.
- Using qualitative exercises to improve tactical patterns of junior soccer players less than 19 years old.
- Considering scientific planning principles when creating training programs so that the programs become thorough and well-integrated for all physical, technical, and tactical aspects of soccer.
- Similar studies are needed on other performances in soccer (like attack/defense tactics) so that soccer training becomes more integrated.

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