

# Nol Hornix, rehabilitation and conditional trainer of VVV-Venlo

In the last part of the series on 'training football conditioning' we focused on strength. In this part we will focus on speed. Speed is essential in the modern day football. Because the room to play in modern day soccer is small. The motto usually is: 'Play small'. Because the lines play close together, situations emerge where players play close together with mostly very little room to manoeuvre. The more players occupying the same playing space, the more duels there will be and less time to think them through. If you want to succeed as a player in these tight quarters, you will need a fast (handling) speed, which enables the player to vastly react on an ever changing game. Fast and adequate reactions is the difference between possession of the ball or losing it.

Text: Nol Hornix

## Training football conditioning (part 4): Speed





Although training has a positive influence on the speed, you have to ask yourself the question whether it is worth it to specifically train speed on an amateur level:

1. The ultimate goal of speed training is determined in advance through the composition of the muscles. With the composition of the muscles we mean the relation between the fast and slow muscles. Football players are aided more from a higher percentage of fast muscles than slow muscles in the body. Unfortunately we have no saying in this matter, the relation of fast and slow muscles is determined at birth and cannot be influenced by training!
2. My definition of speed training is years of consistent and structured training, with focus on diverse areas. These areas include technical and frequency training, but also influences on the players' energy system. Training the energy system is a pretty complicated matter, in which the training variables need to be chosen based on required measuring results. The profit, which will eventually be gained after years of intense training, is marginal. Given the time that trainers need to invest in speed training and the profit that is gained from it, I think specialized speed training isn't profitable for the amateur football coach. Generally a football player will increase his reaction and handling speed by repetition. The more he trains a certain exercise, the faster his execution will become. In other words: focusing on positioning and small sided games seems to be the most logical choice. My advice is therefore to training as much as possible in specific exercises.

Focused speed training therefore isn't suitable for amateur clubs. But I want to emphasize that does not mean coaches shouldn't pay attention to speed training. You won't achieve the maximum results, but you will be able to achieve optimal results within the group.





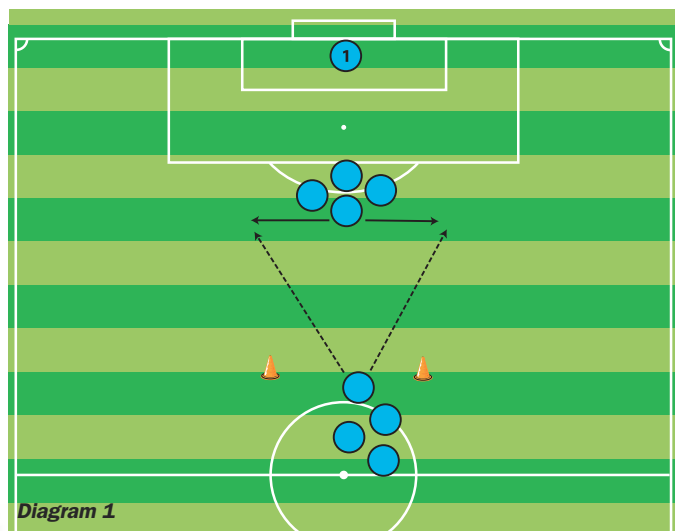
## Focus areas for training speed

The exercises for speed training are easy to fit into a regular week of training. Let's start from the point of view of an average amateur club. A club which plays a game during the weekend, and trains 2 times a week, let's say on Tuesdays and Fridays. During the Tuesday training session you train finishing on goal, these exercises can be easily modified to also train speed. Divide the training field during the exercise into 2 parts, the speeding zone and the finishing zone. The ball will only be put into play once you are satisfied with the distance the player has sprinted. Ask no less than their best, but give them time to recover so the players can push themselves to the maximum of their abilities. The recuperation period will be dependant on the distance the player has sprinted. Based on the distances which players usually sprint during a game, the following numbers can be used as guidelines:

<b>Distance:</b>	5 - 10 meters (starting speed)			
<b>Repetitions:</b>	6 - 10			
<b>Number of series:</b>	2 - 4			
<b>Recuperation period (RP):</b>	30 seconds between the repetitions 5 minutes between the series			
<b>Build up:</b>	1. Increasing the number of repetitions 2. Increasing the number of series			
Step	Reps.	Series	RP(Reps.)	RP(Series)
1	6	2	30 sec.	5 min.
2	7	2	30 sec.	5 min.
3	8	2	30 sec.	5 min.
4	9	2	30 sec.	5 min.
5	10	2	30 sec.	5 min.
6	7	3	30 sec.	5 min.
7	8	3	30 sec.	5 min.
8	9	3	30 sec.	5 min.
9	10	3	30 sec.	5 min.
10	8	4	30 sec.	5 min.
11	9	4	30 sec.	5 min.
12	10	4	30 sec.	5 min.

<b>Distance:</b>	10 - 20 meters (Acceleration speed 1)			
<b>Repetitions:</b>	6 - 8			
<b>Number of series:</b>	2 - 3			
<b>Recuperation period(RP):</b>	1 minute between the repetitions 4 minute between the series			
<b>Build up:</b>	1. increasing the number of repetitions 2. increasing the number of series			
Step	Reps.	Series	RP(Reps.)	RP(Series)
1	6	2	1 min.	4 min.
2	7	2	1 min.	4 min.
3	8	2	1 min.	4 min.
4	6	3	1 min.	4 min.
5	7	3	1 min.	4 min.
6	8	3	1 min.	4 min.

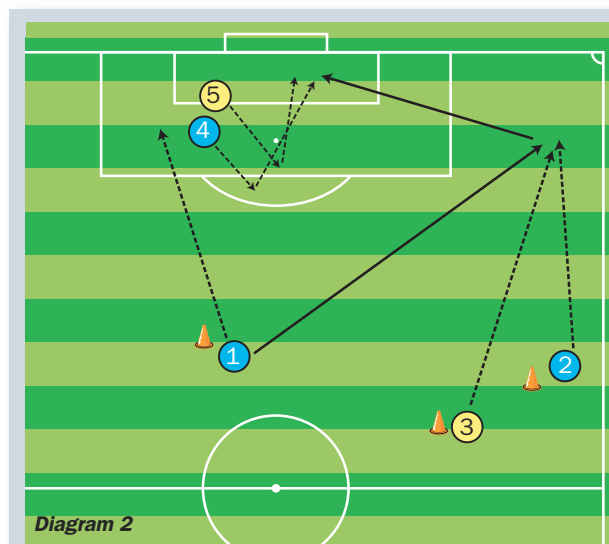
<b>Distance:</b>	20 - 30 meters (Acceleration speed 2)			
<b>Repetitions:</b>	4 - 6			
<b>Number of series:</b>	1 - 2			
<b>Recuperation period (RP):</b>	2 minute between the repetitions 4 minute between the series			
<b>Build up:</b>	1. increase the number of repetitions 2. increase the number of series			
Step	Reps.	Series	RP(Reps.)	RP(Series)
1	4	1	2 min.	
2	5	1	2 min.	
3	6	1	2 min.	
4	4	2	2 min.	4 min.
5	5	2	2 min.	4 min.
6	6	2	2 min.	4 min.



As a coach you can make it as simple as possible by asking the number of repetitions from the players which you require, across the desired distance, and passing a ball which they finish on goal. As is shown in diagram 1.

These simple exercises are according to the norm for speed training exercises (finishing). You can however make the exercises more specific for each game. Certainly when you know most profit can be made on the key-distances, the most common sprinting exercises in football. These key-distances are off course bound to each position. Wingers and backs often cover larger distances then for example an inside forward. With a bit of thinking you can make an exercise in which you account for these differences. Be aware of recuperation period. The long distance sprints are very strenuous on the hamstrings. Inappropriate rest between the repetitions will eventually result in hamstring injuries.





Player 1. plays the ball to player 2. who is sprinting against a defender 3.. After playing the ball player 1. sprints to the far post. At the same time forward 4. makes a pre-action at maximum speed and goes to the near post. Forward 4. is covered by defender 5. Player 1. and player 4. try to finish the cross from player 2.

Players 2. and 3. cover 20 to 30 meters.

From the cone to the line of the box

Player 1. covers 10 to 20 meters.

From the cone to the goal area

Players 4. and 5. cover 5 to 10 meters

11 meters from the goal - outside the box - the near post

The Friday training, or second training of the week, often is focused on the upcoming match. You should use this training to put the players on edge. You can start this process in the warm-up. A suitable method for this is the frequency training. With frequency training or training focused on the footwork of the players you gradually increase the players muscle tone. Explosive game players, like football players, are

aided by high muscle tension. Besides, the training method is also great for waking up the player's explosive system.

For frequency training skipping is often used. Skipping can be performed in forward, sideways and in backward movement. By using materials as a speed ladder, rings, poles and low hurdles you are able to vary a lot and players find these variations enjoyable.

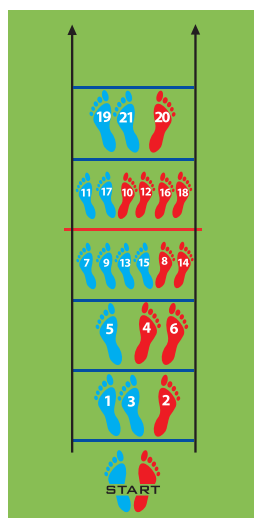
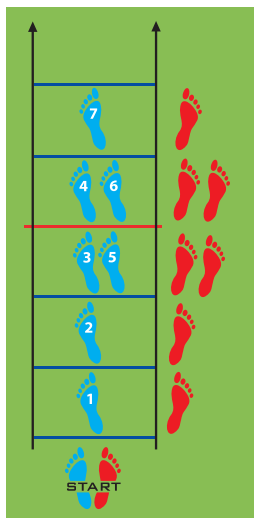
The frequency training and the speed training can be combined optionally. This is normally shown in exercises where the players have to be quick on their feet and from this they sprint across a specific distance and finish on goal. Using this method you will train the transition from a high arm frequency and a short pace, to a relative large pace and a strong arm frequency backwards. Everything done on maximum speed.





# Some examples of frequency training:

## Half high forward skipping



- Basic exercise, interchange left and right steps

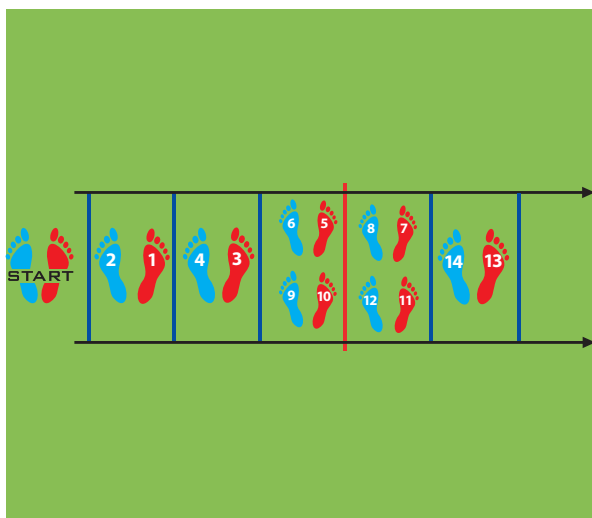
- One-footed

- 1 foot contact in between the sticks
- 2 foot contacts in between the sticks

- Two-footed

- 1 foot contact in between the sticks
- 2 foot contacts in between the sticks
- 3 foot contacts in between the sticks
- 4 foot contacts in between the sticks

## Half high sideways skipping



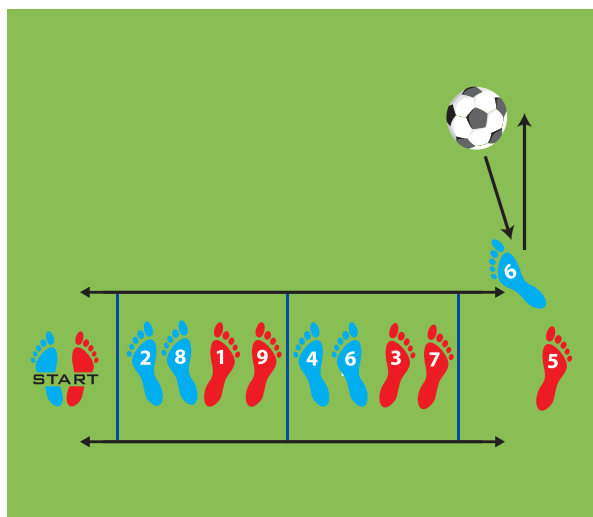
- 2 foot contacts in between the sticks

- 4 foot contacts in between the sticks

- Caution: at the red stick move back and continue forward or sideways

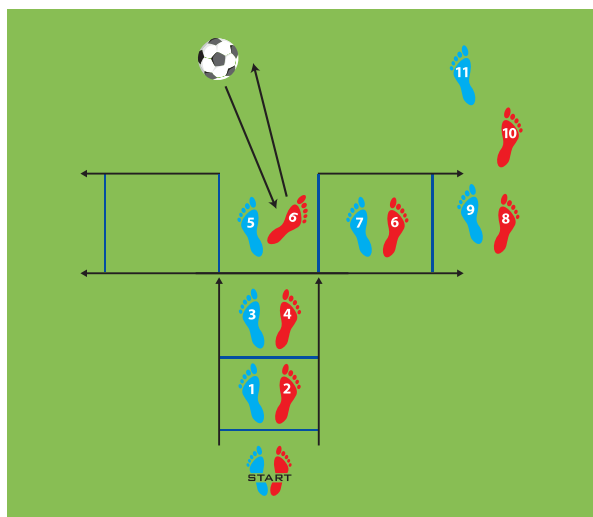


## Short footwork with sticks and a ball



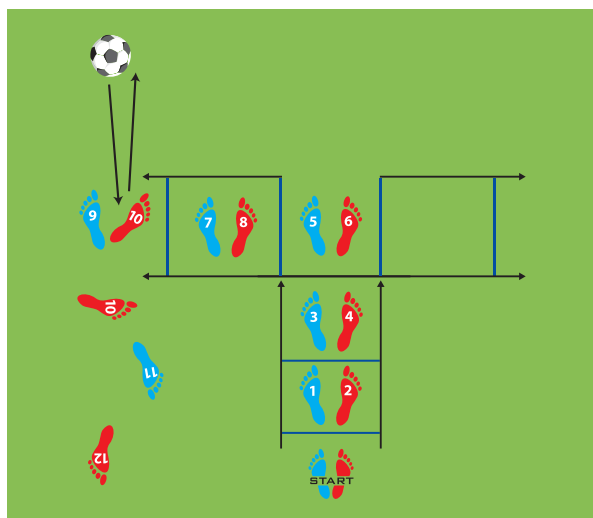
- 3 players
- Move sideways across the sticks with 2-3 foot contacts
- At the end of the exercise wall pass with...
  - inside of the foot of the outside leg
  - instep of the inside leg
  - inside upper leg
- After 6 wall passes change positions

## Forwards with two foot contacts between the sticks



- Interchangeably wall pass with left and right
- Interchangeably with left and right sideways
- 2 foot contacts between the sticks
- After the last stick sprint at max for 5 to 15 meters
- May add a variation to finish on goal after the sprint

## Forwards with two foot contacts between the sticks



- Interchangeably wall pass with left and right
- Interchangeably with left and right sideways
- 2 foot contacts between the sticks
- After the last stick turn open inwards and sprint at max for 5 to 15 meters
- May add a variation to finish on goal after the sprint