# Components of Fitness

In netball being fit and capable is important likewise with our health and well being, also this is very useful whilst playing a match.

Netball requires its participants to have some form of physical fitness; the meaning behind this is to carry out simple tasks without fatigue.

By having physical fitness in netball it will give the game a higher success rate, we would be able to reach demands of the sport at a higher level. By doing this we can then identify both individual and team strengths and weaknesses, needing to be developed.

For Netball there are seven components of physical fitness to consider. These are:

- Aerobic Capacity
- Muscular power
- Agility
- Speed
- Coordination
- Balance
- Reaction time

## **Aerobic Capacity**

Aerobic capacity can also be called "Cardio-Vascular" respiratory endurance or stamina. This is the ability to provide and sustain energy aerobically. It is dependant upon the ability of the cardiovascular system to transport and utilise oxygen during the sustained exercise. In a game of netball we need our cardiovascular system to keep our muscles supplied with the energy they require so they are able to get rid of built up lactic acid during prolonged periods of strenuous activity in netball where the whole body is involved, this depends on the efficiency of the heart, lungs and blood vessels. The higher our aerobic capacity the more efficient we would be throughout a match resulting in a better performance lasting from beginning to the end.

Our maximum aerobic capacity is known as our VO2 MAX; this is the maximum amount of oxygenated blood that can be transported to and used by our working muscles during a game of netball. If netball players have a higher VO2 MAX, for example centre, they can use much more oxygen and will suffer less fatigue than those players with a lower VO2 MAX (for example a Goal Shooter).

We can improve our aerobic fitness for netball by increasing the aerobic fitness in both training and your own personal fitness regime. It doesn't matter what exercise you do to increase the aerobic fitness as long as it is continuous. To improve the aerobic capacity heart rate must be kept between 70-85% of our maximal heart rate.

To calculate one's VO2 max we use the NCF multistage fitness test.

Each participant runs several 20metre shuttle runs in sync to beeps on a pre-recorded tape, the time interval between each beep gets shorter after a minute, meaning our running speed must increase. The participants do this until they can no longer keep up with the beeps. When they reach this point they stop and record their score, which allows us to work out our VO2 max.

In netball you should aim to be between levels 9-7. The greater our aerobic capacity the lower our pulse rate becomes after training or a match situation, allowing it to return to normal quicker.

### Muscular Power

Muscular endurance is very important when playing netball; it is the combination of strength and speed of movement. It is often shown in pacific situations during a match, for example, throwing the ball as far and as fast as possible or such as jumping for a rebound.

To improve the muscular power of a netball player we can introduce medium weights into their training, 60-80% of our maximum, and performing repetitions at speed.

Plyometrics training can also be used to build up power of competitors.

There are two tests, which can be done in training to measure muscular power or endurance:

- 1. The Stand Broad Jump- to do this the feet must be placed comfortably apart, toes to be immediately behind the lines on the court, you then bend your knees and jump forward as far as you can, the distance is measured from the rear heel back to the starting point, each player should have two attempts.
- 2. The Standing Vertical Jump- in this task you stand next to a wall. The highest point you can reach with your fingers of this arm is marked. Both feet must remain flat on the floor at this stage. We then chalk the fingertips and leap upwards touching the wall at the highest point. The distance between the two marks is measured

and gives us an idea of how high we can jump from a stationary position. This test is much fairer than the stand broad jump as it takes into consideration your height.

The standing vertical jump is excellent practice for defenders and shooters helping them achieve successful rebounds.

### **Agility**

Agility is the ability to change the direction of the body at speed. It is essential when playing netball, as it is the combination of speed, balance, power and coordination.

Netball players need agility to be successful in each section of the game. A good netball player would be able to do two things at once without getting confused, such as a running pass; the player wouldn't have done footwork but completed a successful pass.

We can improve a player's agility by practicing the movements, such as the feint dodge, in their training sessions. Doing this in similar conditions to a match should also help improve your speed, balance, and coordination as these aspects all affect a player's agility.

To assess players agility in the best way is to record their performance. However they can assess their general agility by using the Illinois Agility Run. This is set up as shown on the diagram on the next page.

We lie face down on the floor at the start line. When the coach tells us we leap to our feet and complete the course in the shortest time possible. We can then compare with teammates.

#### **Speed**

Speed, in netball, is vital; it is the ability to move all or part of the body quickly. Speed is important during netball because it requires a great deal of effort over a short period of time.

Players need to develop their speed as a match can change its pace and direction suddenly which can lead to success.

For netball players to achieve their maximum speed energy has to be supplied to the muscles quickly. Muscles then have to contract in a short time; they use their aerobic energy supply systems for speed work. If the individual has a large number of fast twitch fibres in their active muscles then they have a natural advantage.

To improve speed in netball players should improve their strength through a weight-training programme; stronger muscles supply more power resulting in more speed. Also to increase speed you need to improve your reaction time, do this by rehearsing "toss-ups". You need to be able to cope with the build up of lactic acid in the body and improve the level of skill; for example, an excellent player will be quicker and have more success in a pressurised match.

Players can determine their speed by timing them selves over a set distance in training sessions.

## **Co-ordination**

Coordination is a vital component of fitness in netball. It aids the ability to carry out movements precisely and efficiently. These movements happen as a result of the nervous system and muscular system working well simultaneously. Good coordination is very essential for skilful netball players. There are lots of examples of coordination in netball,

They are:

Footwork, Interceptions, Dodging, Passing, Marking, and "toss-ups".

Coordination naturally improves with practise.

A test for coordination is the juggling test; you start off juggling with two balls and progress to three. Generally you will find that some people are able to juggle faster than others.

### **Balance**

This is the ability of the body to retain the centre of mass of the body above its base support. However the main type of balance required for netball is Dynamic Balance.

Dynamic balance is the ability for the body to maintain its balance under changing conditions\_of body movement, shape and orientation. Most netball players have good dynamic balance as they move fast and have to constantly readjust their positions; netball players maintain balance through the coordination actions of the eyes, ears, and proprioceptive organs in our joints.

The stork stand is a test used to measure static balance. It is a good test for netball players as it helps them to improve on their footwork. It is also useful for shooters to learn to balance when shooting controlling their feet.

## **Reaction Time**

This is the ability to react to a stimulus quickly. There are two types of reaction, simple or choice.

An example of simple reaction time is the time delayed between the umpire giving an instruction and the player doing it.

An example of choice reaction time is when we signal where we want the ball to be thrown too in order to receive the pass.

In the above situations we have to react quickly, however when dealing with a choice reaction we have to decide where and how we are going to place the next pass and who to. There are external factors, which determine this.

There are many computer programmes specially formulated to test an individual's reaction time. Usually participants have to respond to visual or audio stimuli.

Our sensory and motor nerves are capable of transmitting messages quickly ensuring our muscles get messages from our brains telling them to contract quickly.

### Warming up and Cooling Down

Warming up is very important when you are taking part in a sporting activity, as is a cool down. You should always do a specific warm up and cool down for the activity you are taking part in to prepare the working muscles and cardiovascular system for the events to follow.

Firstly I would slow jog for 4 minutes to raise my heart rate and increase body temperature before doing specific stretches to prevent injury when playing netball.

#### Stretches

- Slowly rotate your neck in a circular motion to allow the rotation of your neck to become easier in a game situation when you are turning to receive a pass.
- Secondly to stretch the shoulders (netball players need to do this)
  place your arm across your chest and using the back of your other
  hand push your elbow to the opposite side of your body to feel the
  stretch in the shoulder joint repeat this on both shoulders twice.
- Then I would use a stretch for both the triceps and the shoulder joint, bend your arm at the elbow and place it over the back of the shoulder so you can touch the middle of your back and gently with the opposite hand push the elbow towards the other shoulder. Repeat this stretch 3 times on each side.
- Next you need to stretch your quadriceps and hamstrings. Firstly
  to stretch the vastus lateralis, rectus femoris, and vastus
  intermedius you take hole of your ankle and pull it up to behind
  your quadriceps by your gluteus maximus and hold for a few
  seconds. Do this on each leg four times.
- To stretch the hamstrings stand with one foot in front of the other and gently lean forward on your front leg. Doing this you should feel a stretch down the back of the leg. Repeat this three times for each leg.
- Again to stretch the hamstrings stand with your feet together and reach down towards your toes and hold the position for 6 seconds repeat this three times.

Once the game of netball is finished you must cool down to prevent the build up of lactic acid and stiffness. To cool down I would jog for 4 minutes and do one of each stretch described above.

## The effects the warm up have on skeletal muscle in relation to speed and strength of muscle contraction

When warming up body temperature increases causing an increase in enzyme production, this allows the muscle tissue to digest food within the body to then increase the supply of energy to the tissues. This therefore allows the speed of muscle contraction to increase significantly.

Throughout the warm up capillaries dilate meaning more oxygenated blood can reach the muscles. This process also allows waste products to be removed, for example carbon dioxide and lactic acid are broken down. The strength of muscle contraction will increase because the muscle tissue will be able to react quicker and perform the chosen movement more effectively. More power can be generated in the muscle tissue as a result of the increased speed of muscle contraction. As muscle temperature increases when warming up the muscles have more elasticity and flexibility, which reduces the risk of injury because each muscle is able to cope with the demand. The points above combined can give an individual ability to perform the game at a greater level.

Nerve impulses that sent and received by muscles can work quicker because of the increase in power and speed of contraction, this then allows a faster speed, coordination, and reaction time which overall increases the performance of any individual in a game of netball.

As the speed of contractions in the cardiac muscle around the heart increase it allows more oxygenated blood to be sent from the heart to the working muscles and tissue quicker. After this the oxygen will dissociate from the haemoglobin and therefore increased supply of oxygen allows the speed and strength of muscle contraction to increase, as the constant supply of oxygen will allow the tissue to work harder for a longer period of time.

## **Major Coaching Points of Netball**

As I'm an attacking player in the game of netball I propose to give essential coaching points for the attacking game.

The aim for attackers is to either get the ball into the circle or if you are GS or GA to score the goal. To achieve this ultimate aim there are many things you can do:

- Get to know the team members and have understanding and confidence in their skill.
- Use variation of passes and body positioning and speed.
- Always execute the best option of pass for the team not just the first option.
- Move when and where it is appropriate.

#### Tips for shooting:

- When shooting in netball your feet should be shoulder width apart facing towards the post this allows you to have better balance.
- I would advise that you place the ball in one hand a finger space between the ball and the palm, using the other hand to support the ball only.
- Both your arms and legs should bend at precisely the same moment
- When releasing the ball try to keep your balance because if you lean forward you are shortening the three feet rule between the defender and you.
- To score successfully in netball you should use an upward motion of the ball when releasing instead of a forward motion.

At first shooting is difficult but the more practice you put in the more goals you will score.

Passing is a basic motor skill, which is highly required in the game of netball. To be efficient in a game situation, your throwing and catching skills must be of a high standard as the aim is to pass the ball down to the shooters with speed and accuracy so they can score a goal.

- To throw you should have your fingers well spread allowing a good grip off the ball.
- Next you transfer the weight from your back foot to your landing foot so you can push the ball forward with force.

- I would advise players to use a variety of passes to catch the opposition out.
- When receiving a pass also spread your fingers wide placing your thumbs behind.
- Push your hands out towards the ball and snatch it bringing it close to the body.

To fake the defender stand behind them and signal to the thrower where you would like the ball and sprint to the space to receive it, this is lobbing the defender.

The key to be successful in attacking is to have good vision of the game, and the ball, to throw accurate passes, and great decision making taking into account the position of your own team members and the opposition.



#### Movement in the circle:

Shooters need to have an understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses to be efficient.

#### What to do:

The shooter and GA are both in the circle and alternately they have to run to the edge of the circle in any direction they like. (The second player begins to run immediately after the first has finished.)

Now add a third player to feed the ball into the circle, the ball can be passed into either player and they can either shoot from that position or look for an opportunity to feed to the other shooter.

To increase the intensity of this practice vary types of passes, speed and number of passes before the shooter can go for goal.

#### Shooting Technique:

In this practice the 3second rule and footwork rules apply.

#### Equipment:

1 ball, 1 net, 5 cones.

#### What to do:

Set out the five cones around the circle in any area having feeders by each cone (on the outside of the circle), the shooter sprints from the post to a cone keeping her eyes fixed on the feeder she pivots at the cone and runs back towards the post still keeping her eyes on the feeder. Repeat 5 times incorporating all five cones.

To make it more worthwhile, place a feeder to pass the ball into the shooter on her way towards the post, when the shooter receives the ball she must apply the footwork rule, balance in her position and shoot.

To vary this practice further, try passing the ball at different time in the shooters run giving her coverage of the whole circle allowing near and far shots.

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## **Structure**



The above tree diagram shows the structure of netball in England. The county selectors go to each county and pick the best talents and move them to play at county level. If they are good enough they have the chance to represent England at an international level, where they are given specialised coaching and more chances to excel in netball.

## Grass Koot Schemes

To promote netball to children of a young age there are two schemes, "First step Netball" and "High Five". Which are simpler versions of the game.

"First Step Netball" is aimed at children between the ages of 7 and 9. In this game there is only 4 players as opposed to 7 and the court size is reduced to one third of an actual netball court. The rules and equipment are adapted in this game, for example the ball size is 4, the time allowed with the ball is 5 seconds instead of 3 and there is 2 halves of 5 minutes.

"High Five" is aimed at older children of the ages 9 to 11 it's the only game of netball primary school girls and boys should be playing, it is fun and skilful. "High five" is played with 5 players using squad rotation, using a size 4 ball with other squad members taking on the roles of time keeper, score and umpire, however the time with the ball is reduced to 4 seconds from 5 in "first step netball". The full court is used although there is 6 minutes in each halve and there are 4 halves.

### **Coaching Awards**

#### **Types Of Awards**

Level 1 Assistant Coach Certificate

Level 1 Coach Assessment Module

Level 1/Level 2 Bridging Course

Level 2 Club Coach Award

Level 3 County Coach Award

Young Netball Organiser

Athlete Talent Identification and Development Workshop

These are some of the coaching awards that can be taken to allow anyone to become a coach of netball. Most of these courses have a set time where the volunteer has to teach for so many hours before obtaining the qualification it is usually covered in two parts, theory and practical and there is a fee for each although this varies depending on the course you choose to take.

## **Doping Control and Drug Testing**

CLASSES OF DRUGS PROHIBITED IN SPORT

- 1. Stimulants: Amphetamine, Cocaine.
- 2. Narcotics: Morphine, Heroin.
- 3. Anabolic Agent: Stanazol, Clenbuterol.
- 4. Diuretics: Frusamide
- 5. Peptide and Glycoprotein Hormones: Growth Hormone

Netball follows the advice of the International Olympic Committee and bans the use of certain drugs to enhance performance. Any netball player competing under the influence of drugs will be put before a disciplinary panel and treated accordingly as the netball association does not tolerate such an offence.

## Regional and National Competitions

• English counties league

This has 4 divisions containing 8 counties it supports the "2 up 2 down" relegation and promotion technique.

• National Clubs league

There are 7 divisions with 8 club teams in each division apart from the last one, which has only 7 teams. This is open age level meaning each player must be 16 or over.

• Inter County Tournament

In this competition 50 counties compete in a weekend tournament based on two open teams from each county.

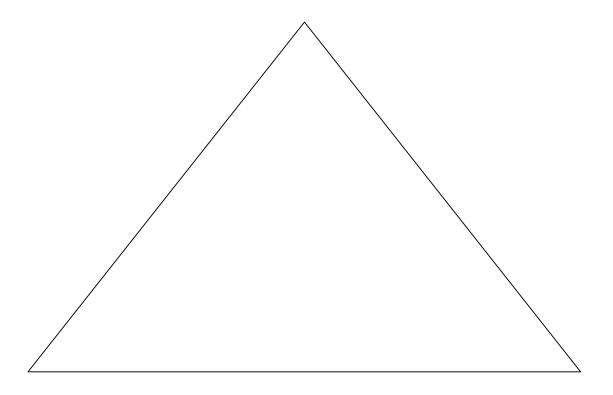
National Schools Tournament

This is organised individually for schools around the country, the early rounds see each school competing against those in the same county the winners go to national finals to compete.

- National youth championship
- Super Cup
- The world netball championship and youth championship

Staged every 4 years at various venues around the world with 50 netball playing countries taking part. There are more competitions including the Commonwealth Games, the FENA tournament and the international test series.

## Performance Pyramid for my chosen Activity - Netball



### Performance Pyramid for Netball in England

The pyramid is split into 5 sections:

- Grass roots level
- Recreation
- Sport
- Excellence
- Elitism

Within these 5 sections England netball has different levels of coaching according to the standard of the player and the competitions they participate in.

At grass roots level the performers are just novices taking up the sport for instance a child playing "First step netball" this scheme is introducing them to the game of netball in a simplified version.

At the level of recreation on the performance pyramid a performer has knowledge of the game but this could only be basic. However they can apply and understand the rules and etiquette of the game, they are people generally playing for fun and escapism during their own leisure time. This is not serious and generally uncompetitive.

At the level of sport on the performance pyramid the standard has been raised since previous years, if the performance is good at club level it can progress onto county level. This is where the competitiveness between clubs and players is shown. It becomes much more serious how you play and where you play. At this level you enter more competitions and practice your game and play regularly to achieve improvement.

The excellence level in the pyramid is where you have reached a level where you are playing good netball and representing your county and pushing for a place in a national squad. Your competitive level is far more serious and the amount of practice is much more than it was at the sporting level. Also at this level with the help of a coach you should be able to recognise your strengths and weaknesses and devise a training programme to improve.

When at the elite level on the pyramid you have reached the top and the standard of your game is very high, the amount of practice is again more than the excellence stage, this is so you can keep match fitness and techniques in order. At this stage the different competitions you play in are at a more national and international level rather than open tournaments. The coaching you receive at this level is national and international standard giving you a supportive team to work with, giving you the best advice on how to cope with pressure, the game and with injuries you have the best in the medical profession to help you recover fully in the least time possible to restore your game back to its incredibly high standard.

## My position on the Pyramid

As you can see from the diagram I have placed myself in the sport section of the pyramid. I have placed myself here as I have in the past had opportunity to play at county level although I didn't represent the county I was selected to train with them, by doing this the coaching was of a higher standard allowing me to recognise my own weaknesses. I practice twice a week and play two matches a week and I also have level one umpiring award which helped me with my own game.

## Strengths And Weaknesses In My Game

Overall my main strengths in netball are:

- Hardworking
- Shooting
- Fitness
- Creating Space
- Team work

Hardworking: I always practice shooting from various areas of the circle. During match situations even if we are losing I never give up I always try to either receive a pass to shoot or throw a ball in to my GS for her to shoot, as the game is not over until the whistle goes therefore I believe everyone should give it all their effort until then.

Shooting: As I regularly practice shooting from different positions it has improved over the years since GA is the position I have always favoured. I am able to block out the defenders movements as I'm shooting due to practice this is selected limited attention to the environment and things around me. It allows me to concentrate better when aiming at the net.

Fitness: I work out often so this helps when I play netball as I can run for much longer period of time without tiring. Being fit has increased my speed and strength allowing me to throw a powerful ball and sprint into the circle in time to receive a pass to shoot.

Creating Space: As I'm fast I can dodge a defender by sprinting away from her into my own space either in or out of the circle, when I create space I draw the defenders into my actions leaving the GS free then I slip her a high ball for her to catch and shoot.

Team work: I have played with the same GS for quite a few years therefore I know her style of play and I can adapt my game accordingly. The centre links up well with me also which helps, as I know exactly where on the court to be at what time and what type of pass she will throw me.

#### However I have my weaknesses:

- Footwork
- Defending
- Being aggressive
- · Long passing

Footwork: My footwork sometimes lets me down as I run fast when I receive the ball it appears that I can't keep still because I shuffle my feet whilst trying to balance myself. Also when receiving a pass at an awkward angle I sometimes get pulled up when I turn my body around to shoot.

Defending: As I am an attacker I sometimes forget to defend the ball when I lose possession because I'm used to attacking with it instead of trying to intercept it, or force an error on the opposition by defending their throws.

Being Aggressive: I tend to give penalties away for contact because when I jump for a 50/50 ball I always seem to knock the opposition over, or if I'm running and can't stop in time and the defender stands still in my way I get penalised because I have ran into her even though she should move out of my path.

Long passing: I don't really need to throw a long pass in my position but when I'm in a situation when I do have to it's difficult as they are not accurate this causes lack of possession. My arms are not as powerful to throw an accurate pass whereas I can throw a short fast pass easily.

### **Action Planning For My netball**

After considering all aspects of my game I have decided I am going to concentrate on improving skills that could help me to get to the position of my game I want to be

#### I am going to improve:

- Defending of the ball and the opposition
- Tactics and Strategies
- Balance
- Pace of the game

#### Targets for the improvements:

To improve my target of defending the ball and opposition whilst they are in possession I am going to give myself one month. In this month I will practice for 30minutes each day using the court and a defending player to mark so I am aware of the position I'm in when defending their passes either on court or their throw ins, I will do practices designed for defenders to enhance my defending and during my games, which I play twice a week I will apply my new skills to give myself match practice at defending as well as attacking, with another netball player from a different team watching my performance to give me some constructive criticism after analysing my targets.

Also to improve my tactics and strategies I will read around the sport of netball and find out some tactics that are well known before I can apply my own knowledge and ideas to our team situation, I will discuss these with my team mates and again test them out in match and practice situations. The timescale for this target is to read and/or draw up tactics for at least 15 minutes a day, again adding my own ideas to the specific teams I play against as I already have some knowledge of their style of play.

As I also dance my balance is ok however I find it difficult to stop running and balance straight away therefore I will also give myself a month to practice sprinting and stopping dead to balance. Like in the previous targets I will use the court to do this so I am aware of my boundaries when sprinting. Likewise I will apply my newly acquired skills as best I can in my current game situations, like the other targets I will have a netball player count how many times during each match my balance is a fault and improve from the figures I receive.

As a GA I am involved with a lot of running, (Receive a pass throw one and make it into the circle from the centre third to receive again) therefore I can decide the pace of the game depending on the pass I throw if it's a short one the pace is fast which is what I generally stick to so I will try to vary my speed when passing this could help with accuracy. If I can improve from throwing a fast pass to a slow one by varying and switching the speed and type of pass it will catch the defender out. To do this I will vary my passes and their speed during practice and matches, I will look at progressive practices for the control of pace in a game situation. As like the other improvements I will allow myself a month to concentrate on this. Also my helper will count how many times I change the pace of the game each week so I can see the figures and if there is any improvement after 4 weeks.

If I fail to improve my targets in the timescale set I will allow myself some more time until I feel I have improved considerably, hopefully this will not be needed as I am willing to put in hard work and effort to achieve my goals.

## **Record of Implementation**

To record whether I improve in my targets or not I will have my friend (also a player of a different team) watch me each time I play with her knowing of my targets she will write down what (if I do) improve on and how long it's taken me to do so.

These are the statistics below to show my improvements:

#### Week 1:

Number of pace changes during match: 6

Number of times I forgot to defend the ball in match: 9

Number of times balance was a problem: 6

Number of tactical and strategically plays during match: 1

#### Week 2:

Number of pace changes during match: 5

Number of times I forgot to defend the ball in match: 7

Number of times balance was a problem: 4

Number of tactical and strategically plays during match: 3

#### Week 3:

Number of pace changes during match: 8

Number of times I forgot to defend the ball in match: 4

Number of times balance was a problem: 2

Number of tactical and strategically plays during match: 5

#### Week 4:

Number of pace changes during match: 10

Number of times I forgot to defend the ball in match: 3

Number of times balance was a problem: 0

Number of tactical and strategically plays during match: 6

As the above statistics show by the end of a month of hard work and effort I reduced my errors and improved tactically, and defended better in week 4 compared with week 1, my balance was the biggest improvement with in week 4 I had no balancing errors as opposed to 6 errors in week 1. As each week progressed I learned to control the pace of the game with my varied passes and the feedback, both intrinsic and extrinsically has been good. Due to my improvements, at club level I have been nominated as young player of the year and most improved player of the year. I am going to continue to practice improving my game to get a county position, as I feel there is still room for improvement in these areas and others in my game.

## **Evaluation**

From initially identifying my strengths and weaknesses present during my game of netball I devised myself a training drills and gave up my spare time to stick to practicing them. I set myself targets to improve my performance.

By the time I had my first match I didn't really feel like I had improved in my game after only a week, I felt by analysing the mistakes I made in match 1, I could improve by match 2 as I had the figures to work with, if I could reduce these after another week of training then I was improving and I could continue with the same type of practices.

By match 2 my performance had slightly improved, this was pleasing as I put in a lot of effort and organised more team practices to help myself with the targets, but at this point in my own head I set myself a "mini-target" I wanted to reduce my errors of each weakness by 3 from the previous figure in the next week. I failed to do this which prompted me to practice harder although the pace changing and defending was achieved I still needed to work on balance and tactical plays.

At the end of my month I felt I had improved in my knowledge of the game due to reading around the sport and working extremely hard on the specific targets I set myself. I feel I have a lot more confidence when playing now, my defending and balance are the biggest improvements and I will continue to practice these to ensure I always mark the opposition and receive a pass without falling over and disobeying the footwork rule. Also by introducing tactics into our club team situation we have had a greater average of wins compared with when we never used a strategy.

Overall I am pleased with my progress the extrinsic feedback has been as good as my kinaesthetic feeling, players from other teams have commented as well as those I play with, hence being nominated for the two awards.

## **Bibliography**



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