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EFFECT OF SAQ TRAINING COMBINED WITH SPORTS SPECIFIC TRAINING ON SELECTED MOTOR FITNESS COMPONENTS AMONG COLLEGE MEN CRICKET PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT :

This study investigated the effect of Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ) training combined with sports-specific training on selected motor fitness components among college men cricket players. In cricket, motor fitness components such as speed, agility and arm strength are essential for optimal performance in batting, bowling and fielding. The purpose of the study was to assess how a structured SAQ training program, supplemented with cricket-specific drills, could enhance selected motor fitness variables, thereby improving athletic performance. Thirty (N=30) male cricket players from Bharathiar University, Tamil Nadu, were chosen as subjects and randomly divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each comprising fifteen players. The experimental group participated in a six-week combined training program, conducted three days per week, each session lasting 60 minutes. The training included warm-up, SAQ drills, cricket- specific skill-based exercises and cool-down activities. The control group did not undergo any additional training apart from their routine practice. Motor fitness variables such as speed, agility and arm strength were measured using standardized field tests before and after the training intervention. Data were analyzed using the dependent 't' test. The findings revealed that the combined SAQ and sports-specific training program produced significant improvements in selected motor fitness components of the experimental group when compared with the control group. The results suggest that integrating SAQ training with cricket-specific exercises is an effective approach to developing motor fitness and enhancing overall performance among college men cricket players.

KEYWORDS: SAQ Training, sports specific training, Speed, Agility, Arm Strength and Cricket Players.

INTRODUCTION

Motor fitness is a pivotal determinant of athletic performance in cricket, demanding attributes such as speed, agility and arm strength for success in batting, bowling and fielding. Cricket's dynamic nature requires athletes to execute rapid movements, frequent accelerations and skilful actions that rely on high levels of physical conditioning. Speed, agility and power enable players to run between wickets efficiently, react quickly to gameplay situations and deliver or counter fast bowling, while arm strength is crucial for powerful throws and effective batting strokes. SAQ training typically involves exercises such as ladder drills, cone drills and plyometric activities that target explosive strength and reaction time. When combined with cricket-specific training exercises, this integrated approach is designed to develop not only general physical fitness but also the sport-specific skills vital for optimal cricket performance.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ) training combined with sports-specific training on selected motor fitness components among college men cricket players. Thirty male cricket players from Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, were selected as subjects and randomly assigned into two groups of equal size an experimental group and a control group. The subjects were informed about the objectives of the study and the procedures involved and their coaches were requested to motivate full cooperation throughout the study period. The experimental group participated in a combined SAQ and sports-specific training program, while the control group continued their routine cricket practice without additional training interventions. The training program for the experimental group lasted six weeks, with sessions held three days per week, each lasting 60 minutes. Each session included a 10- minute warm-up, 35 minutes of SAQ drills and cricket-specific exercises designed to enhance speed, agility, quickness and cricket-related skills, followed by a 10-minute cool- down. Training intensity and repetitions were progressively increased according to the schedule to optimize performance adaptations. Selected motor fitness components—speed, agility and arm strength—were assessed using standardized field tests before and after the intervention.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The collected data on selected motor fitness components before and after the 6-week combined SAQ and sports-specific training program were statistically analyzed using the dependent 't' test. This analysis was conducted to determine the significant improvements between the pre-test and post-test scores of the college men cricket players. The results derived from this statistical evaluation are presented and discussed in the following tables.

Table 1

Analysis of 't' ratio for the pre and post-tests of experimental and control group on speed, agility and arm strength.

Group	Variables		Mean	SD	SE	t- ratio
Experimental Group	Speed	Pre test	7.45	0.80	0.19	4.20*
		Post test	7.02	0.75		
	Agility	Pre test	11.69	0.98	0.28	4.85*
		Post test	10.77	1.07		
	Arm strength	Pre test	19.50	2.70	0.65	2.95*
		Post test	21.25	2.50		
Control Group	Speed	Pre test	7.50	0.78	0.23	1.80
		Post test	7.49	0.78		
	Agility	Pre test	11.85	0.47	0.12	2.10
		Post test	11.84	0.47		
	Arm strength	Pre test	19.40	2.60	0.66	1.50
		Post test	19.45	2.65		

Significant level at 0.05 (2.14)

Table-1 shows the computation of mean, standard deviation and 't' ratio on the selected variables namely speed, agility and arm strength for the experimental group. The obtained 't' ratios for speed 4.20, agility 4.58 and arm strength 2.95 respectively. The required table value for the degrees of freedom 1 and 14 at the 0.05 level of significance was 2.14. Since the obtained 't' values were greater than the required table value, they were found to be statistically significant for the experimental group. Furthermore, the computation of mean, standard deviation and 't' ratio on the selected variables namely speed, agility and arm strength was conducted for the control group. The obtained 't' ratios were 1.80, 2.10 and 1.50 respectively. The required table value for the degrees of freedom 1 and 14 at the 0.05 level of significance was 2.14. Since the obtained 't' values were less than the required table value, they were found to be statistically insignificant for the control group.

Figure 1

The bar diagram shows the mean pre- and post-test values for speed variables in the experimental and control groups

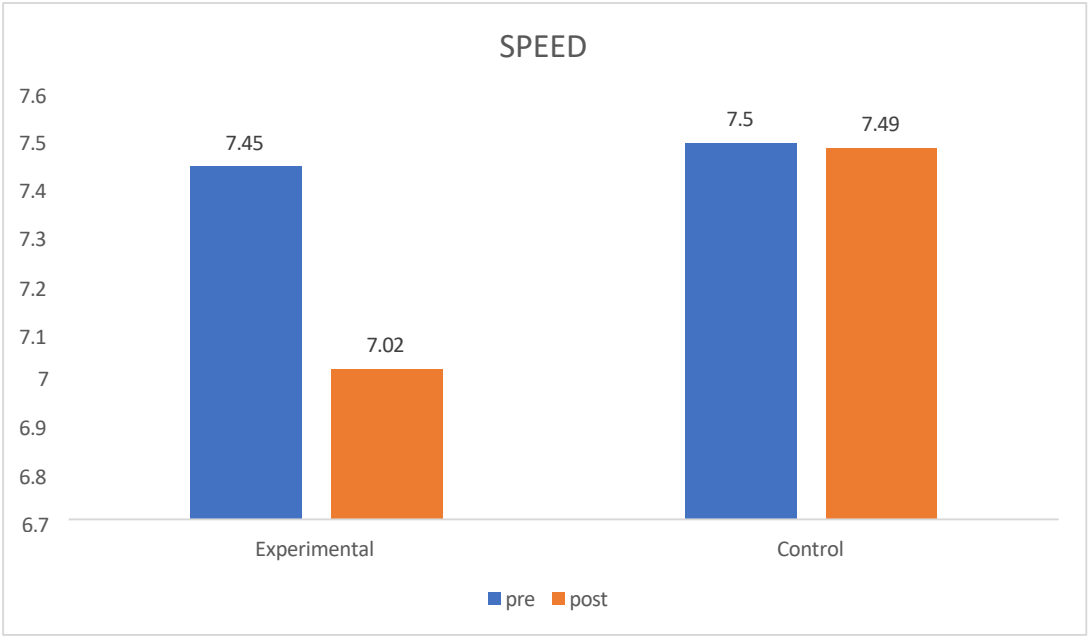


Figure 2

The bar diagram shows the mean pre- and post-test values for agility variables in the experimental and control groups

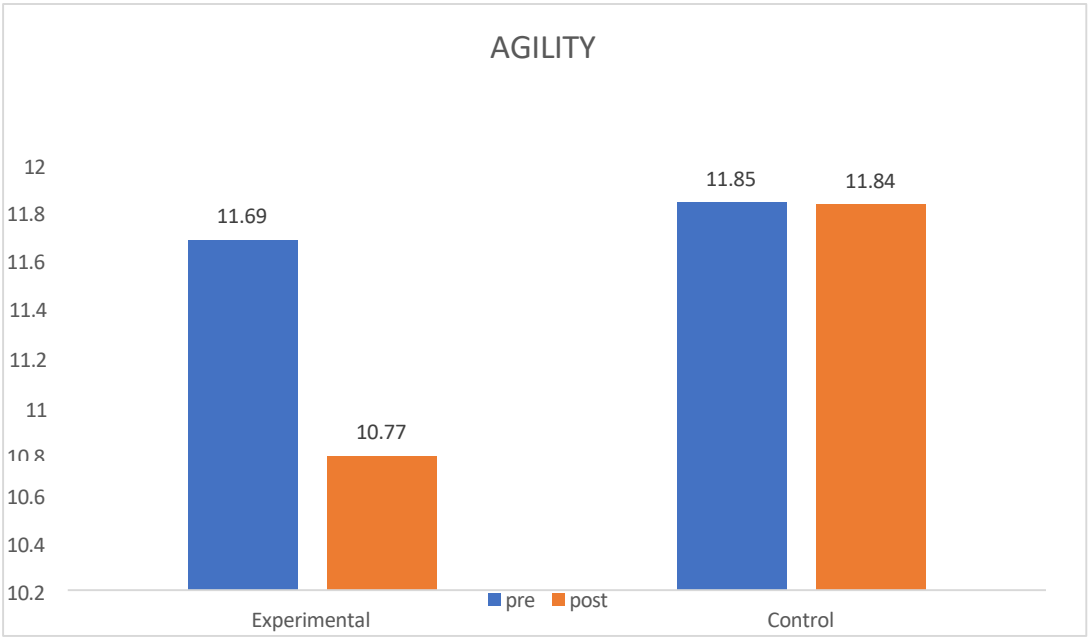
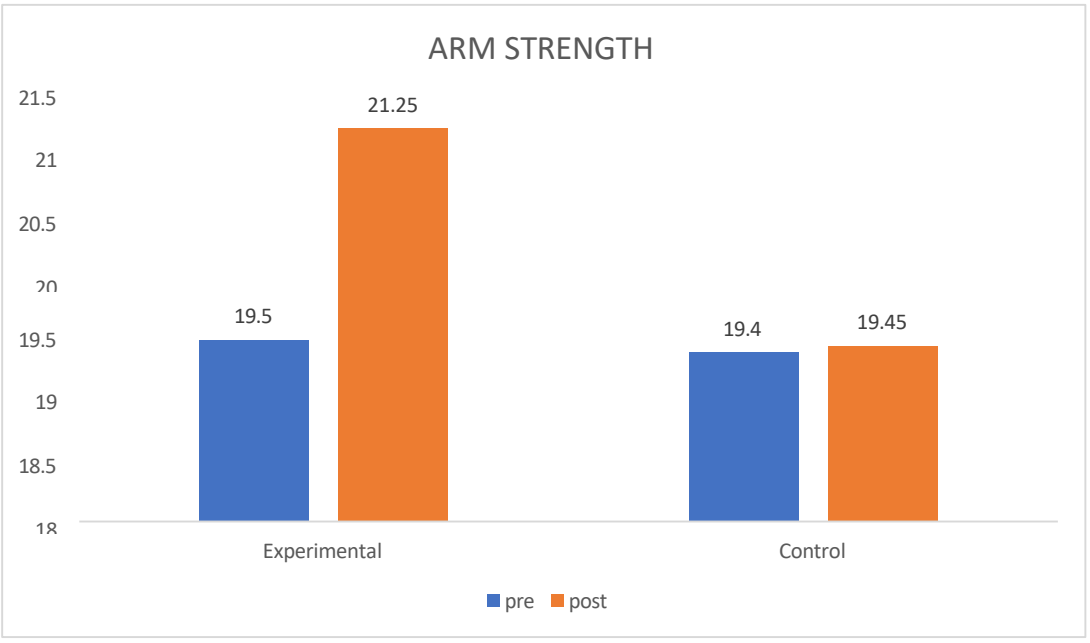


Figure 3

The bar diagram shows the mean pre- and post-test values for arm strength variables in the experimental and control groups



DISCUSSION ON FINDING

The present study examined the effect of SAQ training combined with sports- specific training on selected motor fitness components among college men cricket players. The results revealed significant improvements in speed, agility and arm strength in the experimental group compared to the control group. These findings align with previous research that supports the effectiveness of SAQ training in enhancing key motor abilities required in cricket, such as rapid changes in direction, quick acceleration and explosive movements. SAQ training improves neuromuscular coordination, enabling players to execute cricket-specific skills more efficiently and respond faster during gameplay (Lockie et al., 2014; Rössler et al., 2016). The combination with sports-specific drills ensures that improvements in motor fitness translate effectively into on-field performance, including running between wickets, fielding and batting skills. Enhanced motor fitness reduces injury risks by improving muscle strength, balance and reaction time, which are critical for

maintaining optimal athletic condition throughout competitive seasons. Overall, the integration of SAQ and sports-specific training offers a comprehensive approach to developing cricket players' physical and technical capabilities, contributing to improved performance and endurance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that a systematic and scientifically designed six-week SAQ training program combined with sports-specific training produced significant improvements in selected motor fitness components among college men cricket players. The training effectively enhanced variables such as speed, agility and leg explosive power critical for cricket performance. Additionally, it was determined that the integration of SAQ training with cricket-specific exercises is an appropriate and efficient method to develop the motor fitness components speed, agility and arm strength among college men cricket players.

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