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EFFECT OF SAQ TRAINING COMBINED WITH SPORTS SPECIFIC TRAINING ON SELECTED SKILL PERFORMANCE VARIABLES 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 skill performance variables among college men cricket players. In cricket, skill performance components such as batting ability and bowling accuracy are crucial for achieving competitive excellence. The purpose of this study was to assess how a structured SAQ training program, supplemented with cricket-specific drills, could positively influence selected skill-related variables, thereby enhancing overall playing ability. Thirty (N=30) male cricket players from Bharathiar University, Tamil Nadu, were randomly divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each comprising fifteen players. The experimental group underwent a six-week combined training program, conducted three days per week, with each session lasting 60 minutes. The regimen consisted of a warm-up phase, SAQ drills, cricket-specific skill-based practices and a cool-down phase. The control group continued only with their regular practice routines. Skill performance variables such as batting ability and bowling accuracy were evaluated through standardized tests before and after the training intervention. Data were analyzed using the dependent 't' test. The findings revealed that the experimental group showed significant improvements in selected skill performance variables compared to the control group. The results suggest that integrating SAQ training with sport-specific drills is an effective approach for skill enhancement and performance development among college men cricket players.

Keywords: SAQ Training, Sports-Specific Training, Batting Ability and Bowling Accuracy, Cricket Players.

INTRODUCTION

Skill performance is a crucial determinant of success in cricket, requiring players to excel in batting precision, bowling accuracy and fielding efficiency. The dynamic nature of the game demands quick reflexes, controlled movements and situational awareness during competitive play. Batting accuracy, including proper timing and effective shot placement, is essential for building partnerships and scoring runs. Bowling performance, such as line and length control, spin or pace consistency and target precision, directly impacts match outcomes. Similarly, fielding skills like rapid ball collection, throwing accuracy and safe catching play a decisive role in restricting runs. To achieve excellence in these areas, players must combine technical refinement with physical readiness. Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ) training enhances reaction ability, explosiveness and body coordination critical for skill execution. Drills such as ladder movements, cone runs and plyometric activities improve footwork, balance and quick decision-making. When these physical drills are systematically combined with cricket-specific exercises, the benefits transfer effectively to game-related skills. Practical training like targeted batting drills, bowling at specific zones and advanced fielding practices complement physical conditioning. This integrated approach develops both athletic capacity and the precise skill application required for higher-level performance. College cricketers, who are in a key developmental stage, can particularly benefit from structured scientific training programs. A combination of SAQ and cricket skill drills builds sharper reflexes and enhances sport-specific efficiency under match conditions. The holistic influence of the training aims at consistent improvement in selected skill performance variables. By systematically applying this method, measurable progress can be observed in batting, bowling and fielding outputs. Thus, studying the impact of SAQ combined with sports-specific training provides valuable insights for improving cricket performance in college men.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ) training combined with sports-specific training on selected skill performance variables among college men cricket players. For this study, thirty male cricket players from Bharathiar University, Tamil Nadu, were selected as subjects. Among them, 15 subjects were assigned to the experimental group. The subjects were informed about the objectives of the study and the training procedures they would undergo. The experimental group participated in the combined SAQ and cricket-specific training programme, whereas the remaining 15 subjects formed the control group, who continued their routine practice without additional training. The selected skill performance variables such as batting ability and bowling accuracy were measured using cricket skill tests before and after the intervention. The

training programme for the experimental group lasted six weeks, with 60-minute sessions conducted three days per week on alternate days. Each session began with a 10-minute warm-up followed by 25 minutes of SAQ drills including ladder drills, cone drills and plyometric exercises, integrated with 20 minutes of cricket-specific skill drills focusing on batting ability and bowling accuracy. Rest intervals of 30 seconds were allowed between sets. The session concluded with a 5-minute cool-down period. The repetitions and intensity of drills were progressively increased according to the training schedule to maximize skill enhancement.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The collected data on selected skill performance variables 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 batting ability and bowling accuracy.

Group	Variables		Mean	SD	SE	t- ratio
Experimental Group	Batting Ability	Pre test	65.40	5.20	1.34	4.50*
		Post test	71.30	4.80		
	Bowling Accuracy	Pre test	58.90	6.10	1.58	4.10*
		Post test	64.75	5.70		
Control Group	Batting Ability	Pre test	64.85	5.10	1.32	1.35
		Post test	65.00	5.15		
	Bowling Accuracy	Pre test	59.50	6.00	1.55	1.25
		Post test	59.70	6.05		

Significant level at 0.05 (2.14)

Table-1 shows the computation of mean, standard deviation and 't' ratio on the selected variables namely batting ability and bowling accuracy for the experimental group. The obtained 't' ratios for batting ability and bowling accuracy 4.50 and 4.10 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 batting ability and bowling accuracy was conducted for the control group. The obtained 't' ratios were 1.35 and 1.25 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 batting ability in the experimental and control groups

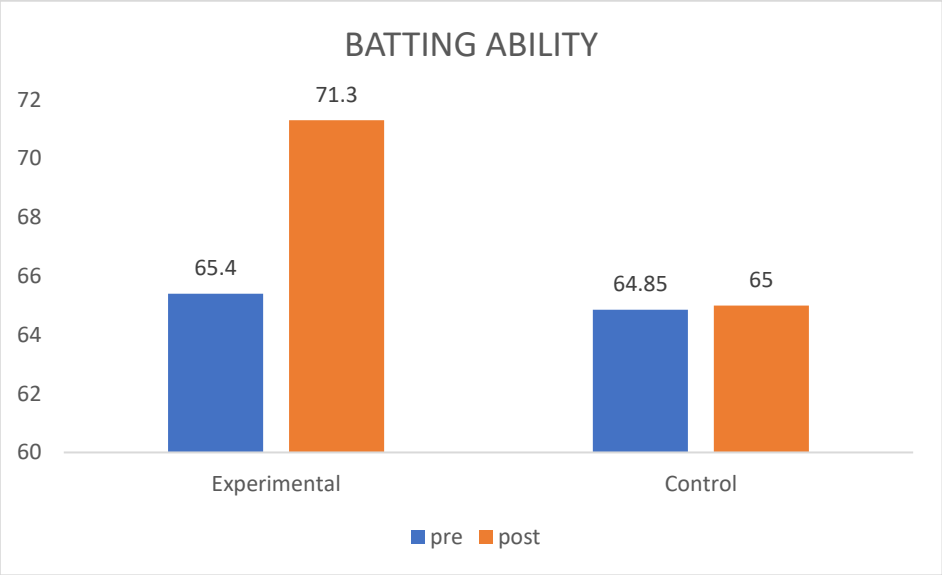
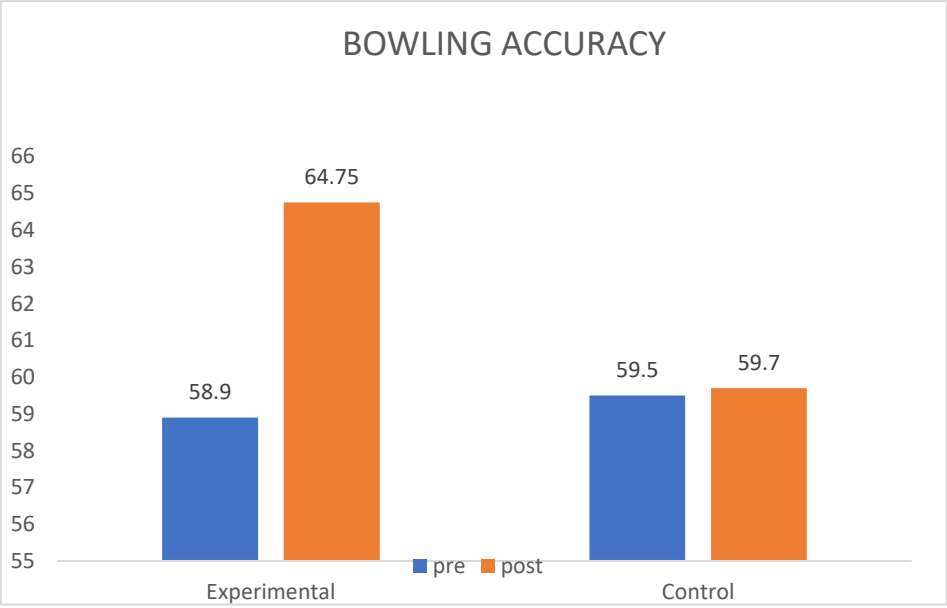


Figure 2

The bar diagram shows the mean pre- and post-test values for bowling accuracy 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 skill performance variables among college men cricket players. The findings revealed significant improvements in batting ability and bowling accuracy in the experimental group compared to the control group. These results support previous research that highlights SAQ training's role in enhancing essential cricket skills, including rapid responsiveness, precise foot movement and explosive power generation. SAQ training enhances neuromuscular coordination and motor control, enabling players to perform cricket-specific skills more efficiently and react faster during matches (Chitra, 2023; South African study, 2009). The integration of sports-specific drills ensures that enhancements in physical abilities translate directly into improved on-field skill execution, thereby elevating overall game performance. Furthermore, improved skill performance contributes to increased consistency and confidence in batting and bowling tasks. This holistic training approach not only fosters technical proficiency but also aids injury prevention by enhancing balance, coordination and muscular strength, which are critical for maintaining peak performance throughout competitive seasons. Overall, combining SAQ training with cricket-specific drills provides an effective and comprehensive strategy for developing the physical and technical capabilities of college men cricket players, leading to superior skill mastery and competitive readiness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that a scientifically designed six-week SAQ training program combined with sports-specific training produced significant improvements in selected skill performance variables among college men cricket players. The training effectively enhanced variables such as batting ability and bowling accuracy, which are critical for optimal 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 skill performance variables of batting ability and bowling accuracy among college men cricket players.

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