

## **THE EFFECT OF BACKWARD TRAINING ON THE SPEED, AGILITY AND POWER OF NETBALL PLAYERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the effect of a backward training programme on the speed, agility and power of well-trained netball players. Seventeen women club netball players (aged 19 – 20 years) were divided into an experimental (n=10) and a control group (n=7) and participated in a six-week backward (BW) and forward (FW) training programme after the competitive season. Before and after the intervention, all the subjects completed the following tests: agility-505 test, agility-T, ladder-test, sprint test (5, 10 and 20 meters) and a vertical jump test. The experimental group showed a statistically significant improvement in the agility-505 test, both for the right leg ( $p=0.03$ ) and left leg ( $p=0.03$ ), the agility-T test ( $p=0.01$ ), as well as the ladder-test ( $p=0.001$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups with regards to straight-line speed and leg power. Although it is not uncommon for coaches to include backward running exercises in the conditioning programmes of team sport players, the actual value of this type of training may have been underestimated in the past. Our findings suggest that netball specific exercises, performed backwards, can be successfully included in the conditioning and skills training programmes of team sport players.*

**Key words:** Backward training; Netball; Fitness.