

EDGE BALL

VIEW FROM A SPORTS SCIENTIST

The sports scientist/coaching scientist in me is excited about testing and retesting training programs for this EDGE ball due to its chaotic movement, innovative and athletically challenging design. The reason I believe the product will improve my own and everyone's training programs, is due to the following "athletic skill/s" it develops:

ATTENTIONAL FOCUS TRAINING

Def. the focus of an individual's attention at a particular moment. This focus may be internal (i.e., attending to cognitive, emotional, or pain cues) or external (i.e., attending to environmental cues).

My hypothesis, after using the ball numerous times, is that; whilst using the ball there is a requirement for the athlete/player to "narrow" his/her attentional focus. (i.e. focusing more directly on the ball and its unpredictable movement.). I have experienced this first hand (using the ball myself) and second hand (viewing a soccer player with a high skill level using the ball) and the skill/task completion actually improves when employing or increasing awareness of this cognitive skill of "attentional focus".

REACTIVE DECISION MAKING (RDM) TRAINING

Def. Decision making based on reacting to unexpected situations due to variability.

In the life cycle of a footballer/soccer player it becomes very hard to train (RDM) with regular equipment, as the intermediate and advanced athletes are adept at particular sports specific athletic movements and skills, which make it "easier or seem less" for them to control a 'normal' soccer/football.

The EDGE ball creates an environment where by even top-level semi pro and pro athletes would and will struggle to control the ball as usual, and have difficulty in immediately completing similar skill tasks at the same level of proficiency as when using a normal ball.

PROACTIVE DECISION-MAKING TRAINING (PDM)

Def. The process of evaluating available information and reaching a judgment or conclusion based on that information.

This skill gets trained and as a result the athlete using the ball gets significantly better at PDM, therefore can control the chaotic ball more effectively.

The learning of the movement of the EDGE ball takes time, however, in my hypothesis, can be done to a level of intermediate to advanced mastery. I would love to see longitudinal (long time based) observations on players using the ball as a training stimulus and creating a testing procedure to evaluate just how good the ball can make them at "proactive decision making" or in other words, judging the flight, turn and spin of the ball and creating the required contact with the body part to achieve a skill or drill completion.

REACTION TIME TRAINING

When you are new to a reaction time task, your reaction times are less consistent than when you have had more practice. Your brain can be trained to react faster to stimulus.

With the ball moving with a high degree of variability right to the last second before contact with the body, reaction time or the ability to react fast is a requirement for skill mastery with this EDGE ball. Providing a much more intense (and variable) stimulus to the player through the balls varied movement will create a "reaction" skill level that will be exponential increased.

CONCLUSION

When you train/play again with a normal ball, the benefits of the attentional focus training, RDM, PDM and reaction time training in THE harder training environment (established by the design of the ball) become apparent immediately, and the normal ball movement appears to be "easier" to control than usual because of the improvement in the cognitive skill.

I believe athletes would have an acute (short term) and chronic (long term) benefit from using the EDGE ball as a new training stimulus, to improve aforementioned cognitive skills, that are imperative to be successful in the associated individual and team sports.