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Role of Combined Fitness Progression and Skill Training in Developing Motor Fitness and Cognitive Planning in Young Cricketers

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Abstract: *Cricket demands both physical fitness and cognitive abilities for optimal performance. While traditional training emphasizes skill development, the integration of systematic fitness progression with skill training remains underexplored in young cricketers. To investigate the effects of combined fitness progression and skill training on motor fitness components and cognitive planning abilities in young cricketers aged 13-16 years. Sixty male cricketers were randomly assigned to experimental group receiving combined fitness progression and skill training, or control group receiving conventional skill training only. The 12-week intervention included assessments of motor fitness and cognitive planning. Data were analyzed using paired t-tests, independent t-tests, ANCOVA, and effect sizes. The EG demonstrated significantly greater improvements than CG in 30m sprint time, T-test agility, vertical jump, and cognitive planning scores. Within-group analysis revealed significant pre-post improvements in EG across all variables, while CG showed minimal changes. Combined fitness progression and skill training produces superior adaptations in both motor fitness and cognitive planning compared to skill training alone. This integrated approach should be incorporated into youth cricket development programs..*

Keywords*:* Cricket training, motor fitness, cognitive planning, youth athletes, integrated training, skill development.