ABSTRACT

TITLE:	The Effect of Instruction and Demonstration on the Illinois Agility Test
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ABSTRACT: Every year during athletic participation, athletes sustain a number of lower extremity injuries. Athletic trainers and other health care professionals use a series of lower extremity functional tests, including the Illinois Agility Test, to objectively determine if the athlete is ready to return to play. Unfortunately, the Illinois Agility Test only comes with generic written instructions to read aloud to the athlete, but no standard for test administration. Without a consistent standard for test administration, inter-tester reliability makes it difficult to determine if the Illinois Agility Test is actually testing the true functionality of the athlete's previous injury. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of instruction and demonstration on soccer player's performance on the Illinois Agility Test. The hypothesis stated that instruction and demonstration would decrease the time it takes soccer players to complete the Illinois Agility Test. Twenty male varsity and club soccer players were pre-tested on an agility course after receiving generic verbal instructions. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups; a control group (CS) and a treatment group (TS). The TS received a live demonstration prior to their post-test, as well as instruction and feedback throughout their trials on how to improve their technique and decrease their time. Participants in the CS received the same verbal instructions as the pre-test and no additional instruction or demonstrations. The averages of the pre- and post-tests scores were compared between the two groups. The results of this study revealed that there was a significant ($P < 0.05$) effect when comparing the pre- and post-test scores of the CS to the pre- and post-test scores of the TS ($P = 0.00$). Furthermore, significance ($P = 0.00$) was found between the pre- and post-test scores among the TS group. Lastly, significance ($P = 0.009$) was also found between the pre-test results of the CS compared to the TS. The hypothesis for this study was accepted as instruction and demonstration decreased the time it takes soccer players to complete the Illinois Agility Test. Thus, a national standard for test administration should be implemented to make the results more reliable and valid. The national standard for test administration should include instruction, demonstration and feedback to assure that the athlete's functionality is truly being tested. Athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, and health care professionals across the nation will benefit from this standard because if functionality is indeed tested, it can be assured that the athlete is safely returning to play after a lower extremity injury.