



DETERMINE THE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE PROFESSIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AND TECHNICAL SKILLS OF MALE ATHLETES ON THE FUTSAL SAIGON TITANS TEAM, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

Context: Modern futsal demands that athletes maintain high-intensity activity and execute precise techniques under pressure and fatigue. Therefore, establishing a suitable evaluation criteria system is crucial for controlling and improving training effectiveness. **Subjects and Methods:** This study was conducted on male futsal players from the Saigon Titans team in Vietnam and a group of experts in futsal, football, and sports coaching. Synthesis and analysis of documents, interviews, pedagogical testing, and statistical methods were used to select and validate the reliability of the tests. **Results:** The study identified a system of criteria for evaluating professional and technical physical fitness that has high expert consensus and ensures reliability through repeated testing. The criteria reflect specific abilities in speed, agility, specialized endurance, high-intensity movement, and execution of specific techniques in futsal. **Conclusion:** The established criteria system is scientifically and practically sound, suitable for assessing skill levels, monitoring training processes, and guiding the development of specialized physical fitness and technical skills for male futsal players of the Saigon Titans team.

Keywords: evaluation criteria, professional fitness, technique, athlete, futsal, Saigon Titans, Vietnam

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1. Introduction

Futsal is a team sport characterized by high-intensity, intermittent movement, played in a confined playing space, and with constant transitions between attack and defense. During matches, athletes must constantly accelerate, decelerate, sprint, change direction, and compete for the ball, while handling the ball under significant time and space pressure. These characteristics place high demands on the athletes' physical fitness and technical skills (Barbero-Alvarez *et al.*, 2008; Naser *et al.*, 2017) [1], [2].

In the system of high-performance sports, Futsal is a competition with high intensity, fast speed, narrow playing space, and continuous transitions between attack and defense. This characteristic requires athletes to have a good professional physical foundation combined with the ability to accurately perform basic techniques under pressure and fatigue. According to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, modern futsal competition requires players to maintain the ability to accelerate, change direction, explosive power, speed endurance, and ball handling technique at high intensity throughout the match (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 2021) [3]. Studies by Barbero-Alvarez, Castagna *et al.* also show that the combination of specialized physical development and technique is the decisive factor in the performance of futsal athletes (Barbero-Alvarez *et al.*, 2008), (Castagna, C., *et al.*, 2009) [1], [4].

Specialized physical fitness is considered the foundation for ensuring athletes maintain exercise intensity and perform technical and tactical tasks effectively throughout the match. Qualities such as speed, speed strength, agility, specialized endurance, and the ability to repeat sprints play an important role in the performance of futsal athletes (Castagna *et al.*, 2009; Nikolaidis *et al.*, 2019) [4], [5]. In particular, a decrease in physical fitness under high-intensity exercise conditions can affect ball handling speed, the accuracy of passes, and the ability to shoot. Therefore, specialized physical fitness and technique do not exist independently but have a close relationship, together determining the performance of athletes (Naser *et al.*, 2017; Mendes *et al.*, 2022) [2], [6].

Modern futsal training trends increasingly focus on controlling the training process based on objective and sport-specific evaluation indicators. Identifying appropriate criteria allows coaches to accurately assess athletes' skill levels, identify strengths and weaknesses, and adjust training content, volume, and methods according to actual requirements. Studies show that specialized training programs can simultaneously improve aerobic and anaerobic capacity, agility, and performance-related factors of futsal athletes (Barbieri *et al.*, 2016) [7]. Therefore, building a system of evaluation criteria that is scientific, reliable, and suitable to the characteristics of the target group is an important requirement in high-performance futsal training.

In recent years, Vietnamese futsal has made significant progress and gradually asserted its position in the region as well as on the international stage. Along with the development of the competition system, the need to improve the quality of training at clubs has become increasingly urgent. However, domestic research mainly focuses on evaluating individual physical attributes, developing speed, or selecting exercises for

athletes in certain groups; the establishment of standardized criteria for evaluating professional physical fitness and technical skills for futsal athletes at the professional club level remains limited. Furthermore, differences in skill levels, athlete characteristics, and training conditions require that evaluation criteria be selected and validated specifically on the research subjects, rather than mechanically applying tests already used for other groups of athletes.

For the Saigon Titans Futsal team, accurately assessing the physical fitness, expertise, and technical skills of its athletes is crucial for controlling training conditions, developing training programs, and improving performance. However, there is currently no scientifically defined system of evaluation criteria that is suitable for the specific professional characteristics of the team's male athletes. This gap necessitates research and the selection of criteria that are specific, feasible, and reliable in practical training.

Stemming from the above issues, the study "Determine the criteria for evaluating the professional physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes on the Futsal Saigon Titans team, Vietnam" was conducted to select and validate a suitable system of evaluation criteria, thereby providing a scientific basis for assessing athlete skill levels, controlling the training process, and guiding the development of specialized physical fitness and technical skills programs to meet the requirements of modern futsal competition.

2. Research materials and methods

2.1 Methods

2.1.1 Method of document synthesis and analysis

The study collected, synthesized, and analyzed domestic and international scientific documents related to the characteristics of futsal competition, specialized physical fitness, techniques, and testing systems for evaluating futsal athletes. The results of the document analysis were used as a theoretical and practical basis to synthesize initial criteria and evaluation tests suitable for the characteristics of movement and the requirements of modern futsal competition.

2.1.2 Interview method

Questionnaire interviews were conducted with experts, scientists, lecturers, and experienced coaches in the fields of football, futsal, and sports coaching. The interviews focused on evaluating the suitability of the compiled professional and technical fitness tests. Interviews were conducted twice to check the consistency of expert opinions. Tests that met the consensus criteria for selection were included in the next validation step.

2.1.3 Pedagogical testing method

Tests were selected through expert interviews and administered to male Futsal players of the Saigon Titans team. The testing process was conducted under standardized conditions regarding location, time, equipment, and procedures. The study conducted

repeated tests using the same procedure to determine the reliability of the tests. The test results served as a practical basis for determining a system of criteria for evaluating professional physical fitness and technical skills suitable for the research subjects.

2.1.4 Statistical methods

The data were processed using statistical methods in sports science research. The study used mean ($\bar{x}$), standard deviation (SD), percentage (%), and Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The correlation coefficient between two tests was used to assess the reliability of the tests. Tests meeting the statistical reliability requirements were selected as criteria for evaluating the professional and technical fitness of male athletes in the Saigon Titans Futsal team.

2.2 Participants

Interview subjects: 20 Futsal coaches, managers, teachers, and referees.

Survey subjects: 15 male athletes from the Saigon Titans Futsal team.

3. Results

To determine the criteria for evaluating the physical fitness and technical skills of male Futsal players in the Saigon Titans Futsal team, Vietnam conducted the following research steps:

- **Step 1:** Synthesize the criteria for evaluating the physical fitness and technical skills of Futsal athletes from various authors.
- **Step 2:** Use questionnaires to gather opinions from coaches, teachers, experts, and referees regarding the criteria for evaluating the physical fitness and technical skills of male Futsal players from the Saigon Titans team.
- **Step 3:** Determine the reliability of the tests evaluating the physical fitness and technical skills of male Futsal players from the Saigon Titans team.

3.1. Synthesis of criteria for evaluating the physical fitness and technical skills of Futsal athletes by various authors

Through reference to documents with tests to assess professional physical fitness and technical skills for Futsal athletes such as: Nguyen Huu Hoang Phuc (2022) [8], Tran Ngoc Minh Khoa (2015) [9], Ngo Huu Phuc (2019) [10], Trinh Dinh Giang (2022) [11], Nguyen Thanh Hau (2021) [12], Cai Van Hoa (2019) [13], Luong Thi Anh Ngoc et.al (2023) [14], Nguyen Dinh Le Thai et.al (2022) [15], Le Quang Nghia (2014) [16], Tang Phu Duc (2019) [17], Nguyen Dinh Le Thai (2025) [18], AFC (2013) [19], Ly Vinh Truong, Nguyen Hong Son et.al (2017) [20], Le Nguyet Nga et.al (2016) [21]. Through his training and coaching experience, the author has compiled 33 commonly used tests to assess the specialized physical fitness and technical skills of Futsal athletes, including 16 specialized physical fitness tests and 17 technical tests.

3.2. Interviewing and selecting candidates for tests to assess the physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes in the Saigon Titans Futsal team.

To ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the selection of tests for assessing the professional physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes in the Saigon Titans Futsal team, the study conducted two rounds of interviews using questionnaires, two weeks apart.

However, to ensure objectivity and avoid errors in test selection, each questionnaire was left blank for coaches, experts, instructors, teachers, referees, and managers to add necessary tests. While some additional opinions on the tests were received, the number of suggestions was too small and irrelevant, so no tests were added to the compiled test system.

The results of the two rounds of interviews regarding opinions on the tests for assessing the professional physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes in the Saigon Titans Futsal team are presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Results of interviews for selecting candidates for professional and technical fitness tests of male athletes in the Saigon Titans Futsal team

Retrieved	Test	Interview results								χ^2	P
		First time (n=20)				Second time (n=20)					
		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Specialized Physical Fitness											
1	10m sprint with high start (seconds)	14	70	6	30	17	85	3	15	1.29	>0.05
2	Run 20m at high speed (seconds)	10	50	10	50	11	55	9	45	0.10	>0.05
3	30m high start sprint (seconds)	19	95	1	5	20	100	0	0	1.03	>0.05
4	Leg muscle strength (kg)	11	55	9	45	10	50	10	50	0.10	>0.05
5	100m run (seconds)	8	40	12	60	10	50	10	50	0.40	>0.05
6	4 x 10m run (seconds)	19	95	1	5	18	90	2	10	0.36	>0.05
7	Run in a zigzag pattern. (seconds)	15	75	5	25	14	70	6	30	0.13	>0.05
8	Run through the cones 25m (seconds)	19	95	1	5	20	100	0	0	1.03	>0.05
9	Hexagon jump (seconds)	11	55	9	45	10	50	10	50	0.10	>0.05
10	Jump rope for 1 minute (times)	8	40	12	60	9	45	11	55	0.10	>0.05
11	1500m run (seconds)	8	40	12	60	8	40	12	60	0.00	>0.05
12	Yoyo Test (seconds)	9	45	11	55	9	45	11	55	0.00	>0.05
13	5 times 30m run (seconds)	20	100	0	0	20	100	0	0	00	>0.05
14	Cooper test run time: 12 minutes (m)	17	85	3	15	15	75	5	25	0.63	>0.05
15	Beep test (m)	18	90	2	10	17	85	3	15	0.23	>0.05
16	Horizontal and vertical splits (cm)	13	65	7	35	14	70	6	30	0.11	>0.05
Technique											
17	Juggling the ball with both feet (times)	13	65	7	35	14	70	6	30	0.11	>0.05
18	Juggling the ball within a 2m radius (times)	20	100	0	0	20	100	0	0	0.00	>0.05
19	Head juggling (times)	17	85	3	15	15	75	5	25	0.63	>0.05
20	Juggling the ball with different body parts (times)	12	60	8	40	9	45	11	55	0.90	>0.05
21	Long throw distance (m)	8	40	12	60	8	40	12	60	0.00	>0.05

22	Cushion the ball with the foot sole for 30 seconds (repeat)	13	65	7	35	12	60	8	40	0.11	>0.05
23	Dribbling at speed for 30 meters (seconds)	15	75	5	25	15	75	5	25	0.00	>0.05
24	Dribbling 25m past the cones, and shooting at goal (seconds)	19	95	1	5	19	95	1	5	0.00	>0.05
25	Dribbling through cones (seconds)	15	75	5	25	14	70	6	30	0.13	>0.05
26	Dribbling in a figure-eight pattern (seconds)	13	65	7	35	13	65	7	35	0.00	>0.05
27	Pass the ball 20m into the goal (times)	14	70	6	30	16	80	4	20	0.53	>0.05
28	Pass the ball 10m into the 1.5x2m space (times)	18	90	2	10	19	95	1	5	0.36	>0.05
29	Shoot the ball towards the goal from a distance of 6m (times)	14	70	6	30	13	65	7	35	0.11	>0.05
30	Shoot the ball towards the goal from a distance of 10m (times)	19	95	1	5	20	100	0	0	1.03	>0.05
31	Long-range shot with non-dominant foot (m)	15	75	5	25	14	70	6	30	0.13	>0.05
32	Long-range shot with dominant foot (m)	16	80	4	20	13	65	7	35	1.13	>0.05
33	Control the ball within a 2m radius (times)	18	90	2	10	18	90	2	10	0.00	>0.05

Table 3.1 shows that in all the observed results from the two interviews of the tests, the χ^2 values ranged from 0.0 to $1.29 < \chi^2 \text{ table} (= 3.84)$, so the difference between the two observed values of the sample is not statistically significant at the probability threshold $P > 0.05$ (5%). Therefore, the interview results of experts, coaches, and lecturers between the two interviews showed a high degree of consistency in their responses.

In summary: Through two research steps, the study identified 10 tests to assess the professional physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes in the Saigon Titans Futsal team, including the following tests:

a. 5 specialized physical fitness tests

- 1) 30m high start sprint (seconds),
- 2) 4 x 10m run (seconds),
- 3) Run through the cones 25m,
- 4) 5 x 30m run (seconds),
- 5) Beep test (m).

b. 5 technical tests

- 1) (6) Juggling the ball within a 2m radius (times),
- 2) (7) Dribbling through cones 25m and shooting at the goal (seconds),
- 3) (8) Passing the ball 10m into a 1.5x2m space (times),
- 4) (9) Shooting the ball at the goal from a distance of 10m (times),
- 5) (10) Controlling the ball within a 2m radius (times).

3.3. Testing the reliability of tests assessing the professional physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes on the Saigon Titans Futsal team

To determine the reliability of 10 tests assessing the professional and technical fitness of male futsal players of the Saigon Titans team, the study conducted two tests on the research subjects within 7 days. The test conditions were the same between the two tests. The results of the reliability tests are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of reliability tests of professional and technical fitness
assessment tests for male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team

	Test	First test (n=15)		Retest (n=15)		r	P
		$\bar{X}$	S _x	$\bar{X}$	S _x		
1	30m high-start sprint (seconds)	4.39	0.10	4.38	0.12	0.84	<0.05
2	4 x 10m run (seconds)	11.14	0.18	11.05	0.20	0.81	<0.05
3	Drive-through cones at a distance of 25m (seconds)	6.42	0.15	6.41	0.12	0.88	<0.05
4	5 times 30m run (seconds)	26.96	0.87	26.98	0.85	0.94	<0.05
5	Beep test (m)	1525.3	55.79	1497.3	48.3	0.87	<0.05
6	Juggling the ball within a 2m radius (times)	63.8	4.25	64.3	4.18	0.95	<0.05
7	Dribbling past the 25m cones and shooting at the goal (seconds)	8.20	0.12	8.22	0.15	0.88	<0.05
8	Pass the ball 10m into the 1.5x2m space (times)	5.07	0.70	5.07	0.7	0.86	<0.05
9	Shoot the ball towards the goal from a distance of 10m (times)	8.20	0.56	8.13	0.52	0.89	<0.05
10	Control the ball within a 2m radius (times)	5.60	0.63	5.5	0.52	0.92	<0.05

If the correlation coefficient $r \geq 0.8$ and $P < 0.05$, the test is reliable.

If the correlation coefficient $r < 0.8$ and $P > 0.05$, the test is not reliable.

Table 3.2 shows that the reliability coefficient between two tests evaluating the professional and technical fitness of male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team has a r value ranging from 0.81 to 0.95 (with $P < 0.05$). Thus, the tests evaluating the professional and technical fitness of male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team have a reliability level ranging from medium to medium to high. This indicates that all 10 tests have sufficient reliability and feasibility to evaluate the professional and technical fitness of male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team.

Thus, through the research steps, the thesis has selected 10 tests to assess the professional physical fitness and technical skills of male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team, including the following tests:

a. 5 Specialized Physical Fitness Tests

- (1) 30m High Start Run (seconds)
- (2) 4 x 10m Run (seconds)
- (3) 25m Cone Run (seconds)
- (4) 5 x 30m Run (seconds)
- (5) Beep Test (m)

b. 5 Technical Tests

- (6) Ball Juggling within a 2m radius (times)

- (7) 25m Cone Dribbling and Shooting (seconds)
- (8) 10m Pass into a 1.5x2m space (times)
- (9) 10m Shooting at the Goal (times)
- (10) Ball Control within a 2m Radius (times)

4. Discussion

The study identified 10 tests, including 5 specialized physical fitness tests and 5 technical tests, to evaluate male futsal players of the Saigon Titans team. Notably, the test system was not derived from a single study but was synthesized from domestic research, professional futsal literature, and training practices; then further refined through two rounds of expert interviews with a consensus rate of 80% or higher, and reliability was tested using a repeated testing method. The results showed that the 10 tests had correlation coefficients between the two tests ranging from $r = 0.81$ to $r = 0.95$, with $P < 0.05$, meeting the requirements for use in evaluating the research subjects.

Compared to previous works, the research results of this project have inherited but at the same time show a more specific approach to professional futsal athletes. Tran Ngoc Minh Khoa (2015) [9] mainly built exercises to develop physical fitness for student futsal athletes; Le Quang Nghia (2014) [16], Tang Phu Duc (2019) [17], Ngo Huu Phuc (2019) [10] and Nguyen Dinh Le Thai (2025) [18] focused a lot on speed; Cai Van Hoa (2019) [13] researched endurance; Luong Thi Anh Ngoc et.al (2023) [14] selected tests to assess physical fitness for student futsal athletes. Thus, most previous studies often approached physical fitness quality separately or focused on students.

Meanwhile, the study simultaneously selected two groups of physical fitness indicators: specialized and technical, including speed, directional change ability, dribbling, repeated sprinting ability, and endurance; while also evaluating the ability to juggle the ball in a confined space, dribbling combined with shooting, accurate passing, shooting, and ball control. This structure is more suitable for the characteristics of modern futsal competition, where the effectiveness of movement depends not only on individual physical ability but also requires athletes to maintain the quality of technical execution in confined spaces and under high-intensity exercise demands. This is a clear difference compared to studies that only focus on evaluating speed or specialized endurance.

The topic has similarities in approach with the research of Nguyen Thanh Hau (2021) [12] and Trinh Dinh Giang (2022) [11], as both consider the physical fitness and technique of futsal athletes. However, the fundamental difference lies in the subjects and application context. The research by Trinh Dinh Giang (2022) [11] was conducted on student-athletes. In contrast, the current topic directly studies male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team participating in the national futsal competition system. Therefore, the selected test system aims to reflect the professional requirements of athletes with a higher level of training and competition.

This result has practical implications for the training of the Saigon Titans Futsal team. While the team's overall physical fitness level is fairly consistent, there are still

differences among the players in terms of accurate passing and ball control in tight spaces. This characteristic suggests that the training program should not only focus on increasing physical fitness but also emphasize integrated exercises that combine specialized physical fitness with technical skills, especially passing and ball control under high-speed, tight spaces, and fatigue conditions.

Thus, the novelty of this study lies not in proposing a completely new test, but in building and validating a system for simultaneously assessing professional and technical fitness suitable for the male athletes of the Saigon Titans Futsal team; based on this, identifying the specific limitations of the team to guide the selection and application of exercises. The approach of assessing the current situation → identifying limitations → selecting integrated exercises → experimentally evaluating effectiveness creates the logic and direct applicability of the study in professional futsal training.

5. Conclusions

Through literature review, expert interviews, and reliability testing, the study selected 10 tests to assess the specialized physical fitness and technical skills of male Futsal Saigon Titans athletes, including 5 specialized physical fitness tests and 5 technical tests. These tests have high reliability and are suitable for use in the research.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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