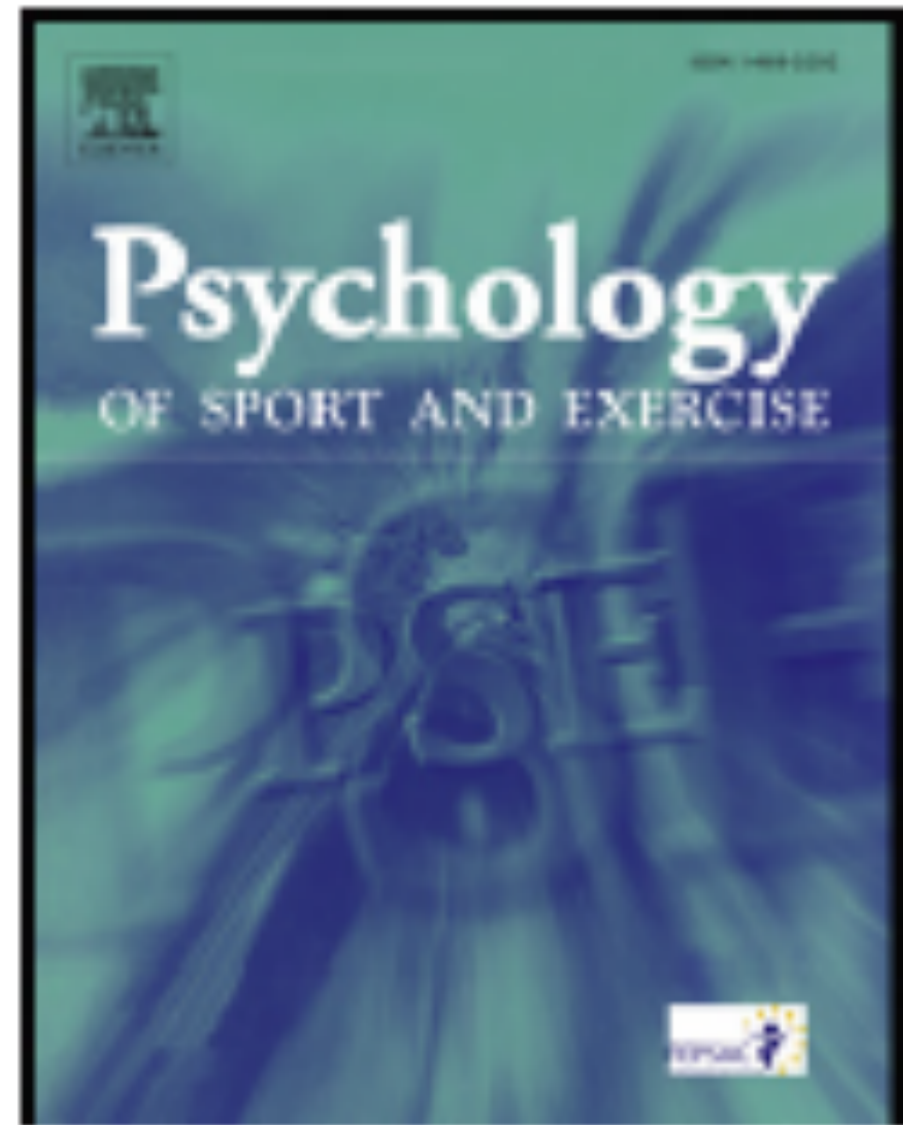




Football coaches' perceptions of visual exploratory activity

Craig Pulling, Phil Kearney, David Eldridge, Matt Dicks



303 current football coaches responded to an online survey about how they introduced, delivered and evaluated visual exploratory activity.



What is Visual Exploratory Activity?

- **Visual exploratory activity** (VEA; aka scanning) refers to movements of the body and/or head in which the player's face is directed away from the ball to pick up information relevant to subsequent actions.
- Research has consistently identified VEA as a characteristic of highly skilled youth and adult footballers.

What did we find?

- (1) The majority of coaches were familiar with VEA, and believed it to be very important in player development.
- (2) A higher coaching qualification and more coaching experience were associated with a positive attitude towards VEA.
- (3) The majority of coaches suggested that VEA should be introduced at Under 8 or earlier: *"It should be embedded as young as possible so it is a natural reaction, just the same as kicking the ball"*
- (4) Coaches used a range of methods to deliver VEA, including direct instruction, constraints-led approaches, and questioning.
- (5) A number of barriers to coaching VEA were identified, including: VEA is difficult to coach; lack of knowledge regarding VEA; lack of resources regarding VEA.
- (6) Coaches reported three main ways of evaluating VEA:
 - Direct observation of body/head movements,
 - Subsequent player behaviours,
 - Assessing player understanding via questioning.

Practical implications

- ❖ Additional coaching resources specifically focusing on the development and evaluation of VEA should be provided.
- ❖ These resources should contain age-appropriate guidelines for session activities.

TO FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1469029218302012>

Contact: c.pulling@chi.ac.uk

[@craigpulling1](https://twitter.com/craigpulling1)