

1 **October 30th, 2021 – Revised Version**

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3 **Development of a Novel Biofeedback System for the Sprint Start**

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13 **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** None

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Abstract

22
23 This study developed and evaluated a novel concurrent biofeedback system for the sprint start.
24 Previous studies have investigated sprint start biofeedback applications, but these have either
25 not considered important kinematics, coaching implications or key motor learning principles.
26 The biofeedback system was developed to convey rear knee angle information, obtained from
27 3D motion capture to novice participants as changes in the colour of an LED start line when
28 they were in the “set” position. Based on initial user feedback, the system indicated whether
29 the participants’ rear knee angles were within $\pm 2^\circ$ of 130° (green) or not (red). A two-group
30 experimental study was then employed to explore the acute responses of novices to the use of
31 the biofeedback system during the sprint start. When exposed to biofeedback, the experimental
32 group (EXP, $n = 10$) exhibited less deviation ($4.0 \pm 2.4^\circ$) from the target rear knee angle than
33 they did in either a pre-test ($11.9 \pm 6.9^\circ$) or post-test ($10.4 \pm 4.4^\circ$) condition without
34 biofeedback. The control group (CON, $n = 10$) with no biofeedback exhibited greater deviation
35 from the target rear knee angle than the EXP group in all three condition blocks (pre-test = 21.8
36 $\pm 15.1^\circ$, no intervention = $15.6 \pm 7.3^\circ$, post-test = $14.3 \pm 6.5^\circ$) but the group \times condition
37 interaction effect was not significant ($P=0.210$). The novel biofeedback system can be used to
38 manipulate selected “set” position kinematics and has the potential to be incorporated with
39 different input systems (e.g. IMUs) or in longitudinal designs.

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41 **Keywords:** Biomechanics, Sport, Motor Control, Sprint Start

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43 **Word Count: 4594**

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Introduction

47 The objective of all sprint events is to translate the whole-body centre of gravity (CoG)
48 over a given distance (60 to 400 m) in the shortest amount of time, and the importance of the
49 start is well established^{1,2,3,4}. A powerful start allows athletes to achieve greater velocities
50 earlier in the race^{5,6}, and this ‘all-out’ strategy is associated with improved overall sprint
51 performance⁷.

52 In all sprinting events that abide by World Athletics regulations, athletes must follow
53 “on your marks” and “set” commands prior to the official start of the race which is marked by
54 the starter’s gun⁸. The position of athletes when in the stationary “set” position is likely an
55 important component of an effective start^{9,10}. An appropriate “set” position may enable
56 increased power generation because of greater impulse production in a shorter period of time^{7,9}.
57 Therefore, it is essential for athletes to learn and be able to attain the “set” position adequately
58 and reliably during training and competition, and this is typically facilitated by technical
59 coaching, often through the provision of feedback.

60 The sprint start is an asymmetric gross motor skill requiring rapid actions and it has
61 therefore been classified as a complex motor skill^{11,12}. Athletes are broadly recommended to
62 position their hips above their shoulders and their shoulders ahead of their hands, which,
63 respectively, translate the whole-body CoG higher and bring it horizontally closer to the start
64 line¹³. Knee joint kinematics in the “set” position have been relatively widely investigated, and
65 the rear knee angle has been identified as an important feature^{2,13,14,15}. The rear knee has been
66 found to be more extended in elite ($136 \pm 11^\circ$) than in well-trained ($117 \pm 10^\circ$) sprinters¹³, and
67 this may assist with the higher and more anterior placement of the whole-body CoG^{2,13,16,17}.
68 The rear leg contributes ~30% of the total horizontal block impulse despite its relatively short
69 pushing duration^{18,19} and rear leg force magnitudes are important predictors of block phase
70 performance^{20,21}. Although the ideal rear knee angle may differ between individuals due to a

71 range of factors, and there is therefore unlikely to be a universally optimal “set” position rear
72 knee angle, the rear knee kinematics in the “set” position are likely important for enabling a
73 sprinter to achieve their desired whole-body CoG positioning and may assist the production of
74 favourable rear leg forces during its relatively short push against the block.

75 While the biomechanics of the sprint start have been widely investigated and features
76 such as the importance of the rear knee action have been established, most studies have been
77 descriptive and cross-sectional. Only a few studies have attempted technique-related
78 interventions for the sprint start, but these have been limited by a lack of supporting motor
79 learning considerations and/or the technology used to present relevant information to the
80 participants^{22,23,24}. For a biofeedback protocol to be effective, it must be tailored to the
81 characteristics of the movement skill and the athletes, and be based on relevant motor learning
82 considerations such as the cognitive load of biofeedback²⁵, biofeedback modality^{26,27} (auditory,
83 visual or haptic), timing²⁸, frequency^{28,29}, focus of attention³⁰ and knowledge of
84 results/performance³¹. A concurrent visual biofeedback system therefore offers a potentially
85 viable solution when integrated within the training environment for complex motor skills such
86 as the sprint start^{33,34}. Coaches may then be able to implement such tools into training to
87 supplement more traditional feedback methods. During complex motor skills, simple,
88 integrated visual displays can be effective due to their low ambiguity^{26,35,30,28}, in particular for
89 novice athletes performing complex movement skills to aid them in learning the general
90 movement patterns^{27,36}. For example, Eriksson et al. (2011) implemented a concurrent simple
91 visual display to successfully modify running mechanics on a treadmill, similar to Luc-Harkey
92 et al. (2018) during walking, whilst Shea and Wulf (1999) found that using concurrent visual
93 displays resulted in improved learning of a balancing task, and Wulf, Shea and Matschiner
94 (1998) found similar results during a dynamic ski simulation task. A simple visual display
95 which has the potential to be integrated into a complex applied environment for whole-body

96 tasks would therefore provide a novel and potentially effective method of providing
97 biofeedback regarding “set” position kinematics, especially for novice sprinters learning the
98 block start. The aim of the present study was therefore to develop and evaluate a simple light-
99 based visual biofeedback system for assisting the near real-time adoption of specified lower
100 limb kinematics in the “set” position of a sprint start.

101 **Methods**

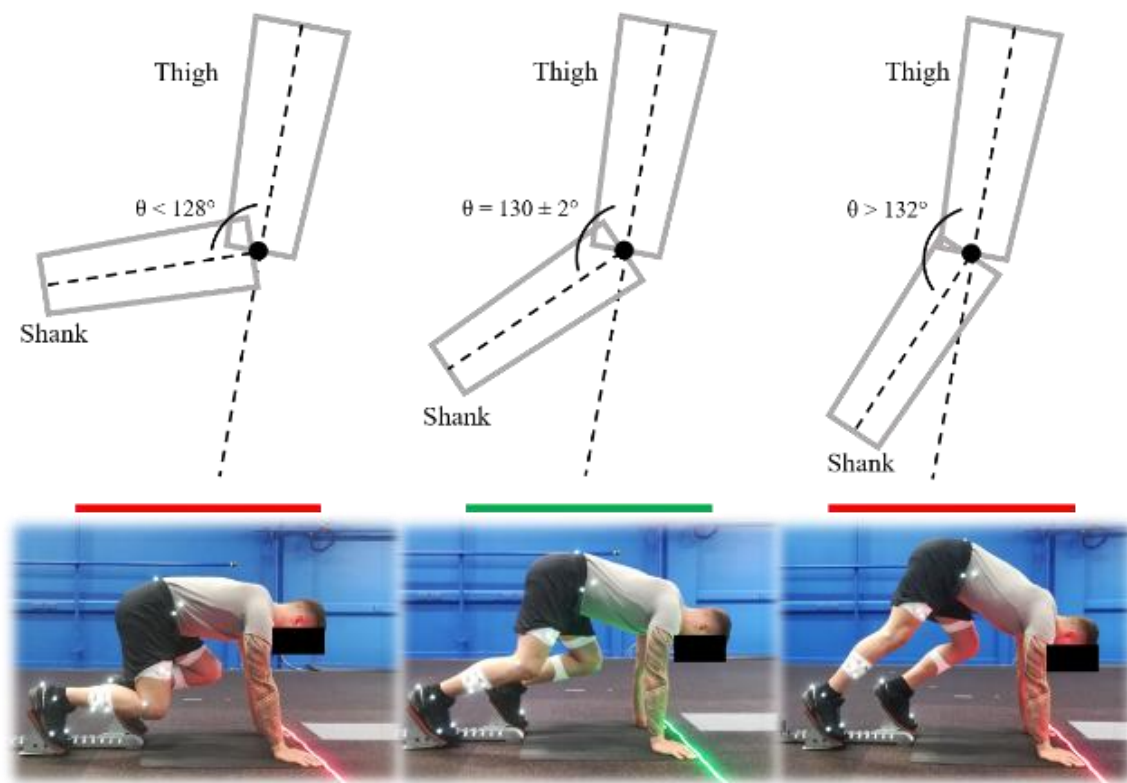
102 Biofeedback System Development:

103 The biofeedback system was developed using a strip of LEDs (Lightstrip Plus base V4,
104 Koninklijke Philips N.V., Amsterdam, Netherlands) which was integrated with input
105 information from a motion capture system so that it changed colour based on participants’ rear
106 knee angles in near real-time. The chosen biofeedback light configuration was based on a pilot
107 study which investigated three different light-based configurations during broad jumps as a
108 general analogue without exposing inexperienced participants to sprint start trials prior to the
109 main study. The pilot study and main study were approved by the Research Ethics Committee
110 of the lead author’s host institution (approval number 2018-063), and all participants provided
111 written informed consent. Participants of the pilot study (two males, nine females; Mean \pm SD;
112 age: 21.3 ± 1.7 years; mass: 60.6 ± 7.9 kg; height: 167.6 ± 7.3 cm) undertook a series of broad
113 jumps under each of three biofeedback configurations: a binary configuration (green when knee
114 angle was within $\pm 4^\circ$ of the target knee angle (90°) and red when not) and two graded
115 configurations (same as binary but with the addition of amber when knee angles were within
116 $\pm 5^\circ$ or $\pm 10^\circ$ of the green target range, respectively). The 4° threshold was selected during
117 development of the biofeedback system as a range that was sufficiently challenging to achieve
118 but which did not lead to frequent small deviations outside of the target range when attempting
119 to maintain a target angle for some participants, as occurred with lower thresholds. The binary
120 configuration led to a higher success rate (64%) in adoption of the prescribed knee angle when

121 compared to both graded configurations (40% and 39%, respectively). Participants also
122 received a questionnaire following each condition and 55% of participants preferred the binary
123 configuration to both graded configurations (18% and 27%, respectively).

124 During the biofeedback protocol for the sprint start, the LEDs were positioned directly on top
125 of the start line and were therefore in line of sight of participants during the “set” position
126 (Figure 1). Based on the above pilot study, a binary biofeedback system was adopted which
127 was configured to show green when the rear knee angle of participants was between 128° and
128 132° and to show red when outside of this range. Participants’ rear knee angles were recorded
129 in real-time at 250 Hz using a 12-camera motion capture system (T-20, Vicon, Oxford, UK)
130 which recorded synchronously with force-instrumented starting blocks (Pace Insights Ltd.,
131 Leamington Spa, UK) at 1000 Hz. A custom seven-segment (pelvis, two feet, two shanks, two
132 thighs) rigid-body lower-body model was used, which included anatomical markers on joints
133 and landmarks, and additional three-marker clusters on the shank and thigh segments.
134 Anatomical markers were placed on the posterior calcanei, the medial and lateral aspects of the
135 first and fifth metatarsal heads, respectively, superiorly on the second metatarsal head, on the
136 medial and lateral malleoli, the medial and lateral aspects of the knee joint flexion-extension
137 axis, and on the anterior superior iliac spines, superior lateral aspects of the iliac crest and
138 posterior superior iliac spines. Three-marker clusters were placed on the lateral aspect of each
139 thigh and shank segment at ~30% of the segment length in an asymmetric manner to aid real-
140 time marker labelling and reconstruction. The anatomical markers were used to define
141 participant-specific models during a static trial and to track the pelvis and feet during the sprint
142 start trials, whilst the marker clusters were used to track the shank and thigh segments during
143 the sprint start trials. The rear knee flexion-extension angle was reconstructed from the shank
144 and thigh segments in near real-time using a six degrees-of-freedom reconstruction by
145 streaming the marker data to Visual3D (Visual3D V5, C-Motion, Germantown, MD, USA). A

146 biofeedback script was implemented in Visual3D whereby a pop-up window changed between
147 red and green based on the current rear knee angle. ScreenBloom software (v 2.2) was then
148 used to relay information from the coloured pop-up window to the LEDs via a Philips Hue
149 Bridge (Philips Hue Home Automation Smart Bridge 2.0, Koninklijke Philips N.V.,
150 Amsterdam, Netherlands). A ~ 0.2 s delay in the real-time provision of the biofeedback
151 information was determined using a high-speed video camera (PXW-Z150, Sony, Tokyo,
152 Japan) and was deemed sufficiently low for participants to appropriately respond to in pilot
153 trials during the development of the biofeedback system.



154
155 *Figure 1 – Illustration of the LED activation ranges while in the “set” position during the
156 intervention condition for a novice sprinter in the EXP group. A rear knee angle of $130 \pm 2^\circ$ causes
157 the LEDs to be green, and all other angles cause the LEDs to be red.*

155 Experimental Design:

156 To evaluate the effectiveness of the novel biofeedback system, a simple pre-post
157 experimental design was used to investigate the acute effect of a biofeedback intervention using

158 this system on “set” position technique during a single laboratory visit. Twenty healthy and
159 currently injury-free participants (10 males, 10 females; mean \pm SD; age: 21.8 ± 2.1 ; mass:
160 67.7 ± 10.8 kg; height: 169.9 ± 10.7 cm) who exercised regularly but had never undergone any
161 sprint start training and had not used starting blocks prior to this study performed five sprint
162 start trials under each of three conditions (pre-test, intervention (or control) and post-test). The
163 participants were assigned in a counterbalanced manner into either the experimental (EXP; four
164 males, six females) group, which received biofeedback during the intervention condition, or
165 the control (CON; six males, four females) group, which did not receive any biofeedback
166 during any of their conditions.

167 Upon arrival at the laboratory, participants’ leg dominance was determined by asking
168 them to lean forward until loss of balance. The leg that was brought forward to stop the fall
169 was considered “dominant” and was placed in the rear block. Block placement was prescribed
170 for all participants based on their directly measured leg length, with inter-block spacing set to
171 45% of leg length and the front block-start line distance set to 50% of leg length¹⁰. Due to their
172 lack of familiarisation with the task, the sprint start protocol was verbally explained to all
173 participants as per World Athletics guidelines (including “on your marks”, “set” commands,
174 and a clear audible start signal). All participants were given general information about “set”
175 position technique (i.e. hands immediately behind start line and hips higher than shoulders) and
176 were shown a visual spatial model of an athlete in such a position in the blocks, in which the
177 rear knee was clearly identified at 130° . All participants were asked to attempt to attain a rear
178 knee angle of 130° during the “set” position. As highlighted previously, it is likely that the
179 ‘optimal’ rear knee angle in the “set” position may differ between individuals, but a consistent
180 value was used for all participants given the primary aim of this study being the development
181 of a proof-of-concept system that could subsequently be tailored for individuals. For the present

182 study, 130° was selected as it is attainable by novice sprinters¹⁴ and broadly appropriate based
183 on the kinematics of experienced and elite sprinters^{13,15,16}.

184 After a self-directed warmup, participants performed five familiarisation trials, which
185 were not included in the analysis. During the familiarisation trials, if participants did not follow
186 one of the general starting instructions (hands immediately behind start line, hips higher than
187 shoulders), the most relevant cue was repeated, but no further ‘technical’ feedback was given.
188 Each trial consisted of a 5 m maximal effort sprint commencing from starting blocks. A two-
189 minute rest was allowed between all trials and during this time participants were verbally
190 reminded of the 130° rear knee angle objective and to produce maximum effort sprint starts. If
191 requested, participants were also able to view the spatial model again. Following
192 familiarisation, all participants in both groups performed five sprint starts under the pre-test
193 condition with no biofeedback. After the pre-test condition, participants in the EXP group were
194 then introduced to the biofeedback system, including how to interpret it and the ~0.2 s delay.
195 During the subsequent intervention/control condition, the EXP group were given concurrent
196 visual biofeedback using the biofeedback system, whilst the CON group performed a further
197 five sprint starts without biofeedback, but they were reminded of the intended 130° rear knee
198 angle. Following the intervention/control condition, biofeedback was removed from the EXP
199 group and both groups were again reminded of the 130° rear knee angle target and to produce
200 maximal effort sprints. Five sprint starts followed under the post-test condition with no
201 biofeedback present for either group.

202 Data Analysis:

203 The raw resultant force data from the instrumented starting blocks was used to identify
204 movement onset and block exit. Movement onset was identified as the first instance where
205 resultant force deviated (for more than 10 frames) by more than 3 standard deviations from the

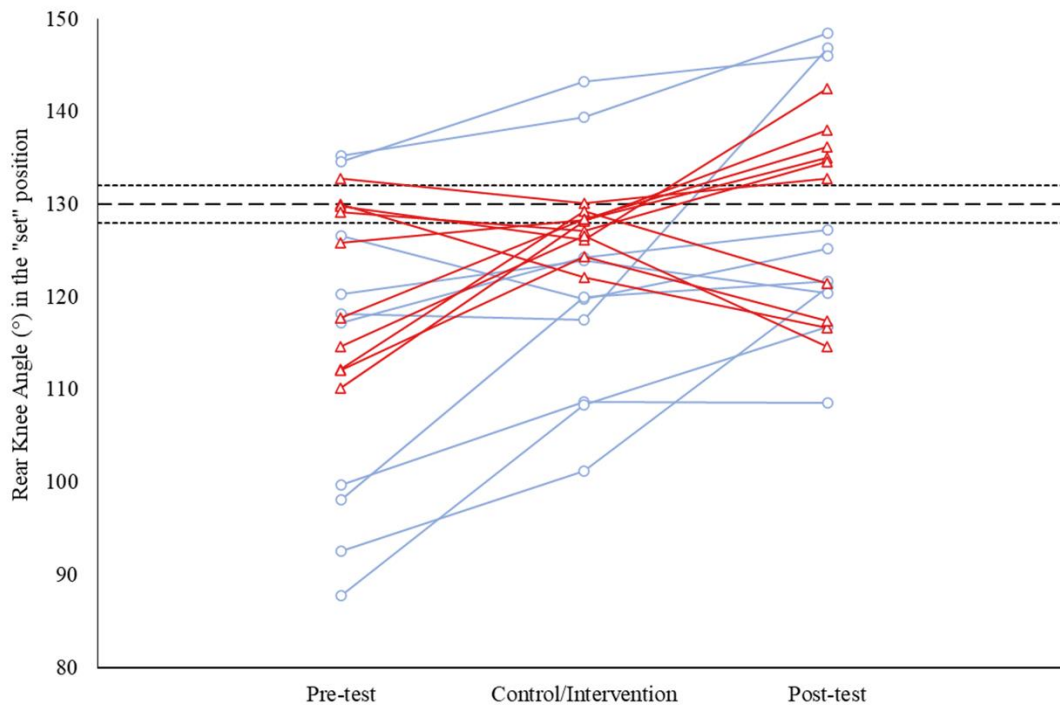
206 mean force during a clear visually identified stationary position prior to this. Block exit was
207 defined as the first instance after movement onset when resultant force was less than 50 N. The
208 “set” position was defined as the 0.6 s prior to movement onset, and the mean rear knee angle
209 over this duration was determined. The root mean squared difference of this mean rear knee
210 angle from 130° (θ_{RMS}) was also determined for each trial. Average horizontal external power
211 was calculated as $mv^2/2t$ and used as the main performance measure³⁷, where m = body mass,
212 v = block exit velocity which was determined from the antero-posterior pelvis CoG
213 displacement during the first flight phase after block exit³⁷, and t = block time which was
214 defined as the duration from movement onset to block exit. These values were then
215 normalised³⁷ to provide normalised average horizontal external power (hereafter simply termed
216 block power).

217 Group (CON, EXP), condition (pre-test, intervention or control, post-test) and
218 interaction (group \times condition) effects were calculated for θ_{RMS} and block power using a mixed
219 ANOVA ($\alpha = 0.05$) on SPSS software (SPSS v.25, IBM) following recommendations by Field
220 (2000)³⁸. Effect sizes for group, condition and interaction were calculated using Cohen’s f test.
221 Pairwise comparisons were performed using a Bonferroni post-hoc test, and pairwise effect
222 sizes were calculated using Cohen’s d ^{38,39}. Cohen’s f thresholds were categorised as small (f :
223 $0.10 \leq f < 0.24$), medium ($0.25 \leq f < 0.40$) and large ($f \leq 0.40$) while Cohen’s d thresholds
224 ranged from trivial ($d < 0.20$), small ($0.20 \leq d < 0.60$), medium ($0.60 \leq d < 1.2$), large (1.2
225 $\leq d < 2.00$) and very large ($2.00 \leq d < 4.00$).

226 Results

227 Rear knee angles during the “set” position for the CON group showed gradual changes
228 between the first (mean \pm SD; pre-test: $112.9 \pm 20.2^\circ$), second (intervention/control: $120.7 \pm$
229 14.6°) and third (post-test: $128.3 \pm 15.8^\circ$) conditions (Figure 2). These changes occurred as a
230 gradual decrease in mean rear knee angle difference to the 130° target as well as in decreasing

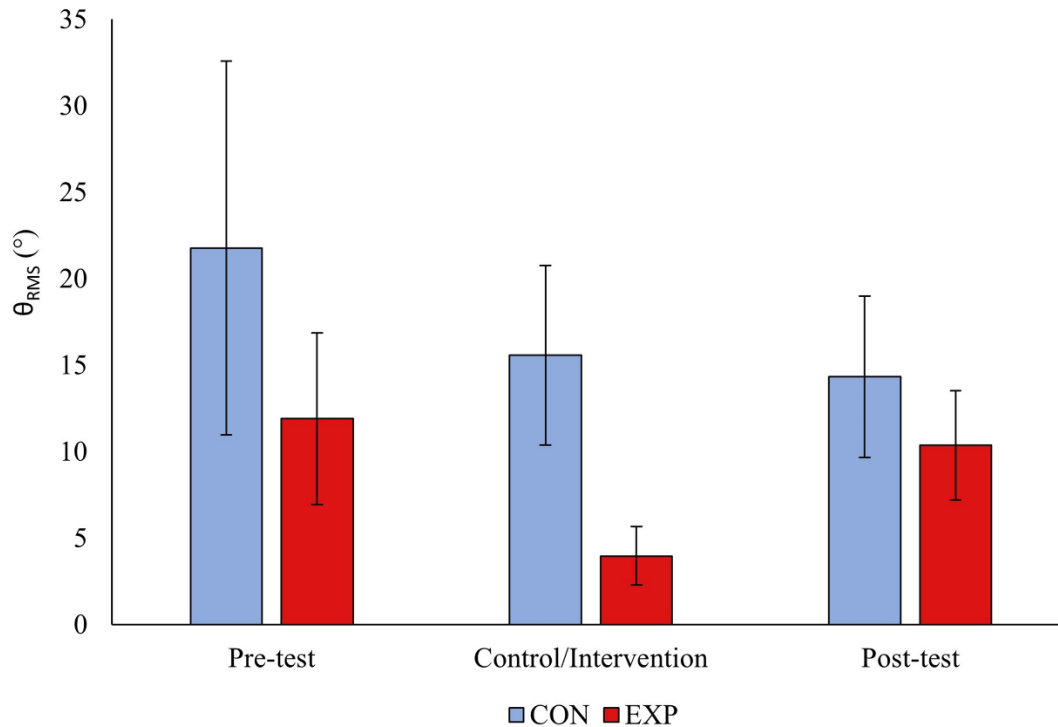
231 standard deviations across the group. The EXP group changed from the first (pre-test: $121.5 \pm$
 232 12.7°) to second (intervention/control: $127.1 \pm 3.5^\circ$) condition both in terms of average rear
 233 knee angle relative to target as well as in lower standard deviation across the group. During the
 234 third condition (post-test: $129.0 \pm 11.3^\circ$) the EXP mean rear knee angle continued to increase
 235 towards the 130° target, while the group standard deviation regressed to near pre-test value.



236 *Figure 2 – Mean rear knee angles of all participants in the CON (blue) and EXP (red) groups in each condition. The horizontal lines show the 130° rear knee angle target \pm the 2° green activation ranges for the LEDs.*

237 Group mean and 95% confidence intervals values for θ_{RMS} in each condition are shown
 238 in Figure 3. There was a significant ($p = .023$) effect of condition on θ_{RMS} with large effect
 239 sizes ($f = 0.54$). Pairwise comparisons between conditions revealed that θ_{RMS} during the middle
 240 intervention/control condition was significantly ($p = .019$) less than at pre-test with a very large
 241 effect size ($d = 3.08$). Post-test was not significantly different from pre-test ($p = .224$) or
 242 intervention/control ($p = .367$), although large effect sizes ($d = 1.89$ and 1.62 , respectively)
 243 were observed. Between-subject effects showed that the CON group displayed a significantly

244 ($p = .004$) greater θ_{RMS} than the EXP group with large ($f = 0.78$) effect sizes. The interaction
245 effect of condition and group was not significant ($p = .210$) with moderate effect sizes ($f =$
246 0.30).



247 *Figure 3 – Root mean squared rear knee angle (θ_{RMS}) during “set” position for CON and EXP groups
248 in each condition. Error bars show the 95% confidence intervals.*

248 Group mean and 95% confidence intervals values for Block power in each condition
249 are shown in Figure 4. There was a significant ($p = .002$) effect of condition on block power
250 (large effect size: $f = 0.78$). Pairwise comparisons showed block power at pre-test and post-test
251 were significantly ($p = .015$ and $p = .042$, respectively) greater than in the intervention/control
252 condition (very large effect sizes; pre-test: $d = 3.38$; post-test: $d = 3.00$). Pre-test was not
253 significantly different ($p = .416$) to post-test (large effect size: $d = 1.55$). There was no
254 significant ($p = .511$) effect of group (CON, EXP) on block power (small effect size: $f = 0.20$),
255 and no significant ($p = .336$) interaction effect (moderate effect size: $f = 0.30$).

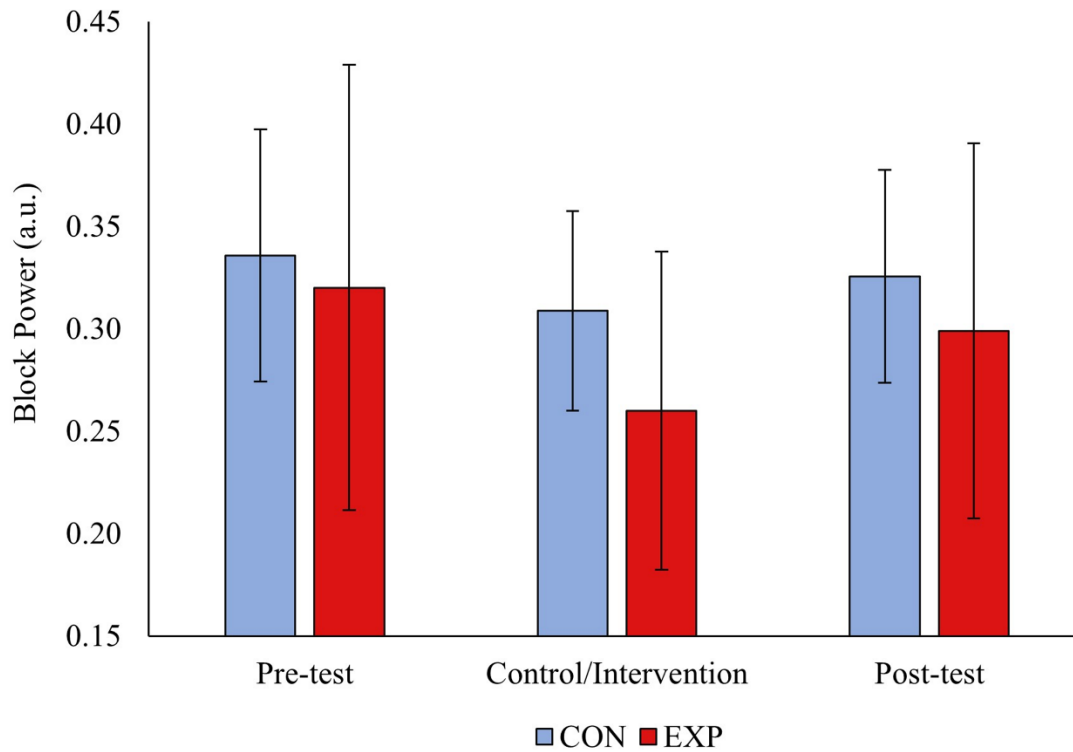


Figure 4 – Mean block power for CON and EXP groups in each condition. Error bars show the 95% confidence intervals.

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Discussion

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This study developed a light-based visual biofeedback system for the sprint start, and successfully used this system in an acute intervention with an experimental group of 10 of the 20 studied novice sprinters. The biofeedback system was programmed to provide this EXP group with a clear signal when their rear knee angle was in the intended configuration (130°) in the “set” position. Based on the results of the mixed ANOVA for the root mean squared difference of this measured rear knee angle from 130° (i.e. θ_{RMS}), there was a significant between-subject effect of group and a significant within-subject effect of condition on θ_{RMS} , but there was no significant interaction effect of group and condition. This may, in part, be due to the 10° between-group mean difference in θ_{RMS} at baseline (pre-test; Figure 3), which occurred by chance as the groups were allocated in a counterbalanced order, as well by the considerable between participant variation (within and between both groups) as could be

269 expected when studying novice participants being asked to perform a complex motor skill with
270 minimal prior instruction.

271 Without any use of the biofeedback system or any additional extrinsic feedback, the
272 CON group exhibited a gradual decrease in θ_{RMS} across the three conditions (i.e. the mean knee
273 angle of this group became closer to 130°), but there remained considerable between-
274 participant variability throughout all conditions (Figures 2 and 3). This trend in the CON group
275 corresponds to the theoretical learning effect of blocked practice with no feedback provided,
276 showing constant improvements in technique for participants learning a new skill³⁴. In contrast,
277 The EXP group, who had the benefit of the novel biofeedback system during the middle
278 condition, did not exhibit such a linear pattern (Figures 2 and 3). The EXP group showed a
279 mean decrease of 7.9° in θ_{RMS} from pre-test ($11.9 \pm 6.9^\circ$) to the intervention condition ($4.0 \pm$
280 2.4°), in which the SD across the group was also lowest of any condition, and then a 6.4° mean
281 increase to near pre-test levels during the post-test condition ($10.4 \pm 4.4^\circ$). These findings
282 provide support for the effectiveness of the developed biofeedback system in acutely enabling
283 participants to modify their rear knee angle during the “set” position in order to exhibit values
284 closer to the desired target, and to obtain values which were closer to the target than a group
285 with no feedback (CON), even after three blocks of five trials.

286 The fact that the EXP group regressed to near their pre-test θ_{RMS} values in the post-test
287 condition, despite the clear reduction in θ_{RMS} during the intervention condition, indicates that
288 there was no retention of motor learning from biofeedback. This was not surprising given the
289 current study design as this is an expected outcome from practice over a single session³¹. Motor
290 learning requires longer-term practice to elicit neurological changes, in turn causing changes
291 in movement patterns³¹, and the purpose of the current study was to evaluate the acute
292 effectiveness of the novel biofeedback system. Future studies employing similar light-based
293 biofeedback systems may seek to extend the current study by incorporating established

294 principles which have been shown to be effective in changing an athlete's well-established
295 technique, for example using the Five-A Model³² and prescribing training over multiple
296 weeks^{22,32,40} in order to assess the potential retention effects associated with such a feedback
297 modality.

298 As this study was primarily focused on the development and efficacy of the biofeedback
299 system for enabling participants to acutely control certain joint configurations, performance
300 effects were only a secondary consideration. Whilst there was no significant effect of group or
301 interaction effect on block phase performance (i.e. block power), there was a significant effect
302 of condition (Figure 4). Block power was lowest in the middle control/intervention condition,
303 with the mean reduction being greatest in the EXP group (Figure 4). It is possible that the use
304 of the biofeedback acutely influenced performance levels as the participants' focus was
305 diverted towards the biofeedback goal rather than the task itself^{34,29}. A reduction in the
306 frequency at which biofeedback is presented may also be beneficial with such a system, and
307 may allow participants to better explore their technique between conditions (i.e. with and
308 without biofeedback) during practice^{25,29}. This may be especially relevant during longer-term
309 studies as concurrent visual biofeedback may interfere and degrade motor learning during
310 practice when used in high frequency²⁹. In the present study the EXP group experienced high
311 feedback frequency during the middle control/intervention condition because the study aim
312 was to determine the acute effectiveness of the system and not the long-term changes.
313 Investigators and coaches aiming to modify the technique of athletes using such real-time
314 biofeedback systems should consider the different feedback frequencies and practice sequence
315 that might best allow athletes to explore possible changes in their technique. Future research
316 could also explore this further, particularly as a consideration in the aforementioned longer-
317 term studies where participants may progressively become more familiar with the biofeedback
318 within the same task and environment.

319 The present biofeedback system was developed based on motor learning considerations
320 and was informed by qualitative and quantitative evidence from a preliminary pilot study. The
321 system was developed with the primary aim of conveying complex continuous kinematic
322 information (rear knee flexion-extension angles) as simple visual signals that could be
323 incorporated into the training environment of the sprint start. During the development of the
324 biofeedback system, a binary configuration was selected above two possible graded
325 configurations. The pilot study participants' perceptions obtained through questionnaires
326 revealed that the binary configuration was simpler to understand and therefore preferable. This
327 may be explained by the lower cognitive load of simpler biofeedback configurations, shown to
328 be beneficial during complex movement tasks for novice performers^{34,41}, particularly as the
329 amber colour could represent a knee angle that was slightly too extended or slightly too flexed.
330 Additionally, the questionnaire responses indicated that the choice of colours (green and red,
331 plus amber in the graded configurations) displayed by LEDs were intuitive to interpret by
332 participants. Rear knee angles were selected as the kinematic variable of choice for biofeedback
333 due to their established importance in the sprint start^{2,13,14,15}. However, numerous aspects of
334 the developed biofeedback system are easily modifiable and could be adapted to specific
335 features of "set" position technique that a coach may consider desirable as well as the specific
336 joint angle ranges prescribed for these. This flexibility also allows researchers or coaches in
337 other sports to adopt a similar approach and implement their own kinematic prescriptions to
338 other movement tasks with similar characteristics and demands to the sprint start.

339 The current inputs to the biofeedback system are highly accurate due to coming from a
340 12-camera motion capture system and a full three-dimensional reconstruction based on marker
341 clusters. As this was a first development of a biofeedback system based on smart LEDs, motion
342 capture system inputs were used to provide a high level of internal validity in the kinematic
343 variable of interest (i.e. rear knee angles) being fed back to the participants. However, this

344 means that the current system is constrained to laboratory-based activities due to its reliance
345 on these inputs. The integration of such a biofeedback system with other inputs from
346 technologies such as inertial measurement units (IMUs) provides a future opportunity for a
347 lower cost and more ecologically valid alternative for extending this towards a more field-
348 based biofeedback system. Furthermore, the current iteration of the biofeedback system yielded
349 a delay of approximately 0.2 s between participants' movements and the visual feedback they
350 received. Whilst this was appropriate for the current self-paced and relatively slow movement
351 of adopting a "set" position, pilot trials with single markers have demonstrated that the lag
352 between participant movement and biofeedback can be considerably reduced by bypassing the
353 Visual3D and Screenbloom software used in the current system. While concurrent biofeedback
354 delays in are typically not reported in published studies, longer delays may result in increased
355 difficulty when interpreting biofeedback. Concurrent biofeedback systems should ideally be
356 able to provide an output within a small portion (10-20%) of the human reaction time of that
357 given task and for the target population^{42,43}. Future developments should therefore explore
358 improvements towards more field-based inputs and/or reduced delays, which could render
359 systems based on similar principles more viable for feedback during dynamic movements, but
360 they should remain cognisant of the accuracy of the raw and/or reconstructed data when making
361 such changes.

362 In the present study, the biofeedback prescription encouraged participants to attain a
363 130° rear knee angle. This was chosen as a consistent exemplar position for all participants as
364 there is unlikely to be a single 'optimal' "set" position for all individuals^{1,13}. It is likely that
365 what constitutes a more beneficial "set" position is specific to individuals due to differences in
366 strength and anthropometrics¹³ and it will also be influenced by the kinematics at other joints
367 including the neighbouring ankle and hip¹⁵. A biofeedback system based on the developments
368 described in the current study has the potential to be used in a field setting to guide individual

369 athletes towards a “set” position that is beneficial to them based on their own individual
370 constraints and the experiential knowledge of the coach. In addition to the aforementioned
371 future work to improve the technology towards more field-based inputs and reduced delays,
372 researchers should also seek to apply such systems to longer-term training studies to ascertain
373 the potential for more permanent changes in technique in response to a simple light-based
374 biofeedback protocol based on the principles which have been developed in the current study.

375 The present study developed a novel light-based biofeedback system that was
376 successfully integrated into a laboratory environment. The system was used to provide near
377 real-time biofeedback which, when present, enabled participants to improve their adoption of
378 prescribed rear knee joint angles during the “set” position of a sprint start. Further research and
379 application is required to explore the longitudinal effects of such a system on the learning of
380 novel movements, and different inputs, which could reduce delays or enable use in more
381 ecologically valid and simulated competition environments, are also encouraged. Future
382 iterations of light-based biofeedback systems may enable coaches to precisely and concurrently
383 guide an athlete’s movements during training. Coaches and researchers aiming to implement
384 such light-based biofeedback with athletes should consider motor learning principles (such as
385 focus of attention, feedback frequency and cognitive load) alongside working models (such as
386 the Five-A Model³²) in an attempt to use such biofeedback systems to effectively and
387 permanently refine technique over longer intervention timescales^{25,29,32}. Further research
388 should also investigate the effect of similar biofeedback systems on different movements as
389 well as with trained participants who have prior experience of the movement being
390 manipulated.

391

392 **Acknowledgements:** The authors are grateful to Katie Bradley from C-Motion for her help
393 during the development of the biofeedback system. The authors would also like to thank Oliver

394 Hurst and Siôn Lewis for their help during the development and testing of the biofeedback
395 system and during data collection.

396

397 **Declaration of interest:** None

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