

QUICK GUIDE

SLOW PROCESSING SPEED

WHAT IS SLOW PROCESSING SPEED?

Slow processing speed does not mean an athlete is unintelligent, or incapable.

It means the athlete may need more time to take in information, make sense of it, and respond.

On the field, that can look like an athlete who understands what you said but doesn't immediately act on it.

That distinction matters.

WHAT MIGHT A COACH NOTICE?

You might see:

- A delayed response after an instruction
- Difficulty following several directions at once
- Needing information repeated
- Taking longer to transition between drills
- Looking like they aren't listening
- Knowing something during practice but struggling when the situation changes
- Falling behind when instructions are given quickly

THE IMPORTANT PART:

A delayed response is not necessarily a lack of effort.

ON THE FIELD

Try this:

PAUSE → SIMPLIFY → SHOW → CHECK → REP

- Give the athlete a chance to process.
- Give them one clear coaching point.
- Show them what you mean.
- Check their understanding.
- Then let them rep it.

5 THINGS COACHES CAN DO

1 Give them a second.

Don't immediately repeat the instruction. Give the athlete a few seconds to process what you said.

Try:

"Take a second. Tell me what you're going to do."

2 Give fewer instructions.

If you give five instructions at once, don't be surprised when an athlete remembers two. Break it down.

Instead of:

"Line up, get your stance, check the formation, listen for the call, and watch the ball."

Try:

"Get your stance." — Then build from there.

3 Show them.

Sometimes the best explanation isn't another explanation. Demonstrate it. Use:

- A visual
- A demonstration
- A video
- A diagram
- A teammate modeling the skill

4 Check understanding.

Don't ask: "Do you understand?" Most athletes will say yes.

Instead ask: "Show me." or "Tell me what you're doing."

Now you know whether the instruction got through.

5 Don't confuse processing speed with effort.

This is probably the most important one. An athlete who takes longer to respond isn't necessarily:

Lazy. Unmotivated. Not listening. Not trying.

They may simply need more time or a different way to access the information. Your standard doesn't have to change. Your instruction might.

REMEMBER

The goal isn't to slow the game down.

The goal is to give the athlete a better way to understand it.

ACCOMMODATIONS TO THE FIELD

Helping coaches turn accommodations into better coaching.