80-TACTICAL PERFORMANCE IN SOCCER: COMPARISON BETWEEN U-12 AND U-13 YOUTH PLAYERS


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Introduction
In soccer, youth levels are categorized according to players' chronological age. For the selection of a competitive squad, coaches conduct certain assessments through the utilization of performance indicators. Among these indicators, Tactical Performance Index (TPI) indicates the efficiency of the tactical actions performed by players during the matches, and can be used as a parameter to differentiate such players and identify which of them are more capable of being selected for the starting eleven. Thus, this study aims to compare the Tactical Performance Index between U-12 and U-13 youth soccer players.

Methods
The sample comprised 58 soccer players born in 1998 and 35 born in 1999. The instrument utilized to assess players' performance was FUT-SAT, which enables the assessment of tactical actions with and without ball possession, through the "GK+3 vs. 3+GK" field test, during 4 minutes, in an area of 36m long by 27m wide. This research had the approval of the Ethical Committee for Research with Human Beings from the Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil.

Results & Discussion
Significant differences were found for the performance of the principle of delay, as players born in 1999 displayed higher mean values (34.86; SD=11.62), in comparison with players born in 1998 (29.65; SD=11.26). No significant differences were found for other tactical principles. Players from both birth years performed actions that supported team collective aspects in the game. However, only younger players seem to possess the necessary marking skills to prevent opponents from performing offensive actions.

Conclusion
Players from both birth years are equally skilled and able to be selected for the starting eleven in real matches, with respect to tactical performance.

References

Keywords: soccer, tactical performance

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