Comparison of Declarative Tactical Knowledge between U-11 and U-15 Youth Soccer Players

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Abstract

Declarative tactical knowledge is the one the player is able to verbalize or, in other words, the player’s ability to know "what to do" (Mangas, 1999). Literature has evidenced that players with more time of practice in a sport display better declarative tactical knowledge. Thus, this study aimed to compare declarative tactical knowledge between U-11 and U-15 youth soccer players. The sample comprised 36 U-11 (n=18) and U-15 (n=18) soccer players, from a Serie A Brazilian club. The instrument used to assess declarative tactical knowledge was the test developed by Mangas (1999), which enables the assessment of 13 offensive video sequences. The scenes are projected onto a large screen, whereas the video is occluded and the participant has to verbalize which is the best option for the player in possession. For assessing the results, responses were categorized into the following scores: 1, 0.75, 0.50, 0.25 and 0, respectively. Descriptive analyses (means and standard deviation) were conducted. Shapiro-Wilk’s test was used to examine data distribution. To verify the differences between both age groups, Mann-Whitney’s test was performed through SPSS v.20 (p<0.05). Significant differences were found between the groups for the scores 1 (p<0.001), 0.50 (p=0.041) and 0.25 (p=0.002), whereas U-15 players displayed better results for the best responses (1). This result can be explained by the fact that players with more practice time within the sport present a wider knowledge base, and might be able to identify more relevant stimuli for decision-making. It is concluded that U-15 players display better soccer specific declarative tactical knowledge, when compared to U-11 players.

References


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