Training and Testing II

9-COMPARISON OF REACTION TIME AND TACTICAL PERFORMANCE BETWEEN U-15 YOUTH SOCCER PLAYERS

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Introduction
Reaction time is a variable that is intrinsically related to the process of decision-making, and is able to affect the tactical performance of soccer players. The aim of this study is to compare the reaction time and tactical performance between U-15 soccer players.

Methods
The sample comprised 100 U-15 youth soccer players. The instruments used to evaluate reaction time and tactical performance were CPT (Continuous Performance Test) and FUT-SAT (1), respectively. FUT-SAT enables the evaluation of the ten core tactical principles of soccer game. These principles are: (i) penetration; (ii) offensive coverage; (iii) depth mobility; (iv) width and length; (v) offensive unity; (vi) delay; (vii) defensive coverage; (viii) balance; (ix) concentration and (x) defensive unity. Reaction time data was grouped in tertiles (low, moderate and high). Players from "low" and "high" tertiles had their values compared with respect to their tactical performance. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Mann-Whitney tests (P<0.05) were performed through SPSS for Windows, version 18.0.

Results & Discussion
Statistically significant differences were observed between reaction time and tactical performance of soccer players for the tactical principle of offensive coverage (U=472.5; P=0.048). No statistically significant difference was found in any of the other tactical principles. Results can be explained by the uniqueness of the principle, which demands from the defensive player some rationalization of the playing space when approaching the player in possession (2).

Conclusion
It is concluded that reaction time influenced tactical performance, especially the principle of offensive coverage.

References

Keywords: soccer, reaction time, tactics

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