**77-COMPARISON OF TACTICAL BEHAVIOR EFFICIENCY BETWEEN YOUTH SOCCER PLAYERS FROM DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS**

Gonzaga, A.*, Santos, R.*, and Teoldo, I*.

*Centre of Research and Studies in Soccer, Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil

**Introduction**

Tactical skills have received considerable attention as important contributors to high performance in soccer. Successful players display well-developed tactical knowledge that enables them to make appropriate decisions and to perform efficient tactical behaviors. Tactical behavior efficiency refers to players' accuracy when performing soccer tactical principles. It is possible that players from different age categories present differences in tactical behavior efficiency related to the time of practice in this sport. Thus, the aim of this study is to compare tactical behavior efficiency between young soccer players from different age categories.

**Methods**

The sample comprised 132 (36 U-11, 36 U-13, 30 U-15 and 30 U-17) youth soccer players from a Brazilian club. They are assessed through the System of Tactical Assessment in Soccer (FUT-SAT) (1). The procedures followed the test protocol. To examine tactical behavior efficiency, the accuracy rate of offensive, defensive and game tactical actions performed by participants in FUT-SAT. Comparative analysis was performed through Kruskall-Walis and Mann-Whitney non-parametric tests (P<0.05). Statistical procedures were performed through SPSS v. 18.0.

**Results & Discussion**

Comparative analysis revealed statistically significant differences in game accuracy rate (P=0.001), between U-11 and U-13 youth soccer players (P=0.003), U-15 (P<0.001) and U-17 (P=0.012). Significant differences were also observed in offensive accuracy rate (P<0.001), between U-11 and U-13 (P<0.001), U-15 (P<0.001) and U-17 (P=0.001). Results suggested that the U-11 soccer players were less efficient when performing tactical actions in comparison to players from the older age levels. Such differences might be related to the lesser practice time, resulting in worse technical and tactical development. There were no differences among the others groups. Furthermore, no differences in defensive accuracy rate were noticed.

**Conclusion**

It is concluded that the U-11 soccer players presented less game and offensive tactical behavior efficiency than the older U-13, U-15 and U-17 soccer players.

**References**


**Keywords:** soccer, tactical behavior, age level

**Acknowledgements**

This study was funded by the State Department of Sport and Youth of Minas Gerais (SEEJ-MG) through the State Act of Incentive to Sports, by FAPEMIG, CAPES, CNPQ, FUNARBE, the Dean's Office for Graduate and Research Studies and the Centre of Life and Health Sciences from Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Brazil.