

THE START UP AGE OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE FUTSAL ATHLETES ON SISTEMATICAL PRACTICE AND FEDERATE COMPETITIONS OF MODALITY

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Abstract

This study had the purpose to verify the start up age of high-performance futsal athletes on the systematical practice and federate competitions of the modality. The sample involved 97 subjects in the mean age at 23.93 (± 5.40) years old belonging to eight teams of the 8th Edition of Futsal National League. The data collection was developed through a questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that most of the athletes had started up on recommended ages at 10.56 (± 3.82) years old in the systematical practice and at 12.4 (± 3.55) years old in federate competitions. The results suggested that although this case be positive it might not be considered intentional, and most of the federations keep on to incentive the early initiation in sport, that could increase the number of athletes that will start up in the modality and will compete in not recommended ages.

Keywords: Athletes – Competition Sport – Sport Games

Introduction

The International Federation of Association Football (Fifa) esteem that have 1.7 million players of futsal recorded in the world. Brazil contributed with over 310 thousand athletes, spread by 27 states, around 4 thousand clubs (FIFA FUTSAL WORLD CUP BRAZIL, 2008). The official championships of the Brazilian Confederation of Futsal (CBFS) happen from the sub-15 category, for adolescents male and female. However, it was verified that a part of the federations of futsal invests in the promotion of those disputes since the sub-07 category (SANTANA; REIS; RIBEIRO, 2006). By consequence, it was observed the formation of minority groups of talented children, in general those of early maturation, for participate of these competitions, in which are scheduled by ages and pursue titles of state expression (SOBRAL, 1994).

For Becker Junior (2008), the introduction of children in sports in that the society attributed elevated importance to the performance in the competition, as the futsal and soccer cases for the South Americans, tends to be problematic. That is because, in order to attend to the competitive demands, the teaching-training process tends to be quite specialized. Arena and Böhme (2004) verified that seems to exist indeed a narrow relation between the type of competition and the character of the training, i.e., as much as bigger the competitive level more intense and specific the training.

Therefore, we see the early installation of a sporting specialization process, i.e., before of the puberty and of a sporting readiness state, it was invested in the excessive competitiveness and in the elevated dedication to the specialized training (BARBANTI, 2003; PERSONNE, 2005). In practice, some children of better physical and motor condition receive specific training and participate of regular competitions organized by the sporting federations (ARENA; BÖHME, 2004).

In order to understand the initiation of children in that sport, the present study aimed to verify the start up ages in the futsal and participation in federate competitions of high-performance athletes. We understand that the knowledge of these variables, insofar as reveals part of the trajectory of players that ascended to the professional scope, will be able to subsidize a useful argument between coaches of smaller categories. Like this, initially it will be analyzed some possible implications of the premature specialized training.

The possible implications of the premature specialized training

Some studies established that most of the workouts of futsal of beginners are destined to the repetition of technical gestures; i.e., to premature technical specialization (GRECO, GIACOMINI; MOREIRA, 2005; PINTO; SANTANA, 2005; SAAD; REZER, 2005; VOSER, 1999). Santana (2008) alerts that futsal coaches that aim especially, win championships, tend to specialize children prematurely in positions and functions, injuring them on the access to the biggest categories that require tactical versatility. In this way, the subjects would be private of a diversified training, the most suitable one for this cycle of life (BOMPA, 2002; GRECO; BENDA, 2001; HAHN, 1988).

Beyond the gestural specialization and premature tactics, there are indications that some parents and coaches charge athletic performance

and/or results of children in the participation in competitions (DE SOUZA; DA SILVA, 2002), ratifying that the participation of South American youths in smaller teams of soccer is stressful, because means face demands of be titleholder of the team, have to act nicely during the period that integrate the category and have to win the championship (BECKER JUNIOR, 2008).

For Barbanti (2003), the premature sporting specialization culminates, nearly always, with the premature abandonment of the practical sporting one, known as burnout or exhaustion (PIRES; BRANDÃO; MACHADO, 2005). Hallal et al. (2004), for example, verified that the intensity in the training, parents pressure for obtain good results and excessive accountability of the coach, among others factors, constitute in possible intervening motives in the abandon of the futsal between adolescents.

If, on the one hand, the premature specialized training permits good results in the childhood and adolescence (ARENA; BÖHME, 2000), on the other hand, reduces the chances of be achieved results in the maturity. Marques (1991) reports that young submitted to this type of training tends not to reach high performance, the foretold performance; which becomes minor the time of sporting activity in that scope and many athletes, in function of the demands, even arrive to that phase. Brito, Fonseca and Rolim (2004) established that barely a limited number of young athletes of the formation levels (sub-13, 15 and 17) obtained to prolong to its sporting career to the senior level with an assiduous presence between the five best of the rankings and also that, the lower the considered level is, smaller is the number of athletes that confirms, in the senior level, the obtained success in the formation level.

Consequently, in spite of the belief of some coaches of youths that only the premature specialized training would forge, in the future, high-performance athletes (FREIRE, 2002; WEIN, 2004), the corroboration of that is doubtful. We know the sporting elevated performance requires of player interrelate, in competition situation, physical, technical, tactical, and psychological factors, we understood for capacity of game (GRECO, 1998; KONZAG, DÖBLER; HERZOG, 2003). This would settle upon a diversified base of experiences, opportune to provoke an opening of cognitive-motor possibilities, and extend the chances of the sportsman practice with autonomy, on the occasion of the sporting specialization, from at 14-15 years old, the

sport of its preference (BOMPA, 2002; GRECO; BENDA, 2001; RÉ; BARBANTI, 2006). According to that reasoning line, the premature specialized training would injure the future performance of the sportsman.

Methodology

Technique of research

It was utilized the technique of research of extensive straight observation, by means of the application of a composed form for five questions. This technique was constituted in one of the essential instruments for the social inquiry, whose system of data collection consists of obtain information straightly of the interviewee. It is required, therefore, that the participant answer the questions in the presence of the researcher (face the face) (MARCONI; LAKATOS, 2003). The Chart 1 contemplates the questions answered by subjects.

What is your date of birth?
Do you devote yourself exclusively to the futsal as professional activity?
Do you are paid to play futsal?
What age do you initiated yourself in the systematical practice of futsal, i.e., oriented by a coach, that required weekly trainings and competed regularly?
What age do you began compete in the federate scope?

Chart 1: Questions answered by high-performance futsal athletes

Characterization of the sample

The form was applied to 97 athletes, with mean age at 23.93 ± 5.40 years, from eight teams of the Futsal League 2003: Joinville (SC), Banespa (SP), Carlos Barbosa and International (RS), Rio Verde (GO), Minas Tênis Clube (MG), Amafusa and Londrina (PR). The number of teams corresponded to 47.05% of the total. The subjects declared dedicate itself exclusively to the futsal as professional activity and receive remuneration for exercise it.

Data collection and statistical treatment

The data collection occurred during the 1st phase of Futsal League 2003. The form was applied in lodgings of the subjects. The researchers provided itself of drawing boards and pens for note the answers. It was presented, in two copies, a Free and Clarified Consent Term, being that one of the copies stayed with the interviewee. It was utilized as statistical treatment the count, the percent descriptive statistical, average and standard deviation. For data interpretation, it was considered the standardization adopted by the CBFS that in the year of 2004 decided the following age division by categories: Sub-07, sub-09, sub-11, sub-13, sub-15, sub-17, sub-20 and main.

Results e Discussion

In the Table 1 are presented the results of the studied sample, considering the start up of the subjects in the systematical practice of the futsal.

Table 1: Classification of the subjects in relation - mean time of systematical practice, mean age of start up, number of individuals, relative frequency, age group

Mean time of practice of futsal	Mean age of start up in the futsal	S	%	Age group
13.37±5.50	10.56±3.82	25	25.77	5 to 7 years (G1)
		18	18.55	8 to 9 years (G2)
		54	55.67	From 10 years (G3)
Total		97	100%	

S = subjects; G1 = group 1; G2 = group 2; G3 = group 3

The mean time of systematical practice corroborates with the mean values indicated in a systematical preparation process and in a long term for the collective sports, around 10-12 years (BARBANTI, 2005; COELHO, 2000).

It was verified, on the one hand, the positive fact of a higher concentration of players (G3) have initiated in age recommended for the training of a single type of sport (BOMPA, 2002; GRECO; BENDA, 2001; HAHN, 1988; SILVA; FERNANDES; CELANI, 2001). This fact confirms the study of Santana, Reis and Ribeiro (2006), who diagnosed, between players with participation in the Brazilian selection of futsal, a percentage of 62.97% that were initiated in the training of the modality from 10 years of age. It means to say that be initiated in

that phase did not stop the sample of ascend to high performance, and that should at least open arguments between coaches, parents and managers, that, in some cases, feed the myth of that "barely the premature start up in the futsal will guarantee a promising future to the children". In practice, that is not true.

We know that children from 10 years would be in the best phase for learn movements and would have bigger capacity of concentration (MEINEL; SCHNABEL, 2004; HANN, 1988); is the period in that the motor abilities could be applied in a more defined context (GALLAHUE, 1996); is when the cooperation is growing (PIAGET, 1994), facilitating social exchange, elementary when playing collectively; we walked to the abstract thought (PIAGET, 1998), essential for tactical learning. Beyond that, since the previous experiences be sufficient, exists the possibility of game level stay free of its anarchical phase, featured in the agglomeration of players around the ball, and would be presented in an off center level, when the players occupy rationally the space (GARGANTA, 1998). Equally, depending on the life history of the subjects, the basic abilities would be affirmed (FREIRE, 2003), we can make a refinement and specialization of its different combinations (FERRAZ, 2002; RÉ; BARBANTI, 2006).

On the other hand, it is noted a search more and more premature by the futsal training (G2 and, especially, G1), corroborating with the study of Santana, França and Reis (2007), that found, among of Paraná youthful players, a concentration of 51% that were initiated between 5 and 9 years. Although the reasons of the sporting practice among children be several, for example, the desire to become a hero or idol, educational reasons, health, social ascension, for attend parents' wishes (MARQUES; KURODA, 2000), achieve the status of professional player (VITÓRIO; THIENGO; DE OLIVEIRA, 2005), that should serve of alert to parents, coaches and managers, because, if sporting practice are not well carried out (see sub-item "Possible implications of premature specialized training"), this may trigger, in time, for exhaustion, the premature abandon of sporting practice.

Table 2 presents the results of the studied sample, considering the start up of the participation in federate competitions.

Table 2: Classification of the subjects in relation - mean age of start up in the federate competitions, number of subjects, relative frequency, age group

Mean age of start up in the competitions	S	%	Age group
12,4±3,55	28	28.86	5 to 9 years (G1)
	15	15.46	10 to 11 years (G2)
	54	55.67	From 12 years (G3)
Total	97	100%	

S = subjects; G1 = group 1; G2 = group 2; G3 = group 3

The mean age of start up of the subjects in federate competitions attends the specified in part of the literature (DE ROSE JUNIOR, 2002; FERRAZ, 2002; WEIN, 2001). It was verified the positive fact the most players (G3) have initiated in federate competitions in an adequate age. In that phase, there is a balance among the resources of the player (motor, physiological, psychological, and social components) and the task demand, i.e., sporting promptitude state. Such finding should influence the sporting surrounding, particularly parents, managers and coaches that insist on introduce children between 5 and 9 years of age in the demanding scope of the federate competitions, charging them immediate results (DE SOUZA; DA SILVA, 2002). In practice, 71, (13%) of the high-performance athletes did not pass for that. Soon, would have another way to treat to competition among children.

Considering the mean of age of the athletes (near at 24 years of age), the mean time of systematical practice (about 13 years) and the mean age of start up in federate competitions (near at 12 years of age), we noticed the significant factor of the subjects, even still very young and having initiated in recommended age, will have the mean time at 12 years of experience in competitions of that carriage. In short, the athletes were private of a premature specialized training (BARBANTI, 2003) and not been weakened regarding the competitive experience.

On the other hand, in the case of the players that competed formally before at 12 years (G2 and, especially, G3); there is disrespect to that sporting promptitude state (DE ROSE JUNIOR, 2002; SOBRAL, 1994). This observation is so much more founded specially on younger child. What seems to contribute for that premature insertion in demanding competitions, such as federate (ARENA; BÖHME,

2000), is the fact of the adults in general will understand little about the level of infantile development, reinforcing a contemporary social tendency to reach a high performance more and more early (TANI, 2000).

Although 44, (32%) of the athletes have initiated in federate competitions before of an recommended age and belong to the high-performance sport, that should concern parents, coaches and managers, because among the possible undesired effects of the exacerbated competition we find the competitive stress (PERSONNE, 2005), that originates in function of the subject feel threatened facing the demands of the task it to be carried out (DE ROSE JUNIOR; DESCHAMPS; KORSAKAS, 1999). Therefore, the stress would not be related to the type of competition (if federate or not federate), but the competence those who play for attend to the environment demands (RÉ; DE ROSE JUNIOR; BÖHME, 2004). It signifies to say that can have children that attend to the technical-tactical demands (gestural-cognitive) of futsal game. However, there are other environmental demands, as, for example, the emotional, which have as sources the coach and the family (BECKER JUNIOR, 2008), for which the children are not prepared. For this author, the children react differently in the competitions perceptions in which are involved. Those who react with high intensity seem to be especially sensible to the fear of fail in the sporting actions. The most anxious tend to worry about the evaluation of significant persons for them, as the coaches, parents and colleagues.

De Oliveira (1993) refers that children submitted to the long of seasons to the excessive competitiveness, in function of the criticisms and exaggerated accountability, may feel shaken emotionally, insecure and afraid of mistake. Filgueira and Schwartz (2007) established among children soccer players of 11 and 12 years, the most "feels ill" and "sad" when are criticized by the parental supporter in its games, attended, especially, by the father. In addition, in some cases, the children do not like that the supporters watch them, because stay "shouting" and "speaking a lot". Knijnik, Greguol and Santos (2001) point that the overemphasis in winning and the excess of pressures of the parents and coaches constitute alleged factors by children to sporting practice abandon, fruit of the exhaustion (PIRES; BRANDÃO; MACHADO, 2005).

From the above, it seems plausible that the most of the children present difficulty in administer the emotional pressure exercised on

the part of the parental supporter, especially when is a federate competitions, in which, according to Santana, Reis and Ribeiro (2006), the climate of dispute tends be tougher and, in some cases, hostile, because the game result implies, nearly always, in classification or disqualification of the team for future phases of the competition.

Another aggravating circumstance of the federate competition for children resides in its low participation in the games. Some coaches, in order to notice all the expectations generated around that type of competition, may disregard some subjects and deprive them of participation in the games, generally those of late ripening (BARBANTI, 2005; RÉ; BARBANTI, 2006). In that case, the infantile sport, that would must be constituted in an educational facilitator (BENTO, 2004; PAES, 2002; SANTANA, 2005; SANTANA; REIS, 2006), fomenting educational competitions in the place of stressful (DE ROSE JR, 2002), disseminates the selectivity and ideology of winning to any cost (FREIRE, 1989; 2002).

On the other hand, it seems reasonable that the not-federate competitions, as festivals and short-term tournaments, because is more cooperative and require less financial resources of the teams, allow the participation of more children (ARENA; BÖHME, 2004). As consequence, increases the chance of the coaches assure the participation of all children and offer them a same reward (MESQUITA, 1998), in that case, by participation and not by performance (KORSAKAS et Al., 2006). That would attend the recommendations of that, in that phase, the competitions should be informal and aiming to achieve fun (BOMPA, 2002), social approval (WEIN, 2004) and educational demands (SCAGLIA, MONTAGNER; SOUZA, 2001).

The promotion of federate competitions for children, in many cases, implies in follow models of competitions of the main category (of adults), because in general there is not a worry of the federations in adapt regulations for children (ARENA; BÖHME, 2004; SANTANA, 2008). Soon, this signals for the fact of the responsible for organization and the maintenance of those types of event do not worry about who plays, i.e., there is not the worry in provide a favorable environment to the development of child (pleasurable, participatory, cooperative and free of tensions), but barely in promote events.

Scalon (2004) verified that among children in the age group at 10 to 12 years, in both sexes, players of different sporting modalities, health and enjoyment are more significant factors of adhesion to sport

than self-realization ("compete for winning"). Consequently, instead of generate so much expectations about the results, compete should create opportunities to the beginners to make friends and develop self-esteem (DE ROSE JUNIOR, 2002), provide the pleasure of play and learn how to deal with winnings and defeats (SANTANA, 2001) and apply the abilities that learn in training (BOMPA, 2002), especially when it knows that the expressive achieved results in premature ages not maintain in upper phases (BRITO; FONSECA; ROLIM, 2004) and that the premature accountability for results has contributed for the futsal abandon among adolescents (HALLAL et al., 2004).

Conclusion

Considering the results of this study, it was conclude that the most of the high-performance futsal athletes was initiated in the systematic practice and in federate competitions of modality in ages recommended by the sporting literature. Although this is positive, it cannot be considered effect of a deliberate measure of the federations that generate the modality, because big part continues to encourage the premature competitive participation, what will be able to increase the number of athletes that will be initiated and will compete in the futsal in not recommended ages.

The data of the present study also can contribute to confront the myth maintained on the part of the parents of player children of that modality and coaches of smaller categories that barely the premature start up in training and in very demanding competitions can prepare sufficiently well the beginners and guarantee the access to the high performance. In practice, it was found that most of the investigated athletes did not participate of the first categories (sub-07 and sub-09) and did not competed in federate scope before at 12 years of age.

It is suggested that other enquires are carried out for better comprehension about the initiation process to futsal of high-performance athletes, especially one that investigate the training character to which were submitted in that phase.

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