

Performance indicators as a resource for the selection of talented football players

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Introduction

Talent is understood as the exceptional mastery of at least one particular, systematically developed skill, situating this person among the top 10% of their peers (Gagne, 2015). Within the scope of soccer, the intuition of the expert (coach, scout) has traditionally been the primary method of performance assessment (Hatum, 2012) due to the lack of appropriate and validated instruments for this purpose (Nicolairé, Catuzzo & De Mello Monteiro, 2013). However, this contrasts with the importance of this process (Fernández-Río & Méndez-Giménez 2014) for both football clubs (obtaining sporting talents future) and for families (rise in the social scale). In order to approach an evaluation of objective performance, one of the ways through which the selection of football talent has been carried out has been the comparison between players (Verburgh, Scherder, Van Lange & Oosterlaan, 2014) based mainly on performance indicators (Liu, Gomez & Lago-Peñas, 2015).

This work has had two aims, first of all, to compare the performance of the players nominated for the Golden Ball, and secondly, to compare the performance of a talented football player with his teammates.

Methods

The sample consisted of a total of 103 soccer players (47.6% 0 times nominated for the Golden Ball, 23,3% nominated 1 time, 13.6% nominated 2 times; 8.7% nominated 3 times, 2,9% nominated 4 times, and 3.9% nominated 5 times for the Golden Ball). The information has been obtained from the data base WhoScored, and the competition which has been analyzed has been the 2014-15 Champions League, because it is the club competition with most international prestige in Europe. Statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS program v. 22.0. The statistical average has been used for descriptive analysis and the Pearson bivariate correlation for inferential analysis.

Results

The comparison between players nominated gold ball pointed out that those players nominated more times scored higher in games, played more minutes and had more influence on his team (number of wins with the player on the field) and goals / shots. However, indicators such as dribbling, successful aerial duels won, penalties scored marked, successful tackles and short / long passes were similar. Regarding the comparison between a talented player and his teammates (not nominated for the Golden Ball), performance indicators such as games and minutes played, goals / shots, dribbling and penalty were those which showed greater differences. Finally, the correlational analysis showed that as the number of goals, shots, dribbles, thrown penalties and passes increased, the chance of being nominated for the Golden Ball also increased.

Discussion & Conclusion

The results warn that the exclusive use of performance indicators as a single method of selection of players must be supplemented by other qualitative tools (González-Víllora, Serra-Olivares, Pastor-Vicedo & Teoldo da Costa, 2015) to measure the tactical soccer player aspect. Therefore, it might be possible to question the conclusions of previous studies, according to the statement

made by Mackenzie & Cushion (2013) in relation to the influence of external factors that can skew the proper selection of the player.

References

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