ANNALS OF RESEARCH IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Session-RPE responses to training and competition of two youth soccer teams, diversified by one year of chronological age and participating in the same championship

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2 • TREINO DESPORTIVO/SPORT TRAINING

SESSION-RPE RESPONSES TO TRAINING AND
COMPETITION OF TWO YOUTH SOCCER
TEAMS, DIVERSIFIED BY ONE YEAR OF
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE AND PARTICIPATING
IN THE SAME CHAMPIONSHIP

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Laura Capranica¹, Antonio Tessitore¹

PURPOSE

The aim of this study was to estimate the overall workloads performed during trainings and official games by two youth soccer teams, composed entirely by players of two chronological ages but participating in the same 14-yrs old championship.

METHODS

Thirty-nine players, divided in two groups (younger group, YG: 13 yrs, $n=21$; older group, OG: 14 yrs, $n=18$), were recruited for this study. Players belonged to the same club (A.F.C. Fermo) and followed the same soccer program, including 24 training sessions (T) and 8 official games (G). During this period, for each T and G ratings of perceived exertion (RPE) and training load were assessed by means of CR₁₀ Borg scale (Borg, 1987) and session-RPE (Foster et al., 1995), respectively. The RPE scales were administered three times during T (after: warm-up, main drill, and at the end) and twice during G (after the 1st half and at the end). A one-way ANOVA was applied to investigate differences in perceived exertion between groups for both T and G.

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RESULTS

For T, mean session-RPE was 515.4 ± 84.6 a.u. and 434.7 ± 97.6 a.u. for YG and OG, respectively. The relative picture for G was 232.3 ± 33.3 and 216.7 ± 47.1 . Differences ($p=0.004$) emerged between groups for T only.

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DISCUSSION

Although both groups were exposed to the same amount of training, YG competing under age in the 14-yrs old championship perceived more demanding their training sessions with respect to their OG counterparts. Although limited to the workloads perception and not involving technical-tactical aspects, the present findings seem to support the opportunity for under-age players to compete in championships reserved to older counterparts. Probably, a 1-year chronological age difference could mask different maturation between children and further studies are needed to investigate this aspect.