Differences Between Winning and Losing Teams in Youth Basketball Games (14-16 Years Old)

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Match analysis is common in performance sport to guide training and competition. However, it is not as common at the youth level. Most studies about match analysis have studied the variables of technique and tactics in relation to final actions of a team's ball possession. However, a few studies have analyzed participation variables of technique and tactics. The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in final and participatory actions of technique and tactics in relation to winning and losing teams, ball possession, and type of attack phase in youth basketball games. The sample consisted of 184 male players from 16 teams with an average age of 15.6 ± 0.2 years. The twenty-four games were analyzed from the men's under-16 finals of the Championship of Andalusia (Spain). The variables studied were: game result (win or loss), variables related to type of ball possession, and variables related to pattern of play. Two groups of three observers were utilized (one group observed terminal events of each possession and the other observed possession time and pattern of play). The minimum inter-observer correlation was 0.94. The results found significant differences between winning and losing teams in the following variables: winning teams had higher values than losing teams in the following variables: 2-point field goals made, free throws made, dribbling opposed, time of movement, dribble time, use of screens, fast breaks, attack phases from 1-5 seconds, attack phases in which 2 players participated, and attack phases in which 5 players participated. The results showed that the winning teams have patterns of play that use less dribbling, in general, and less dribbling with displacement, in particular; and they used fast attack phases (1-5 s) in which two players participate. Winning patterns of play were those that used either fast breaks or a long attack phase in which all players participated.

\textit{key words}: Basketball, Youth player, Effective pattern of play
Introduction

From the perspective of match analysis, oftentimes, the coach, players and even the public make subjective evaluations which are strongly influenced by match results. The utilization of observation with validity, reliability, and objectivity in match analysis is an important step in eliminating subjective analysis (Hughes, 1996). Match analysis allows improvement and/or the acquisition of knowledge about sport from two perspectives: physical (physiological-biological) and technical-tactical (Mombaerts, 1991).

This knowledge allows one to organize and design the learning and training processes in team sports (Hughes, 1996) and to try to establish the principal elements that affect winning and losing. However, the majority of studies have studied professional or semi-professional teams, by either analyzing the game in order to plan and design adapted sessions and tasks in preparing for competition (ex. Evangelos, Alexandros, & Nikolaos, 2005; Tsitskaris, Theocharopoulos, Galanis, & Nikopoulou, 2002) or by analyzing the indicators related to winning (ex. Ibáñez, Sampaio, Sáenz-López, Giménez, & Janeira, 2003; Tsamourtzis, Filaktakidou & Taxildaris, 2001). Only a few studies have analyzed youth teams (ex. Sampaio, Ibáñez, & Feu, 2004).

In both cases of analysis, the majority of the authors analyzed the variables related to the final actions of ball possessions such as shots, efficacy percentage, assists, turnovers, steals, personal fouls received, points scored, etc., or other variables like rebounds or even fast breaks. Most of these studies conclude that two point shots by the team and the efficacy percentage of them are the chief determinants of winning (De Rose, 2004; Fotinakis et al., 2002; Ibáñez et al., 2003; Taxildaris et al., 2001). Also, they show the relationship between number of rebounds and winning, which is to say a higher number of rebounds means better opportunity to win the match (Akers, Wolf, & Buttrons, 1991; Sampaio, Ibáñez, & Feu, 2004; Tsamourtzis & Athanasiou, 2004). In brief, the majority of the studies reviewed identify two-point shots and the number of rebounds as the two most statistically indicative determinants of winning or losing a match in basketball.

However, studies that relate performance (winning or losing a match) to time of ball possession have not been found. Objective information about final and participatory actions in relation to performance will help coaches to design game styles and systems that facilitate player development as well as winning. Therefore,