

MOTOR SKILLS IN FEMALE JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS FROM MACEDONIA AND PLAYERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Modern volleyball game requires a high level of specific motor skills in the players. Our objectives are: 1) to evaluate specific motor skills (setting and forearm passing) in Macedonian female junior volleyball players; and 2) to compare our players with players from other countries in a qualitative manner. A sample of 399 participants, female volleyball players aged 13-18 years, that are part of Junior League (JL) in Macedonia, and JL in other countries, were included. Players from Macedonian JL (N=30) were evaluated at the Faculty of Physical Education, Sport and Health in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. In order to extract data for players from other countries (N=369), articles published in peer-reviewed journals were used. Only players from studies applying the same motor skill tests as the ones used in our study were included. With the aim to compare the players, a single Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet was created containing all the data from our evaluation, as well as the data that we have previously extracted from other articles. Data analysis tool in Microsoft Office Excel 2010 was used to test the normality of data distribution by applying K-S test, Skewness and Kurtosis values. Basic mathematical and appropriate statistical methods were used to calculate descriptive statistical parameters. Finally, graphs were created. Setting and Forearm Passing skills are less developed in Macedonian JL players than in players from India, UK, Italy, USA, Germany, and Norway. Thus, we would advise Macedonian coaches to work more in a direction of specific motor skills development, especially in pioneer and youth categories, instead of putting the main emphasis on player specialization at early age.

Key words: volleyball, motor skills, setting, forearm passing, comparison.

Introduction

Success in professional volleyball is determined by many factors such as: motor skills and abilities, psychological conditions, and morphological structure of the players. Modern volleyball game requires from the players a high level of specific motor skills that are defining the volleyball game and certain playing positions (Martinovic, Dopsaj, V., Kotur-Stevuljević, Dopsaj, M., Vujovic, Stefanovic, & Nestic, 2011). Motor skill is defined as the movement of body components towards programmed goals, and the basic abilities that undertake the task of generating the movements (Goodway et al 2019; Lopes et al., 2013). The level of motor skills is closely related to intelligence, age, anxiety, fatigue, general motivation, environmental factors, and the level of participation in sports (Sayin, 2011; Timmons et al., 2007). Motor skills affect the general performance of athletes. Moreover, there is a positive relation between motor skills, performance, and efficiency (Goodway et al., 2019). Also, they are important indicators that differentiate the quality of the players. In players which motor skills are not at the desired level, fatigue starts earlier, and the application of technical and tactical skills decrease (Uslu et al., 2021).

In contemporary volleyball, players must be prepared to perform technical and tactical elements perfectly, because the match outcome depends on a variety of specific elements, and the final score depends

on the quality of attacks, blocks, serves, as well as the number of the opponent's errors (Conti et al., 2011; Hughes & Daniel, 2003; Marcelino & Mesquita, 2006; Marcelino et al., 2008).

According to Miskin et al. (2010), volleyball coaches should estimate different performance skills of individual players during sets and matches, and then adjust the training cycle of the team focusing on the development of key motor skills that significantly determine players' scoring abilities. Forearm passing (FP) and Setting (SET) are considered as determinants of team's success, since they play an important role during defence, and offence organization as well, meaning they have a direct impact in scoring and final match outcome (Uslu et al., 2021). Furthermore, Marelic et al. (2004) and Mahmutovic et al. (2011), reported that there is a significant relation between the reception rate and the successful outcome of the match.

Therefore, our objectives are: 1) to evaluate specific motor skills (setting and forearm passing) in Macedonian female junior volleyball players; and 2) to compare our players with players from other countries in a qualitative manner.

Materials and methods

Participants

The comparative study is realized on a sample of 399 participants, female volleyball players aged 13-18 years, that are part of Junior League (JL) in Macedonia, and JL in other countries. Players from Macedonian JL (N=30) were evaluated at the Faculty of Physical Education, Sport and health in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. In order to extract data for players from other countries (N=369), articles published in peer-reviewed journals were used (Baddaruddoza & Patharia, 2012; Chatterjee, S. & Chatterjee, P., 2001; Fritsch et al., 2010; Luciano et al., 2004; Rozin et al., 2000; Stefan et al., 2000; Tambs et al., 2001; Thomas & Semmler, 2012; Wells & Dillon, 2002; Williams & Gross, 2008). Only players from studies applying the same motor skill tests as the ones used in our study were included.

Instruments

In order to realise the particular aim of the study, we assessed specific motor skills such as setting and forearm passing in our players by applying:

- SET (R-L) (Collins & Hodges, 2001);
- Forearm pass (FP) (R-L) (Collins & Hodges, 2001)

The rest of the data regarding motor skills in players from other countries were extracted from peer-reviewed published articles (Baddaruddoza & Patharia, 2012; Chatterjee, S. & Chatterjee, P., 2001; Fritsch et al., 2010; Luciano et al., 2004; Rozin et al., 2000; Stefan et al., 2000; Tambs et al., 2001; Thomas & Semmler, 2012; Wells & Dillon, 2002; Williams & Gross, 2008).

Data analysis

With the aim to compare the players, a single Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet was created containing all the data from our evaluation, as well as the data that we have previously extracted from other articles. Data analysis tool in Microsoft Office Excel 2010 was used to test the normality of data distribution by applying K-S test, Skewness and Kurtosis values. Basic mathematical and appropriate statistical methods were used to calculate descriptive statistical parameters. Finally, graphs were created.

Results and discussion

According to the data presented in Table 1, our results have a normal distribution, with a normal asymmetry, which is considered when values for Skewness are in a range between -1,00 to 1,00 (Zeqiri et al., 2020). Except the Kurtosis value for height, that is not in the ideal range of -3 to 3, but if we take in consideration the SD value in addition to the Kurtosis value, as proposed by Kallner (2013), this might be acceptable.

Based on the results presented in Table 2, Macedonian JL players have lower values for motor skills tests than players from India, UK, Italy, USA, Germany, and Norway (Baddaruddoza & Patharia, 2012; Chatterjee, S. et al., 2001; Fritsch et al., 2010; Luciano et al., 2004; Rozin et al., 2000; Stefan et al., 2000; Tambs et al., 2001; Thomas & Semmler, 2012; Wells & Dillon, 2002; Williams & Gross, 2008).

Table 1. Descriptive statistical parameters of Macedonian JL players

| | N | Min | Max | X | SD | CV% | Skewness | Kurtosis | K-S |
|-------------|----|--------|--------|--------|------|-------|----------|----------|---------|
| Height (cm) | 30 | 155,00 | 185,00 | 174,70 | 5,94 | 3,40 | -0,91 | 3,20 | p > .20 |
| Weight (kg) | 30 | 48,00 | 77,00 | 60,53 | 6,28 | 10,37 | 0,39 | 0,42 | p > .20 |
| BMI | 30 | 17,04 | 24,03 | 19,81 | 1,44 | 7,26 | 0,49 | -0,17 | p > .20 |
| SET (R-L) | 30 | 29,00 | 40,00 | 34,69 | 3,27 | 9,42 | -0,57 | -0,41 | p > .20 |
| FP (R-L) | 30 | 14,00 | 29,00 | 22,69 | 4,12 | 18,16 | -0,18 | 0,44 | p > .20 |

Table 2. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation of specific motor skills in JL players from other countries

| Country | Authors | N | X±SD | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|----|------------|------------|
| | | | SET (R-L) | FP (R-L) |
| India | Badaruddoza&Patharia (2012) | 24 | 41,12±3,05 | 30,58±4,30 |
| UK | Chatterjee, S. &Chatterjee, P. (2001) | 17 | 36,19±3,30 | 25,14±4,23 |
| UK | Fritsch, et al. (2010) | 40 | 38,05±3,47 | 30,29±3,02 |
| Italy | Luciano, Wright, & Martin (2004) | 62 | 36,92±3,15 | 31,18±3,47 |
| USA | Rozin, Fallon, &Mandell (2000) | 64 | 37,03±3,32 | 25,73±4,28 |
| Germany | Stefan, et al. (2000) | 20 | 38,54±4,98 | 26,82±4,63 |
| Norway | Tambs, et al. (2001) | 35 | 38,92±3,30 | 26,8±5,16 |
| UK | Thomas &Semmler (2012) | 35 | 38,06±3,67 | 32,49±3,58 |
| USA | Wells &Dillon (2002) | 14 | 38,70±3,46 | / |
| USA | Williams &Gross (2008) | 58 | 35,27±3,40 | 24,68±4,22 |

Macedonian JL players have performed fewer number of repetitions in SET (R-L) and FP (R-L) tests, meaning that their setting and forearm passing skills are less developed than setting and forearm passing skills in players from India, UK, Italy, USA, Germany, and Norway (Figures 1 and 2).

Motor skills differentiate the quality of the players. Uslu et al. (2021) have reported that in players whose motor skills are not at the desired level, fatigue starts earlier, and the application of technical and tactical skills decrease. Also motor skills affect the general performance of athletes. Goodway et al. (2019) found a positive relation between motor skills, performance, and efficiency.

Thus, players must have motor skills developed on a highest level in order to be prepared to perform technical and tactical elements perfectly. It is generally reported that the match outcome depends on a variety of specific elements, and the final score depends on the quality of attacks, blocks, serves, as well as the number of the opponent's errors (Conti et al., 2011; Hughes & Daniel, 2003; Marcelino&Mesquita, 2006; Marcelino et al., 2008).

Moreover, it is reported that there is a significant relation between the reception rate and the successful outcome of the match (Marelic et al., 2004; Mahmutovic et al., 2011). Since forearm passing and setting are directly related to defense reception and offence organization respectively, they are considered as determinants of team's success because they have a direct impact in scoring and final match outcome (Uslu et al., 2021).

As motor skills and motor performance are powerful indicators for success in sport (Pion et al., 2015), we advise Macedonian coaches to work more in direction of motor skills development and technique improvement, especially in pioneer and youth categories, instead of putting the main emphasis on player specialization at early age.

In addition, it is reported in literature that elite volleyball players have motor skills and abilities developed on a higher level than non-elite players (Fry et al., 1991; Sheppard et al., 2007; Smith et al., 1992; Martinovic et al., 2011). Based on what is presented in Figure 1, setting skills are most developed in Indian players, while forearm passing skills in players from United Kingdom (Figure 2). On the other hand, according to FIVB (2021) world ranking for girls under 18, India and United Kingdom share the 52nd place "at the bottom" of the world ranking table. Actually, here comes into consideration the heterogeneity of the samples in terms of competitive level. Unfortunately, we do not have information about the competitive level of the players that are included in our study. Our inclusion criteria was players to be part of Junior NL, but some of the players that are part of Junior NL, might also be part of the Junior National Team, or

even Senior NL and Senior National Team, meaning that their competitive level would be higher. The higher the competitive level of a player is – the higher the quality and efficiency of the player should be (Katic et al., 2006).

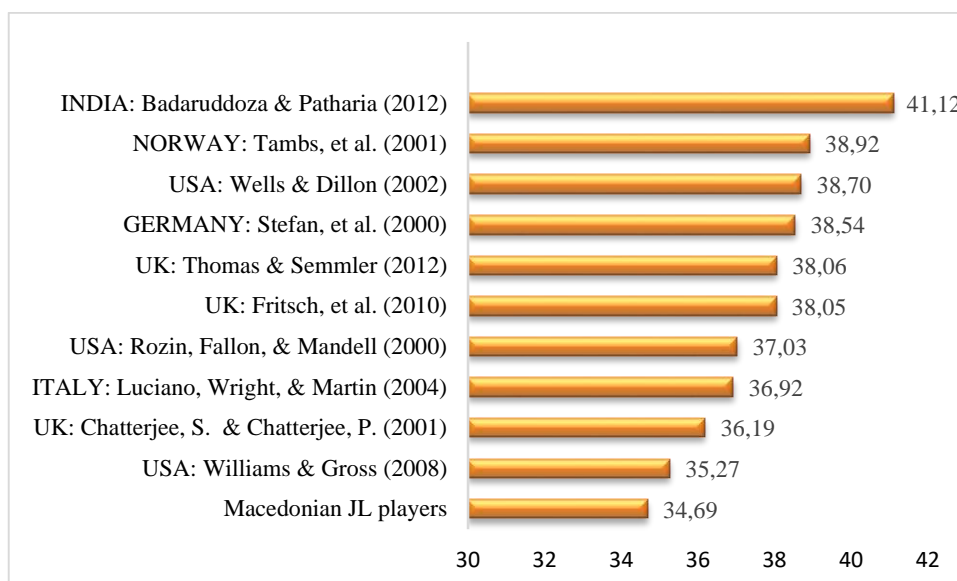


Figure 1.SET (R-L) in Macedonian JL players and players from other countries

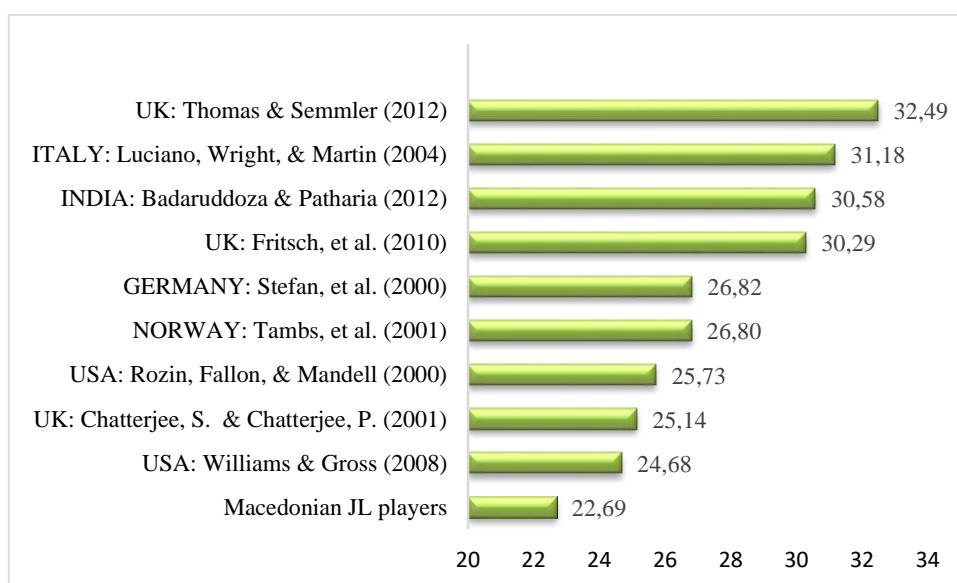


Figure 2.FP (R-L) in Macedonian JL players and players from other countries

And setting and forearm passing skills have a direct impact on player's efficiency and scoring abilities (Uslu et al., 2021). Therefore, we will not be able to do any further conclusions regarding the other countries included in the study because we assume that this methodological weakness might influenced the results. However, it is still obvious that Macedonian coaches should focus more on motor and technical skills of the players.

Conclusion

Setting and Forearm Passing skills are less developed in Macedonian JL players than in players from India, UK, Italy, USA, Germany, and Norway. Thus, we would advise Macedonian coaches to work more in a direction of specific motor skills development and technique improvement, especially in pioneer and youth categories, instead of putting the main emphasis on player specialization at early age.

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