

**Relative Age Effect in Anthropometrical Characteristics and Physical Fitness
Among Youth Soccer Players of Amateur Clubs**

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Abstract

The presence of the relative age effect (RAE) has been widely reported. Most of the studies have been performed on elite youth soccer players. The purpose of the present study was to examine if anthropometric and performance characteristics were different amongst older and younger soccer players of amateur clubs born in the same year. One hundred seventy six players in three different age group (U10, U14, U15) participated in the study. Anthropometric measurements (height, weight, body mass index, body fat) and the performance in physical fitness tests [long jump (LJ), countermovement jump (CMJ), T-test, Yo-Yo intermittent endurance test level 1 (YYIET1)] were the dependent variables. In U14 the older players jump higher to CMJ ($p = 0.05$) and in U15 the older players performed better to CMJ and YYIET1 ($p = 0.01$ and $p = 0.05$, respectively). We observed differences in some fitness test performances between older and younger soccer players. These differences are indicative of RAE presence, but more studies are required on youth soccer players of amateur clubs and of different ages.

Keywords: Relative Age Effect, Youth Soccer, Fitness Performance, Anthropometry