

The older brother: a success factor for junior footballers

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Starting position and questioning

The influence of the family on the successful course of sports careers is demonstrated in various studies (eg Côté, 1999). Van Yperen (2009) showed that successful footballers have an average of more siblings than unsuccessful. It is, however, to be assumed that not the number but the sports-related stimulus potential and the example function (Côté, 1999) of the siblings (in the football predominantly brothers) are relevant. The question is whether brothers, who also play football, have a positive effect on the development of football players.

method

Former Swiss soccer junior national team players from the years 1981-87 (n = 159) were interviewed about their sporting career and their family environment following the expert research (Ericsson, 1996). Because of their adult performance, they were allocated to four performance groups: 1) international level, 2) national top level, 3) national level, and 4) regional level. For each group the proportion of players who have at least one brother who also plays football is compared.

Results

The results of Van Yperen (2009) can be confirmed: The most successful players have more siblings, especially more brothers. The proportion of players with at least one soccer-playing brother is more than 70% for players with an international level, while the players with a regional level are close to 36% ($\chi^2(3) = 10.89, p = .012$). Age-dependent evaluation shows that elderly football-playing brethren have a positive influence on performance.

discussion

In the childhood and youth age, young footballers often play a lot of football outside of the club training. Since the social environment at this age is to a large extent characterized by the family, it can be assumed that the brothers play the role of the training, resp. Game partner. The physical superiority of an older brother is particularly effective in fostering the younger generation's development.

Literatur

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