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DESIGNING A PROTOCOL AND COMPARATIVE NORMS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TALENT AMONG ELITE AGE-GROUP RUGBY PLAYERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Lord and Saviour and my two girls; Chantél my wife and Zoey my daughter.

Without you in my life, I am nothing and I amount to nothing.

Thank you!

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I would like to take the opportunity to thank the following individuals and groups for standing by me and assisting me in the successful completion of this study.

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Philippians 1:6: *"And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you." (AMP)*

SUMMARY

TITLE	Designing a protocol and comparative norms for the identification and selection of talent among elite age-group rugby players in South Africa
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SUPERVISOR	Prof. P.E. Krüger
DEPARTMENT	Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences
DEGREE	D.Phil

Talent identification and the subsequent development of those individuals with the most potential to succeed is currently of great concern for sporting bodies in a number of countries and South Africa is no exception. Sport in South Africa holds a position of great prominence and has been used in many instances to facilitate national unity and pride.

Rugby Union is one of the most prominent sports in South Africa and it is in this sport that South Africa has achieved a great measure of success, both historically and currently. It is a sport in which the future sustainability of this success is high on the agenda. There have been a number of studies on talent identification in rugby and this study aims to contribute to that body of knowledge. To achieve this contribution, this study has two primary goals and aims.

This study has as its primary goals and aims: 1) to have a sound theoretical base provided by in-depth and up to date research that will form the foundation for, 2) reviewed and alternative sport and position-specific testing protocols as well as comparative results consisting of norms and scores that will adequately identify and select those capable of participating in elite age-group rugby union.

Contained in the theoretical base of this study is a review of the physical parameters required to succeed in sport, a discussion of the nature vs. nurture debate and a review of the developmental approaches to talent and ability. Other factors such as psychological skills, abilities and attributes and a historical review of talent identification models and approaches world-wide as well as in South Africa have also been provided. In all, the first primary aim and goal of this study has therefore successfully been achieved.

Thereafter, the reviewed and alternative test protocol has been presented, discussed and executed, followed by an analysis of the results obtained. Specific achievements of this study are that new and modified tests (3x5x22m Anaerobic capacity test, S-Test and the Kick-for-distance and accuracy test) for talent have been developed and that specific scores and norms for these new tests, as well as other pre-existing tests, have been established for future reference. In noting the success of the alternative, broad-position specific protocol and the establishment of scores and norms, the second primary goal and aim of this study can be said to be achieved. This study then ends with conclusions and further proposed recommendations.

It can therefore be concluded with a great amount of certainty that this study has been successful not only in presenting as up to date research as possible in the fields of excellence and elite sport, but that furthermore, this study has provided a robust test protocol with comparative norms that can be used as an alternative identification and selection tool.

Key words:

rugby	sustainability
talent	physical parameters
identification	psychological skills, abilities and attributes
selection	historical approaches
protocol	comparative norms

OPSOMMING

TITEL	Die ontwerp van ‘n protokol en vergelykende norms vir die identifisering en seleksie van talent in elite ouderdoms-groep rugby spelers in Suid Afrika.
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PROMOTOR	Prof. P.E. Krüger
DEPARTEMENT	Biokinetika, Sport and Vryetydwetenskappe.
GRAAD	D.Phil

Talent identifisering en die daaropvolgende ontwikkeling van daardie individue met die meeste potensiaal is huidiglik van groot belang vir sportliggame in talle lande. Suid Afrika is geen uitsondering nie. Sport in Suid Afrika is in ‘n posisie van groot prominensie en was al gebruik in baie gevalle om nasionale eenheid en trots te bewerkstellig.

Rugby is een van die mees prominente sportsoorte in Suid Afrika, en dit is in hierdie sport dat Suid Afrika groot suksesse behaal het, beide histories gesproke en huidiglik. Dit is ‘n sport waarin die toekomstige handhawing van hierdie sukses hoog op die agenda is. Daar was al ‘n aantal studies met betrekking tot talent identifisering in rugby en hierdie studie beoog om ‘n bydrae maak tot daardie kennis. Om hierdie bydrae to maak het hierdie studie twee doelwitte en oogmerke.

Die twee primêre doelwitte is: 1) om ‘n grondige teoretiese basis te skep deur deurtastende en kontemporêre navorsing wat grondliggend sal wees vir, 2) oorsigtelike en alternatiewe sport en posisie-spesifieke toetsprotokolle wat daardie individue genoegsaam sal identifiseer wat die nodige vaardighede en karaktertrekke het vir elite ouderdomsgroeprugby.

Bevat in die teoretiese basis van hierdie studie is ‘n oorsig van die fisiese paradigmas nodig vir sukses in sport, ‘n bespreking van die “aard vs. opvoeding” debat en ‘n oorsig van die ontwikkelings benaderings tot talent en vaardighede. Bykomende faktore soos sielkundige vaardighede, vermoëns en karaktertrekke en ‘n historiese oorsig van talent identifisering’s modelle en benaderings oor die wêreld sowel as in Suid Afrika word bespreek. Dus is die eerste primêre doelwit van hierdie studie suksesvol behaal.

Daarna word die alternatiewe toets protokol aangebied, bespreek en uitgevoer, gevolg deur ‘n analise van die resultate wat behaal is. Spesifieke prestasies van hierdie studie is dat nuwe en gemodifiseerde toetse (3x5x22m Anaerobiese kapasiteitstoets, S-Toets en die Skop-vir-afstand en akkuraatheidstoets) vir talent ontwikkel is en dat spesifieke tellings en norms vir die nuwe toetse en ander voorafgaande toetse vir toekomstige gebruik opgestel is. As gevolg van die sukses van die alternatiewe, breë posisie-spesifieke protokol sowel as die opstelling van tellings en norms, is die tweede primêre doelwit vir hierdie studie ook suksesvol behaal. Daarna volg die gevolgtrekkinge en verdere aanbevelinge vanuit hierdie studie.

Daar kan met groot sekerheid gesê word dat hierdie studie geslaagd is in die aanbieding van navorsing so op datum as moontlik in die gebiede van uitnemendheid en elite sport, maar dat hierdie studie ‘n robuuste toets protokol aanbied met vergelykende norms wat gebruik kan word as ‘n alternatiewelike identifiserings en seleksie werktuig.

Sleutel woorde:

rugby	volgehoudendheid
talent	fisiese parameters
identifisering	sielkundige vaardighede, vermoëns, karaktertrekke
keuring	historiese benaderings
protokol	vergelykende norms

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