

Title: Academic Performance and Self-Regulatory Skills in Elite Youth Soccer Players.

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Secondary theme: Characteristics of a dual career athlete.

Aims: It has been previously noted that youth athletes in The Netherlands were also high academic achievers with high graduation rates and ambitions to attend university. However, there is still a stereotype that football players are poor students. This study aims to compare elite youth football players' academic achievements with an age-matched, non-athlete, control group. This study also looks at self-regulation in these groups. Self-regulation can be defined as the ability for an individual to be aware of, monitor and control their behaviour, emotions and thoughts and the ability to alter them depending on the situation. Self-regulation is considered an important skill for success in sport and therefore, it is considered that the participants might be able to transfer this skill into the educational context.

Methods: The study recruited 292 male students between the ages of 12 and 26; just under half (128) of these students were involved in a football talent programme. All participants completed questionnaires measuring self-regulation, planning, self-monitoring, effort, reflection and self-efficacy.

Results and Practical Implications: The results showed that a higher percentage of the youth players enrolled in a pre-university system (as opposed to a pre-vocational system) than the control group. Furthermore, there was a similar number of individuals that had to re-sit a year in the football players group and in the non-athlete, control group. This could

suggest that the players are high achievers in sport and in education. It could also suggest that, contrary to the stereotype, youth football players are in fact performing better in education than non-athlete students. The youth players also had higher scores on the measures of self-monitoring, reflection and effort than the control group suggesting they had developed advanced skills in these areas. These results, that show advanced skills and success in both sport and school, give a small indication that some skills are transferable between the two domains and therefore, that sport and school are compatible careers that enhance one another.

TASS have produced this lay summary. The full article is available (permissions may apply):
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02640414.2010.516270?casa_token=xyRUVJ8D4YQAAAAA:Xbh6bLdt_iA_A8lBqva-7rJhtCnNr0kSKdjx9xLJc9BAzQLYe-QJHfhpjH-cVOP0Lsiz5MMLYwHxA