Body Size and Its Impact on Selection for Advanced Level Baseball Teams

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Abstract

The presentation is focused on the role that body size plays in the selection of pitchers at advanced levels. Previous studies have shown that players who are more biologically mature are more likely to be selected for advanced training or competition, especially near puberty (French, Spurgeon, & Nevett, 2007). At young ages, the tallest players tend to be assigned to play shortstop, first base, and pitcher (French, et al 2007). Professional baseball players are taller than the normal population, pitchers and first basemen are the tallest players (French & Spurgeon, 2010).

The participants were twenty-one pitchers of varying levels of expertise. The expert group was professional minor league baseball pitchers. Individuals who had pitched on a high school baseball team, but did not pitch for a college or professional team, were recruited to serve as an intermediate skilled group. The age ranges of both groups ranged from 18 to 23.

Each participant self-reported his current adult height and weight. One way ANOVAs were conducted to determine group differences in height and weight. Expert pitchers were significantly taller than novice pitchers. Expert pitchers were heavier than novice pitchers, but the differences were not significant.

Participants were also asked to rate their body size in relation to peers at ages 10, 14, and 18. At age 18, 5 expert pitchers and 4 novice pitchers estimated their body size as similar to peers. More expert pitchers tended to rate themselves as larger than similar age peers at ages 10 and 14.

The topic is related to the theme of the conference in how to develop research in the area of baseball, specifically pitching related activities for youth participants. Research topics related to pitching such as pitch counts and coach selection criteria for positions are topics currently being researched.