

# PHYSICAL AND TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A- AND B-TEAM SOCCER PLAYERS

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## Introduction

To attain an expert level in soccer, players should possess a wide range of physical and technical abilities. International level players perform 25% more high intensity running and 35% more sprinting during a soccer game than players at a moderate elite level<sup>1,2</sup> and show overall better technical abilities.

## Methods

In total, 23 A-team (age 24.4±3.6) and 36 B-team (age 20.1±1,9) players from two Belgian first division teams performed a Yo-Yo intermittent recovery test level 1 (Yo-Yo IRT) to assess soccer specific endurance, a 5m and 30m sprint test to measure explosive power and maximal speed respectively and the Flemish Sports Compass dribble test to assess technical ability during the 2007-2010 seasons. Players were divided into A- and B-team players according to their player status at the time of the tests. Differences in Yo-Yo IRT distance (m), 5m Sprint time (s), 30m Sprint time (s) and Dribble test time (s) were analyzed using MANCOVA with these variables as dependents, selection for the A- or B-team as a fixed factor and age as a covariate. Statistical significance was set at p<0.05.

## Results and discussions

	A-team	B-team	F Team	Covariate
	n=26	n=32		
Yo-Yo IRT distance (m)	2364,62±407,66	2108,57±427,21	0,093	3,873
5mSprint (s)	1,04±0,09	1,13±0,08	12,691**	3,114
30mSprint (s)	4,19±0,18	4,31±0,10	17,002**	11,776**
DribbleFoot (s)	18,12±1,19	18,50±1,35	0,038	0,732

Table 1: average values and standard deviations for Yo-Yo-IRT, 5 m Sprint, 30m Sprint and a dribble test. \*\*= significant at the 0.01 level

Multivariate analysis showed significantly better scores for A-team than for B-team players (F=4.302, p=0.006). Age was a significant covariate (F=3.971, p=0.009). Univariate analysis revealed better scores for a the A team on the 5m and 30m sprint. Explosive power and maximal speed seem to be important factors in the (de)selection for an A-team

## Conclusion

In elite soccer, a good explosive power and maximal speed are necessary. Thus, a professional approach on physical coaching and post-formation is of importance in developing elite soccer players.

## References

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