

## Making profiles in boys and girls playing basketball

Ana Concepción Jiménez \*, Gema Ortega\*\*, Francisco Javier Giménez\*\*\*  
and Francisco Javier Castejón\*\*\*\*

### MAKING PROFILES IN BOYS AND GIRLS PLAYING BASKETBALL

KEYWORDS: Basketball, Initial stages, Decision-making profile.

ABSTRACT. Decision-making in players of sports such as basketball is essential to the sport activity itself. For this reason, decision-making is being researched in sports from a range of approaches and angles. The focus of this study is on understanding the decision-making profiles of basketball playing boys and girls ( $n=63$ ), aged between 10 and 12. They belong to a basketball school with a distinct educational philosophy and an internal competition style that favour educational values required in sports at the initial stages. A descriptive study was conducted by applying a questionnaire on decision-making styles in sports (CETD). The questionnaire results according to the three analysed parameters are as follows: perceived decisional competence,  $M=2.26 \pm 0.2$ . Anxiety and feeling overwhelmed when making decisions,  $M=2.36 \pm 0.3$ . Tactical learning commitment,  $M=3.43 \pm 0.3$ . These results have allowed the acquisition of greater knowledge about the players being analysed in terms of their perception on how they make decisions in training and competition, thus allowing the application of certain teaching strategies, enabling them to progress in basketball skills.

Players' decision-making skills in basketball, just as in other cooperation and opponent sports, are essential in training and competition. For this reason, numerous studies have been performed that have enabled us to learn more about the cognitive processes involved in decision-making around variables likely to be crucial for the right choice: which factors are limiting for a suitable decision, or which teaching-learning models should be used to improve the players' decision-making skills (e.g. Araújo, Trassavassos, Torrents and Vives, 2011; Cárdenas, 2009; McPherson, 2008; Ruiz and Arruza, 2005). In addition, the use of specific instruments for analysing decision-making in sports has been a useful support in certain studies. An example of these are performance assessment tools during the game, databases, interviews and questionnaires (González, García, Pastor and Contreras, 2011; Jiménez, 2007; Mouchet, 2010; Raab, 2002; Ruiz and Graupera, 2005). While these tools measure indirect decision-making, they enable us to assess the players' perception and knowledge when making decisions in a twinkling of an eye.

The analysis of the different decision-making player profiles may be important for studying the players' perceptions in terms of decision-making. In particular, the results of the questionnaire on decision-making styles in sports (CETD) (Ruiz, Graupera and Navarro, 2000), determine a type of player that is more or less related for making decisions on the field, by analysing the perceived decision-making skill, the athlete's perceived fear when making a decision as well as the degree of commitment in improving decision-making.

The decision-making profiles studies have been conducted with athletes from all levels of expertise (Aguilar, Martín and Chiroso, 2014; García, Ruiz and Graupera, 2009; Gil et al., 2012;

Jiménez, 2007; Jiménez, Lorenzo, Sáenz-López and Ibáñez, 2009; Rabaz, et al., 2012). Knowledge of these decision-making profiles may be information of interest for coaches in terms of planning and later mediation to improve tactical learning, especially if the athletes are in the initiation and training stages. The study's focus is on understanding and analysing the decision-making profiles of young basketball players aiming at carrying out an educational mediation to improve their decision-making.

### Method

63 basketball players aged between 10 and 12, belonging to the Fundación Real Madrid basketball schools have participated. These boys and girls trained for two hours a week throughout the season and participated in an in-house competition which included regulatory adaptation sessions in order to contribute to the integrated training of the participants to the greatest degree possible.

The tool used was the questionnaire on decision-making styles in sports (CETD) (Ruiz et al., 2000), and consisted of 30 items relating to three parameters (10 items each): (a) perceived decisional competence; (b) anxiety and feeling overwhelmed when making a decision; and (c) decisional learning commitment, as well as following up on the coaches' tactical advice. This questionnaire includes a Likert scale type from 1 to 4, where 1 represents "complete disagreement" and 4 "complete agreement".

The procedure performed commenced with a request for consent from the participants' parents as well as the Fundación Real Madrid coordinators and coaches. This questionnaire was

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Ana Concepción Jiménez Sánchez. Facultad de Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte-INEF. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. 28040-MADRID. ESPAÑA. E-mail: anaconcepcion.jimenez@upm.es

\*Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.

\*\*Escuelas de Baloncesto de la Fundación Real Madrid.

\*\*\*Facultad de Educación. Universidad de Huelva.

\*\*\*\*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

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applied at the end of the season in sports facilities, after one of the training sessions and in the presence of the coaches in charge who provided prior information and clarified any questions raised by the players.

## Results

A descriptive analysis was performed taking into account each of the three questionnaire parameters. The “perceived decisional competence” parameter produced an average of  $M=2.26 \pm 0.2$ , “anxiety and feeling overwhelmed when making a decision” obtained an average of  $M=2.36 \pm 0.3$ , and the mean value for “tactical learning commitment” was  $M=3.43 \pm 0.3$  (Figure 1).

## Discussion

The results show considerable differences with respect to results achieved from the most proficient athletes. These differences are shown at the level of perceived decisional competence, which is higher in experts, and anxiety and feeling overwhelmed when making a decision, which is clearly lower in experts. Therefore, the figures from beginners displayed in the graph do not match the “V-graph” shown in the expert study results (García et al., 2009; Jiménez, 2007; Jiménez et al., 2009). However, there are still similarities found in the results obtained in this study with others conducted with athletes of low expertise level (Aguilar et al., 2014; Gil et al., 2012), although the participants’ characteristics in each of the studies do not match those of our athletes. The authors mentioned above made suggestions to improve the tactics beginning from the initial

training, based on a comprehensive learning and teaching process.

Given their characteristics and training and competition practice, athletes analysed at the Fundación Real Madrid basketball school lack sufficient knowledge and experience that would allow them to rank at a high level of decision-making competence. This probably explains the results obtained from the parameter referring to “anxiety and feeling overwhelmed when making a decision”, as indicated in studies conducted by Gil et al. (2012). The high result in “anxiety and feeling overwhelmed when making a decision” moves away from the initial forecast, bearing in mind that the sports schools where the players of this study are trained, initially encourage a type of “fun education”, with a particular focus on the process rather than the final result, and working on the basis of educational competition where other values other than just winning the game prevail.

We believe it is necessary to promote learning that improves decision-making and reduces the risk of erroneous decisions. In line with the studies conducted by Castejón and López (2003) and Castejón and Argudo (2013), we consider the need for developing comprehensive learning that integrates technical and tactical facets. The goal is to answer questions about what to do, how to do it and when and where to do so, that the players uncover a relationship between what they already know and what they still have to learn. The aim is to provide them with types of contextualised tasks that encourage solution-finding, to adapt the level of difficulty to enable the players to respond with different options to become more involved in the activity and lastly to encourage critical thinking and to use the coach feedback to help build up a learning process.

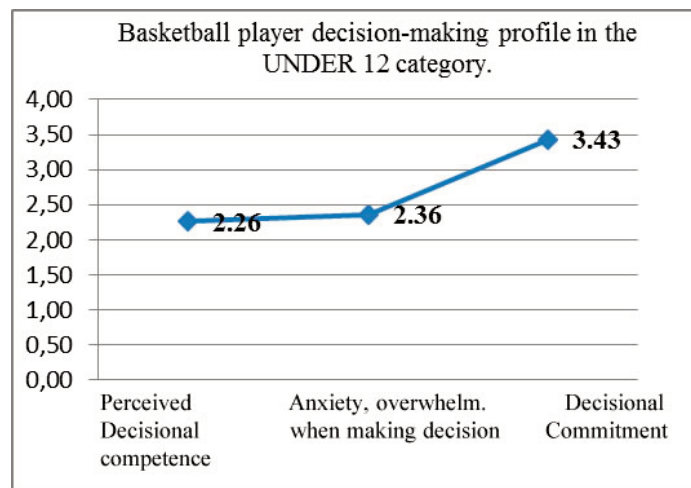


Figure 1. Decision-making profile of the basketball players in our study.

*PERFILES DECISIONALES EN NIÑOS Y NIÑAS DE BALONCESTO*

PALABRAS CLAVES: Baloncesto, Etapas de iniciación, Perfil decisional.

RESUMEN: La toma de decisiones de los jugadores en deportes como el baloncesto, es consustancial al propio deporte. Por este motivo, la decisión es objeto de investigación en el ámbito deportivo, abordándola desde diferentes enfoques y perspectivas. El objetivo de este estudio ha sido conocer el perfil decisional de un grupo de niños y niñas que practican baloncesto (n=63), con edades comprendidas entre los 10 y 12 años. Pertenecen a una escuela de baloncesto con una marcada filosofía educativa y un tipo de competición interna favorecedora de los valores educativos necesarios para la práctica deportiva en las etapas de iniciación. Se realizó un estudio descriptivo aplicando el cuestionario de estilos al decidir en el deporte (CETD). Los resultados obtenidos según las tres dimensiones analizadas del cuestionario fueron: competencia decisional percibida,  $M=2.26 \pm 0.2$ . Ansiedad y agobio al decidir,  $M=2.36 \pm 0.3$ . Compromiso en el aprendizaje táctico,  $M=3.43 \pm 0.3$ . Estos resultados han permitido obtener mayor conocimiento de los jugadores y jugadoras analizados en cuanto a su percepción sobre cómo deciden en el entrenamiento y la competición y, de este modo, poder aplicar determinadas estrategias didácticas que les permita progresar en el aprendizaje del baloncesto.

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