

Within Game and Between Gender Comparisons of Match Demands in Men's and Women's International Touch Rugby World Cup.

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ABSTRACT

Touch rugby is an intermittent, high-intensity, anaerobic team sport that is widely played internationally as the Federation of International Touch includes 47-member nations. **PURPOSE:** The present study quantified and compared the match demands of men's and women's international touch rugby players during the 2019 world cup. **METHODS:** Match demands (male: n=16; female: n=15) were assessed via 5Hz global positioning system devices. Separate linear mixed models and Cohen's effect size comparisons were used to compare variables within matches (1st v 2nd half) for men's and women's only matches, while between gender comparisons were made for complete match demands. **RESULTS:** Within match comparisons revealed significant, small reductions in running distance ($p = 0.003$) and one-minute peak average speed ($p = 0.019$) for men's matches in the second half compared to the first half. For women's matches a significant, small reduction in running distance ($p < 0.001$) and a significant, small increase for walking distance ($p < 0.001$) was revealed during the second half compared to the first half. Significant, small to moderate differences were found between men's and women's matches for average speed ($p = 0.006$), running distance ($p < 0.001$), sprint distance ($p < 0.001$), and peak speed ($p < 0.001$). **CONCLUSION:** Findings show the physical demands of men's touch rugby matches are more demanding than women's matches. Results from our study suggest that gender specific conditioning programs should be implemented to ensure suitable preparation for international matches.