Effect of Soccer Positions on Steps Taken Per Game

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ABSTRACT

Soccer players are conditioned to run just as hard the first five minutes of the game compared to the last five minutes of the game. Different positions on the field tend to require more effort than others. Knowledge of the vast difference in game-time activity from one position to the next can greatly improve performance within their dedicated position. Very little research has been conducted on the amount of steps taken by a soccer player at their specific position. The purpose was to compare the effect of soccer position on steps taken per game. It is hypothesized that there will be a significant difference in activity levels between playing positions on the soccer field during competition. SW-200 Digiwalker™ (NEW-LIFESTYLES, Inc., Lee’s Summit, MO) pedometers were clipped to the waistband of the playing shorts along the right anterior hip of soccer players aged 18-26 years. Before each game, pedometers were reset to zero and steps were recorded after the first half, and then reset again at the beginning of the second half. Data was collected for 20 games. A repeated-measures ANOVA was used to compare differences between the positions and pairwise comparisons were used to indicate where the differences lie. An alpha of .05 was used for these tests. The only non-significant difference in steps/min occurred between the forward (79±14 steps/min) and sweepers (81±13 steps/min), p > .05. Center-midfielders accrued the most steps/min (99±11) and goalies the least (11±2.5). This study does provide evidence to show there is a significant difference in steps taken per game according to a player’s position. Care should be taken to appropriately condition players according to their position.