

Niels Nygaard Rossing, Diana Stentoft & Dan Stieper Karbing

Abstract:

Athletes' place of early development plays a significant role in talent development (Côté, 2006). Previous studies have shown some association between community size and density and the likelihood of becoming an elite athlete but without consistent results across nations. Since only some clubs have established structures for talent development, the proximity of an athlete's place of early development to the location of talent clubs may be a significant predictor. The main objective of this study was to investigate the relation between proximity of athletes' place of early development to sports clubs with well-established talent development.

The samples included 579 football and 311 handball elite youth league players, 85 football and 80 handball national youth players, and a comparison sample of 147,221 football players and 26,290 handball youth players. The data analysis was carried out in five steps. First, youth players were categorized to the primary municipality they resided in their first 12 years. Second, odds ratio analyses (OR) was performed for each municipality to find the odds for being selected to national youth and elite youth league level compared to the number of youth players. Third, we used Jenks method to categorize the municipalities into five groups based on their OR. Fourth, we linked the five groups with geo-coded data in a geographical information system (GIS) called QGIS. Finally, we specified the geographical location of the talent clubs.

Municipalities near a talent club had mainly higher OR of national youth players and elite youth league players in both sports. As such, proximity of an athlete's place of early development to a talent club may be an important predictor for the likelihood of being selected at youth level.

Côté, et al. *J Sports Sci*; 2006; 24 (10), 1065–1073.

Rossing et al. *Eur J Sport Sci*; 2016; 16(2), 237–245.

Biography:

Niels Nygaard Rossing is a teaching associate professor in sports science at Aalborg University. His research primarily focuses on the social psychological aspects of youth sport and talent development such as the place of early development, relative age effect and cultural studies. He is also an external sport psychology consultant to Team Denmark and has worked with several youth and elite athletes. Niels is also a former President of DIFO, the Danish Sport & Exercise Psychology Organization.