TALENT SELECTION CRITERIA IN BASKETBALL: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

CRITERIOS DE SELECCIÓN DE TALENTOS EN BALONCESTO: UNA REVISIÓN EXHAUSTIVA

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Abstract

This narrative review examines the main criteria used for talent selection in basketball, highlighting the multifactorial nature of talent identification and development. Physical attributes, including height, body mass, agility, speed, endurance capacity, and lower limb power, are commonly used as initial screening indicators of potential. However, physical characteristics alone are insufficient to predict future success. Technical competencies such as shooting, passing, dribbling, screening, and defensive skills represent fundamental components that differentiate players and contribute substantially to performance. In addition, cognitive factors, particularly tactical understanding and reaction time, play a crucial role in a sport that requires rapid decision-making under dynamic and unpredictable conditions. The review also emphasizes the importance of growth potential, encompassing physical maturation, skill acquisition, tactical development, and psychological progression. Current evidence suggests that successful talent selection requires an integrated assessment of physical, technical, cognitive, and developmental characteristics rather than reliance on isolated indicators. Despite considerable advances in talent identification research, there remains a need for more comprehensive, objective, and reliable evaluation frameworks. The findings of this review provide practical insights for coaches, scouts, researchers, and practitioners involved in the identification and development of basketball talent.

Keywords: Talent identification, basketball skills, tactical development, physical abilities, players.

Resumen

Esta revisión narrativa analiza los principales criterios utilizados para la selección de talentos en baloncesto, destacando la naturaleza multifactorial de los procesos de identificación y desarrollo del talento. Los atributos físicos, como la altura, la masa corporal, la agilidad, la velocidad, la capacidad de resistencia y la potencia del tren inferior, constituyen indicadores frecuentemente empleados en las fases iniciales de selección. Sin embargo, las características físicas por sí solas no permiten predecir el éxito deportivo. Las habilidades técnicas, entre ellas el tiro, el pase, el bote, los bloqueos y las acciones defensivas, representan componentes esenciales del rendimiento y contribuyen de manera significativa a diferenciar a los jugadores. Asimismo, los factores cognitivos, especialmente la comprensión táctica y el tiempo de reacción, desempeñan un papel determinante en un deporte que exige una toma de decisiones rápida y eficaz. La revisión también resalta la importancia del potencial de desarrollo, incluyendo la maduración física, la adquisición de habilidades, el crecimiento táctico y la evolución psicológica. La evidencia disponible sugiere que la selección eficaz del talento requiere una valoración integrada de factores físicos, técnicos, cognitivos y evolutivos. Estos hallazgos ofrecen orientaciones prácticas para entrenadores, investigadores, captadores de talento y otros profesionales vinculados al baloncesto.

Palabras clave: Detección de talento, habilidades baloncestísticas, desarrollo táctico, aptitudes físicas, jugadores.

Introduction

Talent identification and development are crucial factors for success in elite sports (Pérez-Toledano et al. 2019). The formalization and standardization of these processes are highlighted in research, confirming the influence of multiple factors on talent development (Bjørndal & Ronglan, 2019). The transition of athletes from the primary level to the elite level is significantly influenced by talent identification, as it helps maintain a high level of performance and improves the athlete's overall environment (Pérez-Toledano et al. 2019). The importance of this process cannot be overstated, as it forms the foundation for the development of future elite athletes.

In the context of basketball, talent identification and development are particularly challenging due to the sport's dynamic nature and the diverse skill set required for success. Basketball is a sport that requires a combination of physical attributes (such as height, speed, and agility), technical skills (such as shooting, passing, and dribbling), and cognitive abilities (such as decision-making and game understanding). Therefore, the identification of talented players is not a straightforward task and involves the consideration of a multitude of factors.

The formalization and standardization of these processes are highlighted in research, confirming the influence of multiple factors on talent development. These factors can include the player's age, physical maturity, technical skills, tactical understanding, psychological attributes, and even environmental factors such as the support provided by coaches and family.

The transition of athletes from the primary level to the elite level is significantly influenced by talent identification, as it helps maintain a high level of performance and improves the athlete's overall environment. This transition is a critical period in an athlete's career, and effective talent identification can ensure that promising athletes are provided with the necessary support and resources to reach their full potential. Furthermore, it is also important to consider the position-specific demands of basketball. For example, guards may require greater speed and agility, while centers and forwards may benefit more from height and strength (Drinkwater et al., 2008). Therefore, the importance of height may vary depending on the specific role a player is expected to fulfill on the team.

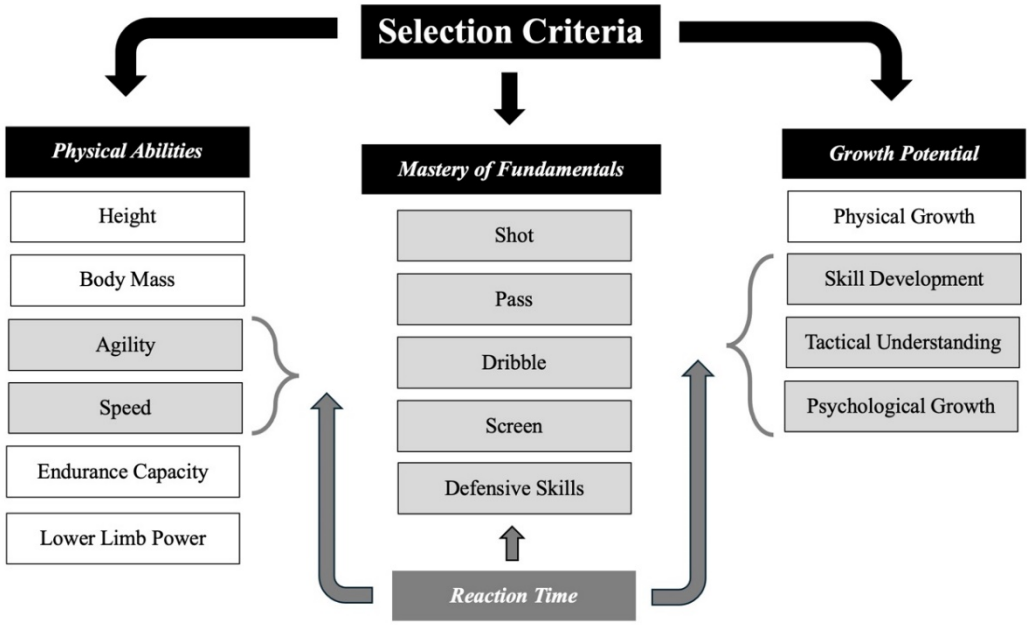
However, despite its importance, the process of talent identification and development in basketball is still a subject of ongoing research. There is a need for more comprehensive and objective criteria for the selection of talented players, considering the multifaceted nature of the sport. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of the current knowledge on this topic, focusing on the criteria used in the selection of young and professional basketball players. It is hoped that this review will contribute to the ongoing discussion on this topic and provide valuable insights for coaches, researchers, and other stakeholders involved in the sport of basketball.

Selection Criteria

Figure 1 represents a general comprehensive set of factors considered in selecting talents in basketball. In the subsequent sections, we will delve into each of these criteria to provide a more detailed understanding of their importance and application in talent detection.

Figure 1

General Criteria Used in the Selection of Young and Professional Basketball Players

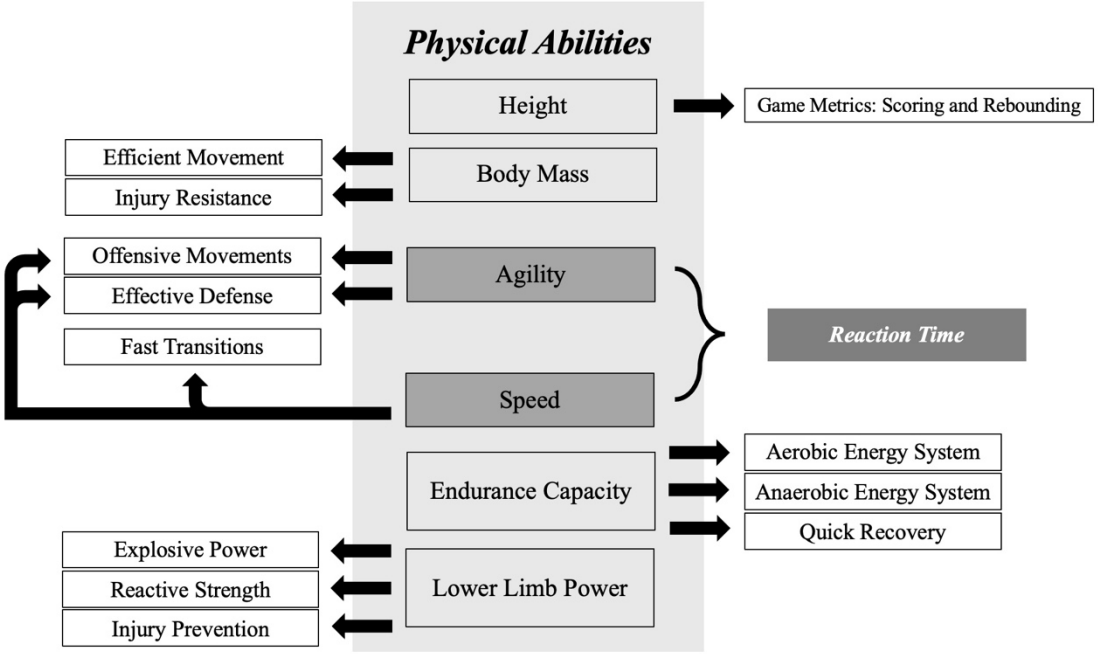


Physical Abilities

Physical abilities are a critical component in the selection of basketball players at both the youth and professional levels. These abilities often serve as initial screening tools for talent identification, as they can provide a clear indication of a player's potential for success in the sport. Factors such as height, body mass, agility, speed, endurance capacity, and lower limb power could affect the early development of basketball (Pérez-Toledano et al., 2019). For instance, the study found that height, body mass, Yo-Yo test, T-test, 20m sprint, and jump performance had statistical significance between elite and non-elite groups (Pérez-Toledano et al., 2019). This section will delve deeper into the various physical abilities that are considered during the selection process (figure 2).

Figure 2

Physical Abilities Criteria Used in the Selection of Young and Professional Baseball Players



Height

Height is a significant factor in basketball, given the advantage it provides in shooting, rebounding, and defending. Taller players can often shoot over their opponents, grab rebounds more effectively, and deter opponents' shots. In fact, body height has been significantly correlated with game performance, particularly in terms of scoring and rebounding metrics (Garcia-Gil et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, this component is crucial in the process of assigning specific playing positions is body height, in which taller players are selected as centers (close to the basket), and shorter players are selected as point guards (on the perimeter, further away from the basket) (Ostojic et al., 2006). However, height should not be the sole determinant in the selection process, as skills and other physical attributes are equally important.

Body Mass

Body mass, particularly lean body mass, is a significant factor in the sport of basketball. It plays a pivotal role in a player's performance on the court, influencing their efficiency, injury resistance, and overall fitness level (Sisic et al., 2016). Lean body mass, which comprises muscle, bone, and water, is particularly beneficial for basketball players. A higher proportion of lean body mass can often lead to more efficient movement on the court, as it contributes to strength, power, and speed. This can be advantageous in various aspects of the game, such as shooting, rebounding, and defensive positioning (Ziv & Lidor, 2009). Moreover, players with a higher lean body mass are often better equipped to resist injuries. The additional muscle mass can provide support to the joints, reducing the risk of injuries commonly associated with the high-impact nature of basketball (Jones et al., 2009).

However, it's important to differentiate between lean body mass and fat mass. While lean body mass can enhance a player's performance, excessive fat mass can be detrimental. Higher fat mass can reduce a player's speed and agility, impede their endurance, and limit their performance during the game (Drinkwater et al., 2007). In this sense, assessments such as skinfold measurements or dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) can provide valuable insights into a player's body composition and potential for success in basketball (Sutton et al., 2009). Therefore, maintaining an optimal body composition, with a focus on maximizing lean body mass and minimizing fat mass, is crucial for basketball players.

Agility

Agility, as defined by Sheppard & Young (2006), is a rapid whole-body movement with change in velocity or direction in response to a stimulus. This attribute is of paramount importance in the sport of basketball, regardless of the player's age or professional status. Agility allows players to effectively evade defenders, transition swiftly between offensive and defensive roles, and enhance their overall performance during a game.

In the context of basketball, agility is not just about speed; it also involves the ability to make quick decisions under pressure, demonstrating cognitive agility (Young et al., 2015). This cognitive component is particularly important in a fast-paced game like basketball, where players must constantly adapt to the changing dynamics of the game. Moreover, agility plays a significant role in both offensive and defensive situations. On offense, agility enables players to create space, evade defenders, and execute effective dribbling maneuvers (Gabbett et al., 2008). On defense, agility is crucial for quickly closing down opponents, blocking shots, and stealing the ball (Scanlan et al., 2014).

Drills that test a player's agility, such as the T-Test or Illinois Agility Test, can provide valuable insights into their potential for success in basketball (Sassi et al., 2009). These tests measure not only the physical component of agility but also the player's ability to make quick decisions under pressure. In addition to these traditional agility tests, sport-specific tests have been developed to assess agility in a context that closely mimics the demands of a basketball game. For instance, the Basketball-Specific Agility Test (B-SAT) incorporates basketball-specific movements and decision-making tasks, providing a more accurate assessment of a player's agility in a basketball context (Ben Abdelkrim et al., 2010).

The evolution of agility provides useful information about key qualities in basketball (Scanlan et al., 2014). Currently, two types of tasks are employed in the evaluation of agility: the assessment of agility in closed skills or tasks and agility in open skills or tasks. The assessment of agility in closed skills involves measuring the speed of change of direction along a previously planned course or route (Sheppard & Young, 2006). An example of this type of assessment is the Agility T-Test or the Lane Agility Drill Test. In contrast, agility in open skills involves measuring the speed of movement along an unplanned

course or route where the athlete must respond to an external stimulus (Sheppard & Young, 2006). An example of this type of assessment is the Y-Shaped Agility Test (Lockie et al., 2014).

Speed

Speed is another vital attribute in basketball. It allows players to outrun their opponents, whether they are rushing towards the basket for a layup or running back to defend their basket. For both offensive and defensive purposes, high-speed movements are essential given the short duration of decisive actions in the game (Barrera-Domínguez et al., 2024). In addition, research suggests that faster players are more likely to progress in their careers and reach professional levels (Kalén et al., 2021).

Speed plays a pivotal role in offensive actions. Quick players can outpace their defenders, whether driving to the basket for a layup or transitioning back to defend their own basket. Research has shown that sprint speed correlates with improved shooting accuracy near the hoop due to the fast players can escape defensive coverage and create scoring opportunities for themselves and their teammates (Barrera-Domínguez et al., 2024).

Modern basketball involves rapid transitions between offense and defense. Teams that can run the court with speed gain a significant advantage. A player's ability to change direction swiftly and accelerate during transitions can impact the game's outcome. Studies indicate that teams with more fast-break opportunities tend to score more points (Gál-Pottyondy et al., 2021).

On the defensive end, speed is crucial for closing gaps and preventing opponents from penetrating to the basket. Quick players recover faster after turnovers, allowing them to block shots or intercept passes. Lateral speed is equally essential for staying in front of agile opponents and impeding their drives.

Endurance Capacity

Basketball, as a high-intensity sport, necessitates that players maintain a high level of performance throughout the game, with the ability to withstand multiple high-intensity actions and better resistance to fatigue (Sanders et al., 2017). Therefore, a player's endurance capacity, defined as their ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort, is a critical factor in their selection. To be successful in basketball, coaches often pay less attention to the contribution of aerobic capacity to improve athletic performance, however, endurance is related to the successful performance of high intensity work over a longer period before the onset of fatigue (Meckel et al., 2009).

Furthermore, it is important to consider the specific demands of basketball when assessing endurance capacity. Basketball involves a combination of aerobic and anaerobic energy systems, with players required to perform repeated sprints, jumps, and changes of direction, interspersed with periods of lower-intensity activity (McInnes et al., 1995). Therefore, a comprehensive assessment of endurance capacity in basketball players should consider both aerobic and anaerobic fitness, as well as sport-specific skills and abilities.

This is often evaluated through tests such as the Yo-Yo test, a popular method for assessing endurance capacity, involves repeated bouts of high-intensity exercise interspersed with brief recovery periods (Bangsbo, 1994). It is designed to mimic the intermittent nature of many team sports, including basketball, and provides a reliable measure of a player's ability to recover quickly from high-intensity efforts and maintain performance over time (Krustrup et al., 2003). In addition to the Yo-Yo test, other measures of endurance capacity may also be relevant in the context of basketball. For example, maximal oxygen uptake (VO^2 max), a measure of aerobic fitness, has been shown to be associated with performance in high-intensity intermittent sports (Tomlin & Wenger, 2001). Moreover, measures of anaerobic capacity, such as the Wingate test, may also be relevant given the importance of high-intensity, short-duration efforts in basketball (Inbar et al., 1996).

Lower Limb Power

Lower limb power, as a critical attribute, holds significant importance in basketball. This is particularly true given the fundamental role of jumping in various aspects of the game, such as shooting, rebounding, and blocking shots. The ability to generate powerful and explosive movements using the lower limbs can often be the determining factor between success and failure on the basketball court (McInnes et al., 1995). Moreover, lower limb power is not only important for performance

but also for injury prevention. Strong lower limbs can help players withstand the physical demands of the game and reduce the risk of injuries (Jones et al., 2009).

Jumping variables are frequently used to indirectly assess muscle power characteristics. This is due to the variety of basketball-specific tasks that involve different forms of jumping, such as rebounding and contesting a shot. Furthermore, the high frequency of jumps executed throughout games underscores the importance of lower limb power in basketball (Stojanović et al., 2018).

In addition to the traditional vertical jump tests, other assessments like the countermovement jump (CMJ) and the squat jump (SJ) are also used to evaluate lower limb power (Markovic et al., 2004). These tests provide insights into the player's explosive power and reactive strength, which are crucial for performing high-intensity actions such as sprinting, changing direction, and jumping.

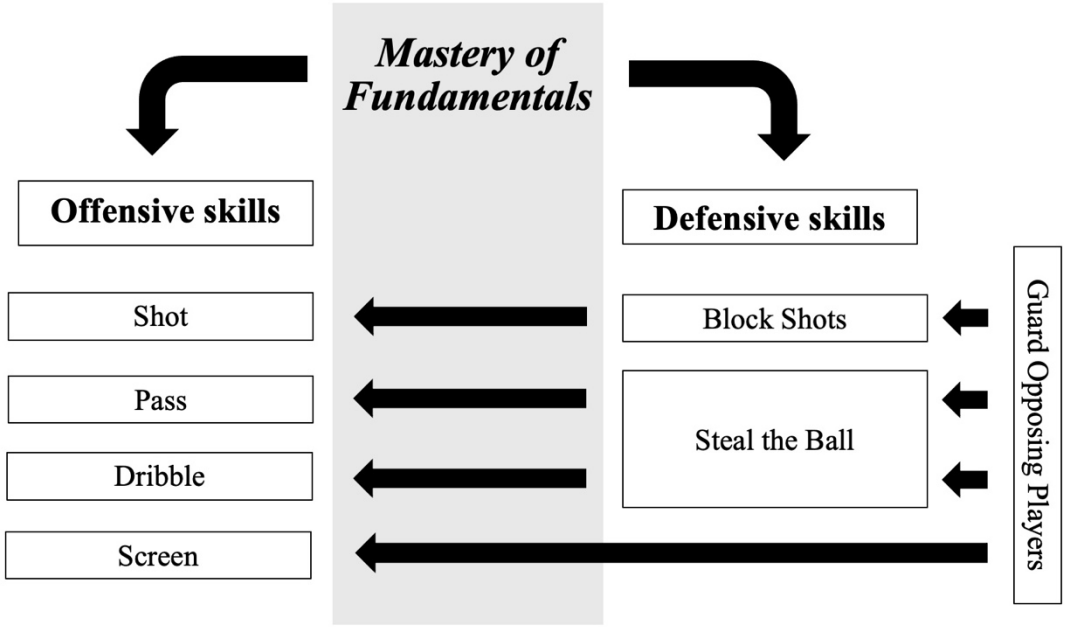
In the context of young and professional players, the assessment of lower limb power can aid in talent identification and development. It can provide valuable information about a player's current physical condition, potential for improvement, and suitability for the sport (Lloyd et al., 2015)

Mastery of Fundamentals

The mastery of fundamental skills such as shooting, passing, dribbling, and screening is another criterion for players selection (Han et al., 2023). Coaches often assess how well a player has mastered these offensive skills (Han et al., 2023) and another defensive (figure 3). All these skills form the foundation of a player's game and are often the distinguishing factor between players of similar physical attributes. This section will provide a detailed overview of the fundamental skills considered during the selection process.

Figure 3

Fundamentals Skills Criteria Used in the Selection of Young and Professional Basketball Players



Shooting

Shooting is often considered one of the most important skill in basketball. The ability of a player to score points consistently is a valuable contribution to any team. Excluding free throws, the basketball shot, also known as a field goal, is the primary scoring method and a delicate technical component in competitive basketball (Hay, 1993). Coaches frequently evaluate a player's shooting accuracy, their capacity to shoot under pressure, and their proficiency in various types of shots, including

layups, free throws, jump shots, and three-pointers. Consequently, it's crucial for basketball players to master the art of shooting with high proficiency, irrespective of their position on the court or the level of competition (Cabarkapa, 2022).

Players utilize a range of shooting techniques, influenced by factors such as distance, angle, and player type. To excel as a shooter in basketball, a player requires training in choosing and implementing the appropriate technique. Given the limited practice time, techniques that are commonly used in competition should be prioritized during practice. However, game statistics provide only a limited understanding and lack technical details of the shots. Empirical research has specifically analyzed and endorsed certain characteristics of basketball shots, such as successful teams attempting fewer three-pointers and having a higher shooting percentage on average (Ortega et al., 2006; Lorenzo et al., 2010), and guards taking more long-range shots than centers, particularly three-pointers (Sampaio et al., 2006).

Erčulj & Štrumbelj (2015) found no significant differences between elite U14 and U16 Slovenian players, but U16 players resemble Senior competition more in all observed variables than U14, which can be attributed to their advanced physical, tactical, and technical skills. The most notable differences are between Youth and Senior competitions, with most of them explainable by situational variables, especially the fact that the average Youth basketball shot is much closer to the basket. In the Youth games observed, more shots are taken while jumping or standing on one leg (as opposed to two legs), and there is more dribbling or cutting to the basket. Shots close to the basket have a higher success rate. Allowing more such shots suggests less effective 1-on-1 defense and closing down. While this might work in Youth basketball, it doesn't in Senior basketball, so the transition from Youth to Senior level should emphasize two-legged long-range shots above the head. Additionally, there are more uncategorized shot types (especially in U14), which can be attributed to these players still developing proper technique and tactics.

Passing

Passing is a determinant skill in basketball, as it allows teams to move the ball around the court and create scoring opportunities. It should also be noted that players interactions are an essential part of many competitive team sports (Böer et al., 2024). Coaches often look for players who can make accurate passes, understand when and where to pass, and can execute a variety of passes, such as chest passes, bounce passes, and overhead passes.

The ability to pass effectively is essential for enhancing the number of points scored in senior top basketball leagues (Courel-Ibáñez et al., 2016; García et al., 2013). These researchers have expressed a specific interest in the impact of passing skills in various situations such as pick and roll (Marmarinos et al., 2016), fast break (Cárdenas et al., 2015), and the inside pass (Courel-Ibáñez et al., 2016) to augment the count of assists and the potency of the offense. Furthermore, when confronted with heightened defensive pressure, the best players opted for passing over any other action (Csapo et al., 2015).

Dribbling

Dribbling is the primary method by which players move the ball around the court. Coaches often assess a player's ability to maintain control of the ball while moving at different speeds and in different directions. Additionally, the ability to execute complex dribbling moves, such as crossovers and behind-the-back dribbles, can be a significant advantage.

Certain players perform as much as 10% of the total game time to this skill (Scanlan et al., 2015a). It allows a team to retain control of the ball, especially in critical moments during the end of games (Scanlan et al., 2015b). Moreover, reaching high speeds while dribbling is a key element of basketball play. Data from matches show that many sprints are executed while players dribble the ball (Conte et al., 2015), and dribbling results in more successful fast breaks than passing does (Conte et al., 2017).

Screening

Screening, or setting picks, is a fundamental skill that often goes unnoticed but is vital to a team's offensive strategy. At present, one strategy to achieve this advantage is to create a defensive mismatch (Vélez & López, 2010). A good screen can create open shots and disrupt the opposing team's defensive setup. Coaches often look for players who can effectively set screens and understand the timing and positioning required to do so. Furthermore, the screen represents the most widespread cooperative action among the players of a high-level basketball team during offensive processes (Vaquera et al., 2016).

Back screens and hand-off screens demonstrate greater effectiveness compared to lateral screens. Moreover, screeners achieve higher effectiveness when they continue towards the basket after the action, and the actions of dribblers following the screen and the orientation of the screen could be the most crucial predictors of ball screen effectiveness (Gómez et al., 2015). In this context, professional male teams utilize ball screens in three out of every ten ball possessions, attaining high efficiency. For female teams, actions without the ball, ball circulation, and off-ball screens are the most advantageous and effective strategies for completion (Romarís et al., 2012). Given these factors, defensively, teams should focus on screens to prevent inside passes and compel the opponent to finish from a greater distance.

Defensive Skills

Moreover to offensive skills, defensive skills in basketball are a fundamental aspect of a player's game, contributing significantly to the team's overall performance (Smith, 2004). These skills encompass a wide range of abilities, including guarding opposing players, blocking shots, and stealing the ball (Johnson & Nelson, 2007).

Guarding opposing players is a complex task that requires a deep understanding of the opponent's tactics and the ability to anticipate their moves (Brown & Miller, 2008). It involves maintaining an optimal distance from the opponent, preventing them from getting into a favorable shooting position, and disrupting their rhythm (Smith, 2004).

Blocking shots, another critical defensive skill, requires excellent timing, agility, and a good understanding of the opponent's shooting technique (Johnson & Nelson, 2007). A successful shot block not only prevents the opponent from scoring but can also lead to a change in possession, providing an opportunity for a counterattack (Brown & Miller, 2008).

Stealing the ball, in addition to being a determining factor in the success of the teams (Izquierdo et al., 2021), is a high-risk, high-reward strategy that requires quick reflexes, anticipation, and a thorough understanding of the opponent's ball-handling skills (Smith, 2004). A successful steal can disrupt the opponent's offensive strategy and create opportunities for fast breaks (Johnson & Nelson, 2007).

Finally, coaches often assess a player's defensive skills based on their defensive stance, footwork, and understanding of team defensive strategies (Brown & Miller, 2008). The defensive stance, which involves bending the knees and keeping the body low, allows the player to move quickly in any direction (Smith, 2004). Quick footwork is essential for staying with the opponent and reacting to their moves (Johnson & Nelson, 2007).

Growth Potential

A player's growth potential is also considered during the selection process of young and professional basketball players (Han et al., 2023). It refers to the capacity of a player to improve and develop their skills, physical attributes, and understanding of the game over time.

Physical Growth

Physical growth, a term that encapsulates the alterations in an athlete's body size, shape, and composition over time, plays a pivotal role in the realm of sports, particularly in basketball (Guimarães et al., 2021). This growth can profoundly impact a player's performance, often serving as a game-changer in their athletic journey. For instance, a late growth spurt can dramatically metamorphose a player's game. This sudden increase in height and reach can equip them with the ability to compete more effectively against taller and weight adversaries, providing them with a newfound advantage on the court (Fragoso et al., 2021). This transformation can lead to significant improvements in various aspects of their game, such as rebounding, shot blocking, and scoring in the paint.

Coaches frequently consider a player's potential for physical growth during the selection process. This consideration is especially pertinent for young players who have not yet reached their full physical maturity (Torres-Unda et al., 2016). By assessing a player's growth potential, coaches can make informed decisions about their long-term prospects and how they might fit into the team's strategic plans. Moreover, understanding a player's physical growth trajectory can also aid in the development of personalized training programs. These programs can be tailored to leverage a player's unique growth patterns, thereby maximizing their athletic potential and match performance (Izquierdo & Redondo, 2021).

Skill Development

Skill development represents a sensitive facet of a player's growth potential and forms a key component of the talent selection criteria in basketball (Vaeyens et al., 2008). It pertains to the player's ability to enhance their technical skills, encompassing aspects such as shooting accuracy, passing precision, dribbling control, and defensive tactics.

The process of skill development is multifaceted and complex, requiring a combination of physical prowess, cognitive understanding, and dedicated practice (Goffena, 2020). It is not merely about mastering the basic techniques but also about understanding when and how to apply these skills effectively during a game. This strategic application of skills is what often differentiates good players from great ones. Coaches often assess a player's potential for skill development by observing various factors. These include their learning ability, which can be gauged by how quickly they pick up new techniques and strategies; their work ethic, which is reflected in their dedication to practice and continual improvement; and their passion for the game, which can often drive their motivation to succeed (Goffena, 2020). However, it's important to note that skill development is not a linear process. Players may experience periods of rapid improvement followed by plateaus, and progress can often be a result of consistent effort over time rather than sporadic bursts of practice (Knapp, 2024). Therefore, patience, persistence, and a positive mindset are crucial for long-term skill development.

Tactical Understanding

Basketball is a team sport, and a player's understanding of their role within the team and their ability to coordinate with their teammates is a crucial aspect of their tactical understanding, also known as game intelligence (Sarlis & Tjortjis, 2020). This concept refers to the player's ability to comprehend and apply game strategies, make intelligent decisions during play, and adapt to the dynamic nature of the game. Game intelligence is not merely about understanding the rules of the game, but it involves a deeper comprehension of the strategic elements of basketball. It encompasses the ability to read the game, anticipate the actions of opponents, make quick decisions under pressure, and execute strategies effectively (Izquierdo et al., 2024).

Coaches judge the player choices in different game situations, such as when to shoot, pass, or dribble, and how they position themselves on the court (Rangel et al., 2019) in order to adapt to different game situations, such as changing defensive strategies or adjusting to the tactics of the opposing team. In this line, there has been limited research into the interactions of players through Space Creation Dynamics during set offenses for defensive disruption (Lamas et al., 2011). This research has identified and classified seven offensive situations: dribbling to create space, creating space without dribbling, post isolation, perimeter isolation, creating space without the ball, on-ball screens, and off-ball screens. Among all of them, it was observed that on-ball screens (34.8%) were the most effective method for increasing scoring opportunities in national teams. Thus, the style of play varies according to the characteristics of the players and the specific contextual situation.

Psychological Growth

Psychological growth, a determinant aspect of a player's development, refers to the maturation of mental skills that are indispensable for high-level performance in basketball (Collins et al., 2011). This encompasses a range of psychological attributes, including self-confidence, motivation, resilience, and the capacity to handle pressure effectively.

Self-confidence, a belief in one's abilities, can significantly influence a player's performance. A confident player is more likely to take risks, make decisive moves, and recover quickly from setbacks (Collins et al., 2011). Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic (family and people environment), drives a player's commitment to training, their desire to improve, and their determination to succeed (Bonal et al., 2020). Resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, is particularly important in a competitive sport like basketball. Players will inevitably face challenges and disappointments, and their ability to remain resilient can determine their long-term success in the sport (Collins et al., 2011). The ability to handle pressure is another critical mental skill. Basketball games can be high-pressure situations, and a player's ability to stay calm and focused can significantly impact their performance (Izquierdo et al., 2024).

In addition, a great player's psychological growth potential includes their behavior during training and games, their reaction to both success and failure, and their overall attitude towards the game. Coaches may look for signs of a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, and a willingness to learn and improve. Moreover, coaches may also consider a

player's psychological preparedness for competition. This includes their ability to stay focused under pressure, their mental toughness in the face of adversity, and their capacity to maintain a positive mindset, even in challenging situations (Low et al., 2023).

Reaction Time

As indicated in the previous sections, reaction time is a crucial factor in basketball performance. This sport requires a fast-paced game that necessitates players to make split-second decisions (Šimonek et al., 2017). Whether it's technical skills such as stealing the ball, blocking a shot, or making a quick pass, a player's reaction time can significantly impact the outcome of the game. Moreover, players with faster reaction times can often anticipate their opponent's moves, giving them an advantage on the court (Lin, 2013). Additionally, the reaction time, as a second condition of a qualitative defense man-to-man, is defined as the time to initiate an athlete's body response after the presentation of a sensory stimulus (Sekulic et al., 2014).

Finally, although reaction time is partially determined by genetics, it can be honed and improved through targeted training. By employing specific stimuli that vary in multiple directions, this boosts the responsiveness of basketball players, leading to an enhancement in their agility performance. When it comes to cognitive mechanisms, it's estimated that about 80% of pertinent information for athletes is received visually. The visual sensory system swiftly conveys continuous signals and data, stimulating the nervous system and keeping the athlete alert and responsive (Dean et al., 2011). This enhances the visual reaction speed and agility performance of basketball players. For this, drills that require quick decision-making, such as small-sided games or reaction ball drills, can help improve a player's reaction time (Scanlan et al., 2014).

Conclusions

This comprehensive review of talent selection criteria in basketball underscores the multifaceted nature of the sport and the diverse skill set required for success. It is evident that talent identification and development in basketball are complex processes that involve the consideration of a multitude of factors.

Physical attributes such as height, body mass, agility, speed, endurance capacity, and lower limb power play a significant role in a player's performance. These attributes often serve as initial screening tools for talent identification, providing a clear indication of a player's potential for success in the sport. However, these physical attributes alone are not sufficient to guarantee success. Technical skills such as shooting, passing, dribbling, and screening, as well as defensive skills, are equally important. Mastery of these fundamental skills forms the foundation of a player's game and often distinguishes good players from great ones.

Moreover, the cognitive aspect of the game, including tactical understanding and reaction time, is crucial. Basketball requires a fast-paced game that necessitates players to make split-second decisions. Players with faster reaction times can often anticipate their opponent's moves, giving them an advantage on the court. Furthermore, a deep understanding of the game's tactics and the ability to apply game strategies effectively are vital for high-level performance.

In addition to the current physical, technical, and cognitive abilities, a player's growth potential is also considered during the selection process. This includes their potential for physical growth, skill development, tactical understanding, and psychological growth. Coaches often look for signs of a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, and a willingness to learn and improve.

However, despite its importance, the process of talent identification and development in basketball is still a subject of ongoing research. There is a need for more comprehensive and objective criteria for the selection of talented players, considering the multifaceted nature of the sport. Future research should aim to develop more reliable and valid measures for assessing the various aspects of talent in basketball. This would not only enhance the effectiveness of talent identification and development processes but also contribute to the overall advancement of sport.

Conflict of Interest

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