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Determining standard levels for some physical abilities to choose football players

A field study on the clubs of the state of Djelfa in the regional Division 2

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to evaluate the physical aspect by setting standard levels of physical abilities that help in selecting football Juniors in the second regional division of the Blida League, Djelfa Province. To complete this study, the descriptive method was used as it is the appropriate method for the nature of the study problem. The study population is represented in all aspects of football by the clubs of Djelfa Province, which play in the second regional division. A sample of 120 players was intentionally selected from the research community. A set of physical tests was applied, including the vertical jump test to measure the explosive strength of the legs: a 20-meter running test to measure maximum speed, and a 5-minute Brikci running test to measure endurance. The study concluded that the standard level falls within the good level of the strength and speed characteristics. In addition, It falls into the average level, close to good, for endurance.

Keywords: standard levels, physical abilities, selection, football.

1. Introduction and Problematic:

Physical and motor abilities are the backbone and foundation that cannot be discussed concerning their importance in physical education and sports. as he pointed out *(Marwan , 1999, p. 39)*. These abilities have become basic assumptions in physical education and sports. It also plays a critical role in achieving excellence in several sports activities. It is the basis upon which physical preparation, planning, and training are relied upon.

The concept of selection holds great significance in the world of sports. It is evident that individuals do not possess identical abilities and capacities; rather, there are inherent discrepancies in their physical, skill, mental, and psychological attributes. Identifying and understanding these distinctive individual characteristics is of paramount importance. These individual differences play a crucial role in directing individuals toward engaging in sports activities that align with their strengths. Such guidance can significantly contribute to attaining success and reaching desired levels of performance with optimal efficiency in terms of effort, time, and financial resources.

The process of selection in football is one of the prominent and crucial aspects in the world of sports. Football is considered one of the most popular sports globally, enjoying significant popularity in most regions of the world. Due to this widespread and growing popularity, many advanced nations have taken serious steps towards the scientific development and nurturing of youth football teams. These youth teams are considered the foundation for the growth and prosperity of this popular sport.

Studies that have been researched and analyzed the performance of football players in national and international tournaments have revealed the importance of multiple factors contributing to success in this game. It has been found that successful football players possess a unique talent, in addition to a high level of physical fitness and proficient technical skills. Furthermore, strong determination and high morale are key factors that play a crucial role in the success of players.

Based on these insights and conclusions, these factors have become of great importance when selecting young talents in the field of football. These understandings have led to numerous studies and research in recent years with the aim of better understanding these factors and developing improved methods for selecting promising players in this sport (Abu Youssef, 2005, p. 21).

Based on the researcher's field observation, the challenges in the field of performance monitoring in football matches show the need for objective and strict criteria to assess player performance on the field. Many coaches find it difficult to accurately and objectively assess player performance due to the lack of objective and systematic criteria for assessing player performance.

These challenges are also evident in the selection of promising players in the field of football, where some prefer to rely on personal experience in this work without the existence of criteria or scientific bases on which the selection process is based. This approach may distort the true picture of the level of performance of the players.

In addition, these random processes can lead to unfair discrimination and may lead to the exclusion of some players with outstanding potential from the teams. This poses a major challenge to the process of selecting promising players in football.

To overcome these difficulties, this research comes as an attempt to replace random methods with objective and scientific methods for selecting players in football. Objective means and tools were used in the testing, measurement, and performance evaluation processes, with the aim of achieving more accurate and objective criteria in this context. The junior category was tested as a study category, as it is the most important period in the player's completion and maturity for his selection to the main teams. The teams of the state of Djelfa, which are active in the second regional division, were chosen. From all of the above, we can raise the following question:

- What is the level of physical fitness for the junior football players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division?

This is the main question, from which the following sub-questions emerge:

- What is the level of speed for junior soccer players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division?
- What is the level of strength for junior soccer players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division?
- What is the level of endurance for junior soccer players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division?

2. Hypotheses:

2.1. Main hypothesis:

- The level of physical fitness is good for junior football players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division.

2.2. Sub-hypotheses:

1) The level of speed is good for junior football players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division.

2) The level of strength is good for junior football players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division.

3) The level of endurance is good for junior football players of the Djelfa clubs in the second regional division.

3. Importance of the study:

- To understand the main theoretical foundations of the tests used in the study from the perspective of physical qualities.

- To provide a guide and manual for those working in the sports field in general and in football in particular on the physical levels of football players. This can be used for diagnosis, prediction, selection, classification, guidance, and the development of training programs. This helps in the early detection of football talents and guides them towards sustainable professional development in the world of football. By understanding the normative levels of physical abilities of amateur teams from the second regional division, coaches can develop customized training programs that target the improvement of individual and collective performance of teams at different levels.

- This study contributes to the establishment of objective criteria for the selection of players in the field of basic physical abilities necessary for football, which are centered on the three most important qualities: strength, speed, and endurance, which are the basis of the game. This reduces the chances of bias and increases the equality of opportunities for participation in football.

- This study makes a valuable contribution to the field of research and development in sports science and physical education, as it provides a scientific basis for understanding and improving physical abilities. It also contributes to the development and improvement of this sport in general by guiding training, improving selection, promoting justice, and providing a valuable scientific contribution, especially for amateur players, where there are few studies of this type.

4. Definition of Concepts and Terms:

4.1. Standard Levels:

Literally: The standard criteria used to determine the relative status of raw scores resulting from the application of tests and measurements for the purpose of interpreting these scores and evaluating their results. (Redouan & Allaoui, 1993, p. 194)

Procedurally: Normative levels are the conversion of the raw scores of the sample to other scores based on the mean and standard deviation of the results obtained. For these results to have a meaning associated with the sample under study.

4.2. Physical Abilities:

Literally: The term "physical abilities" used by many people involved in physical education is a translation of multiple foreign terms, including physical or motor qualities, and motor abilities, and all of these terms mean one concept, which consists of the following qualities: strength, speed, flexibility, and agility. (Bastawisi & Abbas, 1997, p. 241)

Procedurally: A physical quality is a skill that an athlete possesses, which enables him to use his physiological systems and organs effectively and efficiently to perform his tasks successfully, in order to meet the requirements of physical activities with distinctive characteristics.

4.3. Football:

Literally: It is a game played between two teams, each team consisting of eleven players who use a round inflatable ball of a specific international size in a rectangular field with specific dimensions at each end of which is the goal post, and each team tries to hit the goalkeeper with the ball. To get a goal. (Al Suleiman, 1992, p. 09)

Procedurally: A popular team sport represented by a competition between two teams, each of which aims to score goals by entering the ball into the other team's goal. Maintaining a balance between physical fitness, technical skills and strategic tactics is a key element of this game. Football is played on a rectangular field with a goal at each end, and the ball is used as a means of interaction between players and achieving goals.

4.4. Selection:

Literally: Selection in the field of sports is "a process through which the best elements of players are selected in multiple time periods according to the different stages of sports preparation." (El-Hawawy, 2002, p. 37)

Operationally: The selection is a process that aims to select the best elements that have a specific set of attributes, whether these attributes are inherited such as morphological characteristics and features, or acquired through training and development such as physical, skill, and mental aspects.

5. Previous Studies:

PhD thesis at the University of Algiers3 by Yazid Amourane (2017): Presenting a battery of tests and identifying normative levels for evaluating physical qualities in under-17 handball players of the Middle League teams.

This study aimed to achieve three main objectives: to extract a battery of physical tests according to the degree of importance for evaluating physical qualities, then to know the actual normative level of physical qualities and the extent to which they are similar to the normal distribution, and finally to identify and deduce predictive equations for evaluating the physical qualities of handball players. To achieve the purposes of the study, the researcher used the descriptive-analytical approach. A sample of 237 players of the under-17 age group, males, who are active in the teams of the Algerian Regional Handball League of the Middle for the 2016-2017 sports season. The researcher applied a battery of field physical tests that included (10) tests. A battery of tests was extracted to include (5) tests representing (3) factors of physical qualities by the meaning of physical tests, namely: The first factor: The characteristic of translational speed and compatibility, The second factor: The characteristic of flexibility and explosive power, The third factor: The characteristic of endurance of force. The researcher reached to build and identify normative levels for the applied physical tests and found that six (6) physical qualities tests are classified as good, followed by four (4) remaining physical qualities tests that are classified as medium.

PhD thesis at the University of Mostaganem by Ben Nehme Ben Aouda (2018): Identifying normative levels for some physical and technical determinants for the selection of under-20 football players.

The study aimed to identify the normative levels of some physical and technical determinants as a basis for selecting under-20 football players. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used the descriptive method approach. The study population consisted of all under-20 football players who

play in the western region of Algeria, in the regions of Oran and Saida. and includes (14) teams that play in one division, from which the researcher chose 12 teams. The researcher randomly selected 198 players, and the explore study included 7 players from the Widad Mostaganem club, also included 110 coaches who have previously trained young players to understand the reality of the selection process and its compliance with the scientific approach. The researcher used a set of physical and technical tests in his study. Among the most important conclusions reached by the researcher is that the normative levels have classified players according to their actual results in the physical tests, and the variation between the levels makes it easy to select the best of them according to the required number. The researcher also found that there is considerable youth potential in the physical aspect, where the medium and good levels were identified. The level of the research sample was medium in the technical aspect, with the recording of some talents at a very good level. Therefore, the researcher recommended the need to evaluate players from all aspects according to tests and measurements, away from subjective judgments. He also called for the exploitation of the results of this research and others as a scientific model for selection, and to work to identify normative levels for all youth categories according to a larger research sample to be a reference for work.

6. Research methodology:

The descriptive survey approach is the appropriate methodology for this study, given the nature of the study, which requires the researcher to study the physical level of football players as it is in the various clubs where they operate, and to provide accurate descriptions and results that allow for the construction of grades and normative levels that can be relied upon in the future to evaluate the level of players and select them in an objective manner.

7. Study population:

The study population consisted of football players in the **under-19** age group, which is considered the junior category for clubs in the Algerian state of Djelfa, which compete in the second regional division of the Blida Football Association, and consists of **(7)** clubs, namely (Union of Charef, Achbal Djelfa, Amal Mesaad, Union of Ouled Nail, Mouloudia Hassi Bahbah, Taradji El Idrissia, Jil El Birine).

8. Research sample:

The research sample consisted of **120** players who were randomly selected from each team included in the study population. With the exclusion of goalkeepers and **10** players who underwent the explore study from the Achbal Djelfa club. The following table shows the distribution of the research sample.

Table 1: Distribution of the research sample by club

Club	Number of players	Percentage
Achbal Djelfa	11	9.16%
Union of Ouled Nail	20	16.66%
Union of Sharf	18	15%
Amal Mesaad	19	15.83%
Mouloudia Hassi Bahbah	18	15%
Jil El Birine	17	14.16%
Taradji El Idrissia	17	14.16%
Total	120	100%

9. Scope of the study:

9.1. Spatial scope: This study was conducted at the clubs' stadiums. All measurements and tests were conducted at the stadium assigned to each club to facilitate the gathering and arrival of the research sample to the study site.

9.2. Temporal scope: This study was conducted from January to April 2023. During this time, all theoretical information was collected from previous sources and studies, as well as information from the measurements and tests of the research sample in the field.

10. Data collection tools:

The data collection tools consisted of three basic physical tests, which aim to measure the three basic physical capabilities that are the focus of the study: strength, speed, and endurance. The test for strength was the Sargent vertical jump test to measure the explosive strength of the leg muscles, the test for

speed was represented by the 20-meter running test starting from a standing position to measure the maximum transitional speed of a football player, and the test for endurance was the test by Abderrahmane Brikci, which consists of running the maximum possible distance in a period of 5 minutes.

10.1. Brikci 5-minute test:

Purpose of the test: To measure the efficiency of the circulatory and respiratory systems and the maximum oxygen consumption.

Description of the test: Testers are taught the necessity of covering the greatest possible distance during the test period. The period is run without stopping, walking is not permitted, while using the maximum speed for five minutes. The tester can take standby mode from a high start, and if one of the testers stops, he or she is immediately eliminated. He is given sufficient rest to repeat the test.

Recording: The distance run by the subject is recorded during the five minutes of running. (Brikci A, 1990, p. 86)

10.2. 20-meter running test:

Purpose of the test: To measure the transitional speed.

Test equipment: A stopwatch, two parallel lines drawn on the ground with a distance of 20 m between them.

Performance specifications: The subject stands behind the first line in the high start position. Upon hearing the start signal, they start running until they cross the second line.

Recording: Recording the subject's time to complete the 20-meter distance

10.3. Sargent vertical jump test:

Purpose of the test: To measure the explosive strength of the lower limbs (legs).

Equipment: A metric tape, a wall (chalk, pencil, pen)

Procedure: Standing next to the wall and at a distance of 15 cm, looking forward, the player puts a little chalk on his fingers or a pencil according to the means available, raises his hand next to the wall to the maximum while keeping his feet on the ground, then places a mark as an initial estimate. The player bends his arms and knees and then jumps up to try to record the highest point as a second estimate. The distance is measured by taking the difference

between the initial estimate and the second estimate. Each player has three attempts and the best attempt is counted.

Recording method: Measure the difference between the initial and second estimates in centimeters.

11. Results and Discussion:

11.1. Descriptive statistics of the study sample:

Table (2): Shows the descriptive statistics of the test results using measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion.

Test	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness
Briksi endurance	1246.82	53.12	0.068
vertical jump	36.34	2.63	0.081-
20-meter speed	3.48	0.23	0.289

The results of the descriptive statistics for the study sample show that the mean of the **Briksi** endurance test was **1246.82** with a standard deviation of **53.12**. The mean of the **Sargent** vertical jump test was estimated at **36.34** with a standard deviation of **2.63**. The mean of the **20-meter** speed test was estimated at **3.48** with a standard deviation of **0.23**.

It is also noted from the results presented in the table that all values of the skewness coefficient, which fluctuated between **(-0.081)** as the lowest value and **(0.289)** as the highest value, are within the range (3, -3). This confirms that all values of the study sample in all tests applied follow the normal distribution, which gives us an indication of the suitability of the tests used for the study sample, and allows us to use parametric statistics when processing the test results statistically.

The results of this descriptive analysis suggest that the study sample is normally distributed, which is a good starting point for further statistical analysis. The next step is to conduct inferential statistics to determine whether there are any significant differences between the two groups.

11.2. Presentation and discussion of the results for the first hypothesis:

Table (3): Distribution of the study sample on the standardized levels of the Sargent vertical jump test.

Level	Standardized scores	Raw scores	Frequency	Percentage	normal distribution
Poor	Less than 30	Less than 31.06	2	1.7	2.14
Acceptable	30-40	31.06-33.70	23	19.2	13.59
Average	40-50	33.70-36.34	25	20.8	34.13
Good	50-60	36.34-38.98	53	44.2	34.13
Very good	60-70	38.98-41.62	15	12.5	13.59
Excellent	Greater than 70	Greater than 41.62	2	1.7	2.14
	Total		120	100	99.73

Table (3): shows that the number of players in the "poor" level of the study sample in the **Sargent** vertical jump test was **(2)** players, representing a percentage of **(1.70%)**, which is less than the expected percentage in the normal distribution, which is **(2.14%)**. As for the "acceptable" level, it can be seen that the number of players in this level was **(23)** players, representing a percentage of **(19.20%)**, which is greater than the expected percentage in the normal distribution, which is **(13.59%)**. There were **(25)** players in the "average" level with a percentage of **(%20.8)**, and this percentage is less than the percentage set in the normal distribution, which was estimated at **(34.13)**. There was a large concentration of players in the "good" level with a number of **(53)** players and a percentage of **(44.20%)**, which is greater than the expected percentage in the normal distribution, which is estimated at **(34.13%)**. As for the "very good" level, the number of players in this level was **(15)** players with a percentage of **(12.5%)**, which is considered less than the percentage set in the normal distribution, which is estimated at **(13.59%)**. In the last level, "excellent", there were only **(2)** players with a percentage of **(1.7%)**, which is considered less than the percentage set in the normal distribution, which is estimated at **(2.14%)**.

The results of this analysis show that the study sample is normally distributed, with a majority of the players scoring between 50 and 60, which is considered a good level. This suggests that the players in the study have good vertical jump ability, which is an important component of athletic performance.

Based on the results of the previous tests on explosive strength, these results can be considered good. It is possible to predict high levels for the study sample if this quality is given attention, developed, and standardized within the training units. This is because explosive strength is an important quality in general and in football in particular. It helps with jumping, heading the ball, excelling in aerial balls defensively and offensively, shooting, and long passing. The importance of explosive strength is also evident in many aspects of athletic activity that have a changing nature in terms of motor performance. (Abu Youssef, 2005, p. 37)

The level of strength is good in the study sample because the study sample is committed to daily programmed training to develop different physical qualities, including strength. Muscle strength is an effective element in achieving good levels for football players. Kamal Abdel Hamid and Hassanein (1997) confirm that "muscle strength is one of the components of physical fitness, on which the performance of most sports activities depends, and its availability ensures the individual's arrival at the highest ranks of the championship." (Kamal & Hassanein, 1997, p. 66)

A football player needs a good level of strength, especially in the lower limbs, which are the basic axis of efficiency in the game. Cazorla (2006) also believes that "lower limb muscle strength is one of the differentiating factors in achieving a high level in football." (Cazorla, 2006)

The researcher believes that this quality is important for a football player, so the coach should pay attention to it and work on developing it. One of the main reasons for weak muscle strength is the lack of use of weight training, medicine balls, resistance from a teammate, running on sand, and climbing hills. Matveev (1996) has proven that the development of muscle strength and the ability to reach a high level is through regular annual training. On the other hand, irregularity and an increase in training will result in a significant decrease in the level of development of the training status.

11.3. Presentation and discussion of the results of the second hypothesis:

Table (4): Distribution of the study sample on the standardized levels of the 20-meter running test.

Level	Standardized scores	Raw scores	Frequency	Percentage	Standardized percentage
Excellent	< 30	< 3.01	0	0	2.14
Very good	30-40	3.01-3.24	20	16.7	13.59
Good	40-50	3.24-3.48	43	35.8	34.13
Average	50-60	3.48-3.72	34	28.3	34.13
Acceptable	60-70	3.72-3.96	18	15.0	13.59
Weak	> 70	> 3.96	5	4.2	2.14
	Total		120	100	99.73

Table (4): shows that there were no players in the " excellent " level of the research sample in the **20-meter** running speed test. As for the " very good " level, it can be noted that the number of players in this level reached **(20)** players, representing a percentage of **(16.7%)**, which is greater than the expected percentage in the normal distribution, which is **(13.59%)**. The largest number of players was in the "good " level, with **(43)** players, at a percentage of **(35.8%)**, which is the highest percentage specified in the normal distribution, which was estimated at **(34.13)**. There was a good concentration of players in the "average" level, with several **(34)** players and a percentage of **(28.3%)**, this percentage is less than the expected percentage in the normal distribution, which is estimated at **(34.13%)**. As for the " acceptable" level, the number of players in this level reached **(18)** players, at a percentage of **(15.0%)**, which is considered to be higher than the percentage specified in the normal distribution, which is estimated at **(13.59%)**. In the last level, "weak", there were only **(5)** players, at a percentage of **(%4.20)**, which is considered to be higher than the percentage specified in the normal distribution, which is estimated at **(2.14%)**.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the speed level of the 20-meter high-start running test for Junior footballers is good, close to average, according to the standard levels.

These results indicate that there are young talents in regional football who need the necessary care and training, as this trait is often significantly genetic, and its development rate is low. (wilmore, costill, & kenney, 2011) The difference in study results can be explained primarily by individual differences in terms of physiology. (Naif , 2012)

Speed is an important trait for skilled performance and success in football. Saleh Abu Khit believes that speed "is an important determinant of football results, as physical, technical, and tactical performance now depends on speed in most of its parts." (Abu Khayt, 2007, p. 263). Speed is one of the most important requirements of modern football. (Turpin, 2002, p. 202)

It should be noted that this trait is decisive in matches, as the outcome of many matches is changed by fast attacks. (Shaghati, 2014). Therefore, the best young sportsmen who possess this trait in full should be selected.

11.4. Presentation and discussion of the results of the third hypothesis:

Table (5): Distribution of the study sample on the standardized levels of the Brikci endurance test.

Level	Standardized scores	Raw scores	Frequency	Percentage	Standardized percentage
Weak	< 30	< 1140.58	1	0.8	2.14
Acceptable	30-40	1140.58-1193.7	16	13.3	13.59
Average	40-50	1193.7-1246.83	45	37.5	34.13
Good	50-60	1246.83-1299.95	36	30.0	34.13
Very good	60-70	1299.95-1353.07	21	17.5	13.59
Excellent	> 70	> 1353.07	1	0.8	2.14
	Total		120	100	99.73

Table (5) : shows that the number of players in the "weak" level of the research sample in the **Brikci** endurance test was **(01)** player, representing a percentage of **(0.8%)**, which is less than the expected percentage in the normal

distribution of **(2.14%)**. As for the "acceptable" level, it can be observed that the number of players in this level was **(16)** players, representing a percentage of **(13.3%)**, which is also less than the expected percentage in the normal distribution of **(13.59%)**. The largest number of players was in the "average" level with **(45)** players, representing a percentage of **(37.5%)**, which is the largest percentage in the normal distribution of **(34.13)**. There was a good concentration of players in the "good" level with **(36)** players and a percentage of **(30.0%)**, which is less than the expected percentage in the normal distribution of **(34.13%)**. As for the "very good" level, the number of players in this level was **(21)** players with a percentage of **(17.5%)**, which is considered greater than the percentage in the normal distribution of **(13.59%)**. In the last level, "excellent", there was only **(01)** player with a percentage of (0.8%), which is also less than the percentage in the normal distribution of **(2.14%)**.

From the above, it can be deduced that the endurance level in the 5-minute Beep Test for youth football, in light of standard levels, falls somewhere between average and good.

Based on the research sample results in the 5-minute Brikci Test, the performance level of players in this attribute was not classified in the "very good" category. Assessing performance in this attribute is highly significant and a top priority because completing 90 or 120 minutes of play in intense competition is not an easy feat and demands significant effort and endurance. Many matches are decided in the final moments or even in injury time (Ali , 1992).

12. Outcomes:

- The level of strength in U19(Junior) football players in the second regional division is within the good level according to the standard levels.
- The level of speed in U19(Junior) football players in the second regional division is at a good level according to the standard levels.
- The level of endurance in U19(Junior) football players in the second regional division is at a medium level close to good according to the standard levels.
- There are individual differences between U19 football players, with the presence of young talents with the physical qualifications to succeed in the game.

- The research sample is distributed normally in the results of the physical tests (vertical jump, 20-meter sprint, 5-minute Brikci).

13. Suggestions and recommendations:

The researcher suggests, based on the results of this study, the following recommendations:

- The need to work and rely on the standard levels reached through this study for the results of the basic physical abilities of football players as a model and reference for selecting and selecting players from this category.
- Conducting similar studies to this study on this category of clubs in the second regional division, while trying to cover all physical qualities and all aspects required for success in physiological, technical, psychological, and tactical performance.
- Increasing the focus on improving the physical fitness of these clubs at this football level, with the need for coaches to be interested in using advanced training methods and evaluating the level of progress.

14. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this scientific study clearly shows that establishing standard physical fitness criteria in regional division 2 football is a fundamental step towards developing this sport at the local level. By assessing the level of physical fitness of players. clubs and coaches can more effectively direct their efforts towards developing players' skills and raising the level of physical and technical performance. This in turn can contribute to improving the quality of the game and providing better opportunities for aspiring youth to achieve greater success at the sporting level. In addition, this effort contributes to facilitating the process of selecting and choosing football players who have the qualifications for success early on and working to improve and develop training programs according to individual differences. There must be continuous cooperation between clubs, sports federations, coaches, medical experts, and researchers to achieve these goals. Establishing standard physical fitness criteria is an important investment in the future of football and its athletes, and it must be done with dedication and constant attention.

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