



Presence of relative age effect in junior sailing

What is the purpose of this research?

Within many teams sports it has been shown that there is a relative age effect (RAE) (Low et al., 2015). RAE is where individuals with birthdays earlier in the selection period have an increased likelihood of being in representative teams (Cumming et al., 2018). This is because early maturers tend to have increased growth, thus tend to have greater size, strength, and speed (Cumming et al., 2018). Furthermore, the differing RAE for young people has been shown to impact continued participation in sport, the likelihood of being selected for representative teams, and overall talent development progression (Eisenmann et al., 2020).

Yachting New Zealand are investigating whether these effects may be present within junior sailing but with the reverse effect, meaning that larger junior sailors (early maturers) are leaving the sport as they are not achieving desired results. Results in dinghy sailing is often influenced by the size of the individual.

What are the benefits?

This pilot study has the potential to set in motion a fundamental change in the way junior class programmes are designed and delivered. This could help ensure more positive early experiences, improving retention.

References:

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