

# Physical Activity in Youth Flag and Tackle Football

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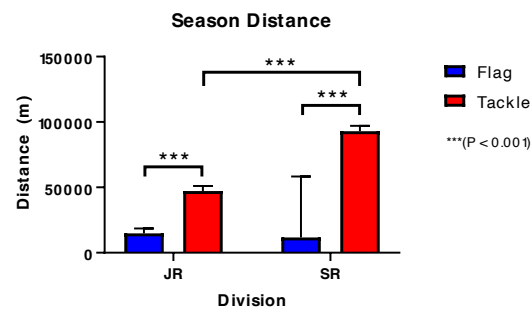
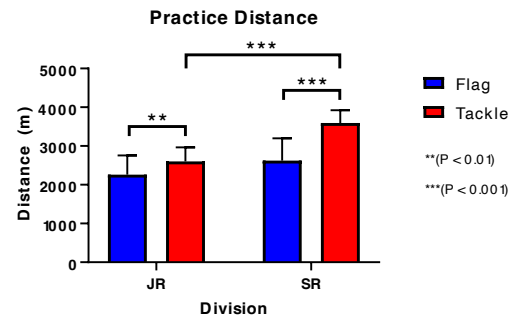
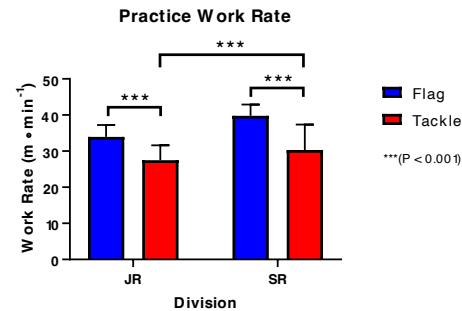
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## BACKGROUND

Flag football is increasingly being promoted as an alternative to tackle football for youth, largely due to increasing concerns about brain injuries. In addition to being perceived as being safer, flag football is believed to offer more health benefits by requiring players to be more physically active. Evidence to support these assumptions is lacking.

## PURPOSE

To quantify and compare the physical activity of youth flag and tackle football players during practice over one season.

## METHODS

- One hundred nine youth football players (39 flag; 70 tackle) from a community-based youth football organization participated in this study over two years.
- Players participated in either a 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade division (37 flag; 36 tackle; JR) or a 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade division (15 flag; 34 tackle; SR)
- All players wore GPS devices (SPT2; SPT USA Inc, New York, NY) during every practice of one season to monitor their physical activity.
- Primary outcome measures were work rate and distance travelled.
- GPS measures over two seasons were combined and analyzed.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Youth tackle football players had significantly more practices per season than youth flag football players
  - JR (18.2 ± 2.2 vs. 6.8 ± 3.9 practices / season; P < 0.001)
  - SR (22.9 ± 9.4 vs. 4.5 ± 4.5 practices / season; P < 0.001)
- Youth tackle football practices were significantly longer than youth flag football practices
  - JR (95.6 ± 9.8 vs. 66.7 ± 4.5 min / practice; P < 0.001)
  - SR (119.9 ± 12.1 vs. 66.5 ± 4.8 min / practice; P < 0.001)

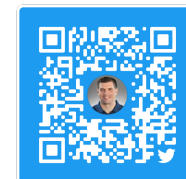
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**Youth flag football players had higher work rates but covered far less distance in practice (per session and overall) than tackle players. Physical activity in youth football players is determined by practice type, frequency, duration and age.**

QUESTIONS?



LET'S CONNECT



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