ISAKOS

International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine

9th Biennial ISAKOS Congress • May 12-16, 2013 • Toronto, Canada

Paper #211

Incidence and Prognosticators for Injuries in Belgian Soccer Players: Evolution Over the Past Decade

Peter Bollars, MD, BELGIUM
Luc Van Lommel, MD, BELGIUM
Steven Claes, MD, BELGIUM
Kristoff Corten, MD, BELGIUM
Johan Bellemans, MD, PhD, BELGIUM

KU Leuven
Leuen, BELGIUM

Summary:
Incidence and prognosticators for injuries in Belgian soccer players: evolution over the past decade

Abstract:
Introduction:
Although characterized by a relatively high injury rate, soccer is the world's most popular sport. In Belgium, the national Royal Belgium Football Association (RBFA) involves about 420000 licensed players, whose injury reports are collected in a nation-wide registry. Over a period of 10 years, the RBFA has introduced the FIFA preventive programs and has initiated a stringent postponent policy of competition in case of non-optimal weather conditions.
We questioned whether these preventive programs effectively decreased the incidence of soccer related injuries.

Methods:
We compared the incidence, location, timing and severity of all registered soccer injuries in Belgium during the season 1999-2000 and 2009-2010.

Results:
A total of 56,364 injuries were reported with an average of 6.8 injuries per 100 players per season. There was a 23% reduction in injury rate in the second season, predominantly caused by a significant reduction in injuries during the winter period. In both seasons an injury peak was noted during the first 3 months of the season. Recreational players had a higher risk for injury than national level players (7.2 versus 4.4 injuries per 100 players per season). The proportions of severe injuries were higher for females and male youth players.

Conclusion:
The introduction of injury preventive programs has lead to a significant reduction of soccer related injuries, especially during the winter period. However, there is still room for improvement and preventive programs can become more effective when specific parameters are targeted such as adequate conditioning of players in the pre-season.