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TITLE

Try Scoring in the RFU Championship

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ABSTRACT

Previous Rugby Union studies have identified a strong correlation between the number of tries scored and winning matches (Laird & Lorimer 2004; Lim et al. 2011). However, to date, the concept of try scoring has not been examined in the RFU Championship, where the majority of premiership academy players gain vital match experience. Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify the characteristics that lead to the scoring of a try. Twenty-eight competitive matches from the 2010/2011 RFU Championship were analysed using the SportsCode elite system (Sportstec). All tries were analysed utilising the following performance indicators; the possession starter and location, number of phases and placement location, all of which were recorded for one team when playing at home and away (Intra operator reliability – % error score 1.69%±0.01%). Due to the non-parametric nature of the data, a Mann Whitney U tests was utilised and identified no significant ($p < 0.05$) differences between all performance indicators. However, a number of key findings were identified; during the 28 matches, a total of 116 tries were scored averaging 4.1 tries per game. Of the 116 tries, 40.52% were scored from the within the opponents 22nd and the ball was grounded 64 times in the 15 meter channels. The team scored 66% of tries from set-pieces and 61% of tries were scored within three phases. This study has reported the characteristics which affect build up and placement of tries, and identified that the analysed team had a greater chance of scoring a try when possession was gained from a set-piece on the right-hand side within the opponents 22. In addition this study has also provided an insight into the strategies utilised by a RFU Championship team during the build up to scoring tries.

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