

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SPEED AND AGILITY BETWEEN
OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE INTER COLLEGIATE MEN RUGBY
PLAYERS**

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to compare the speed and agility between Offensive and defensive Inter Collegiate Rugby Men Players. To achieve this purpose of the study, sixty men Rugby players representing Colleges affiliated to University of Madras were selected as subjects at random. Among them, thirty offensive Rugby Players and thirty Rugby defensive players were selected. The following psychological variables, the following variables namely speed and agility were selected as criterion variables. All the subjects of two groups were tested on selected dependent variables by using standard tests. The independent 't' ratio was used to analyze the significant difference, if any between groups. The .05 level of confidence was fixed as the level of significance to test the 't' ratio obtained, which was considered as an appropriate. The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between university men Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on speed and agility.

Key Words: Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Rugby Men Players, Speed, Agility, Independent "t" Ratio

Introduction:

Rugby is a physically demanding, high-intensity sport that combines strategy, teamwork, and athletic prowess. Among the most critical attributes for success on the rugby field are speed and agility. These qualities are essential for both offensive and defensive players, as they significantly influence individual performance, team dynamics, and the overall outcome of a match.

Speed is a cornerstone of rugby performance, enabling players to cover ground quickly, evade opponents, and exploit opportunities. For offensive players, speed is vital for making line breaks, outrunning defenders, and creating scoring opportunities. Whether it's a winger racing down the sideline or a center bursting through a gap, the ability to move at high velocity can disrupt defensive formations and capitalize on fleeting chances. For defensive players, speed is equally critical. It allows them to close down attacking players, recover from broken defensive lines, and maintain pressure on the opposition. A fast-defensive line can neutralize attacking threats, forcing errors or preventing the opposition from gaining ground. Furthermore, speed in transitions - from attack to defense and vice versa - can catch opponents off guard and give teams a tactical advantage.

Agility complements speed by enabling quick changes in direction, rapid acceleration, and the ability to maintain balance under pressure. Rugby is a dynamic game where players constantly adjust their movements to respond to the fluid nature of play. Agility allows offensive players to dodge tackles, sidestep defenders, and maintain control of the ball in tight spaces. It transforms raw speed into effective maneuverability, enabling players to navigate through defensive lines with precision and creativity. Defensively, agility is essential for tracking opponents, adjusting to their movements, and executing effective tackles. A defender with superior agility can react swiftly to sidesteps, maintain proper positioning, and disrupt an attacker's rhythm. In breakdown situations, agility helps players move efficiently around the ruck, secure turnovers, or realign with the defensive line.

The combination of speed and agility is what separates good players from great ones in rugby. While speed allows players to reach their targets quickly, agility ensures they can adapt to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the game. Together, they provide players with the ability to react to evolving situations, execute complex plays, and maintain peak performance under pressure. Speed and agility allow players to execute plays at a pace that can overwhelm the opposition. This keeps defenders on their heels and forces attackers to make hurried decisions, often leading to mistakes. Rugby relies heavily on teamwork, and players with speed and agility can adapt to the team's tactical needs more effectively. For instance, an agile player can quickly fill defensive gaps, while a fast player can support counterattacks.

Teams with players who excel in speed and agility can employ a wider variety of tactics, from quick counterattacks to aggressive defensive pressure, making them unpredictable and challenging to play against. Developing speed and agility requires a combination of strength training, plyometrics, sprint drills, and sport-specific exercises. Rugby players often engage in drills that mimic game scenarios, such

as shuttle runs, cone drills, and reaction-based exercises. These training methods not only enhance physical attributes but also improve decision-making and spatial awareness, key components of successful rugby performance.

In rugby, speed and agility are more than just physical attributes; they are critical tools that influence every aspect of the game. For offensive players, they unlock scoring opportunities and create excitement on the field. For defensive players, they ensure resilience and control in high-pressure situations. The dynamic interplay of speed and agility allows players to excel individually while contributing to their team's success. As the game continues to evolve, the emphasis on these qualities underscores their enduring importance in shaping the future of rugby.

Methodology:

The purpose of the study was to compare the speed and agility between Offensive and defensive Inter Collegiate Rugby Men Players. To achieve this purpose of the study, sixty men Rugby players representing Colleges affiliated to University of Madras were selected as subjects at random. Among them, thirty offensive Rugby Players and thirty Rugby defensive players were selected. The following psychological variables, the following variables namely speed and agility were selected as criterion variables. All the subjects of two groups were tested on selected dependent variables by using standard tests. The independent 't' ratio was used to analyze the significant difference, if any between groups. The .05 level of confidence was fixed as the level of significance to test the 't' ratio obtained, which was considered as an appropriate.

Analysis of the Data:

Speed:

The mean, standard deviation and 't' ratio values on speed of Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players have been analyzed and presented in Table I.

Table 1: The Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' Ratio Values Between Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on Speed

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation	't' Ratio Value
Offensive Players	7.92	0.76	0.93
Defensive Players	8.11	0.82	

* Significant at .05 level of confidence.

(The table values required for significance at .05 level of confidence with df 58 was 1.672).

The table 1 shows that the mean values on speed for Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players were 7.92 and 8.11 respectively. The obtained 't' ratio value on speed 0.93 which was lesser than the table value required for significance with df 58 was 1.672.

The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between university men Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on speed.

Agility:

The mean, standard deviation and 't' ratio values on agility of Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players have been analyzed and presented in table 2.

Table 2: The Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' Ratio Values Between Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on Agility

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation	't' Ratio Value
Offensive Players	8.54	0.88	0.39
Defensive Players	8.63	0.91	

* Significant at .05 level of confidence.

(The table values required for significance at .05 level of confidence with df 58 was 1.672).

The table 2 shows that the mean values on agility for Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players were 8.54 and 8.63 respectively. The obtained 't' ratio value on agility 0.39 which was lesser than the table value required for significance with df 58 was 1.672.

The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between university men Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on agility.

Conclusions:

- There was no significant difference between Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on speed.
- There was no significant difference between Offensive and Defensive Inter Collegiate Men Rugby Players on agility.

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