



Long term athletic development of youth female players: Are we preparing players for the demands of the game?

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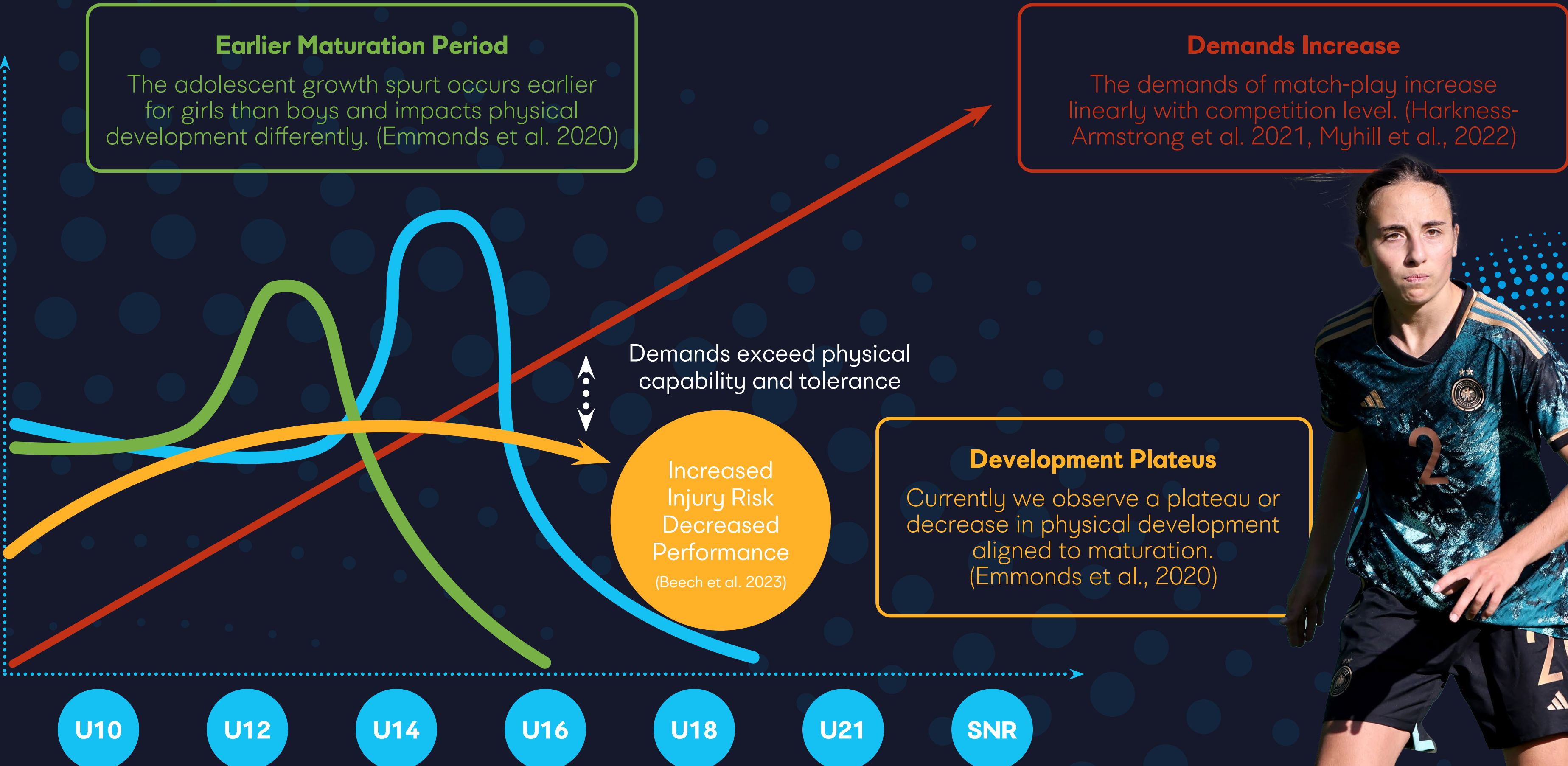
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Long-term athletic development (LTAD) is crucial for youth female footballers as it ensures a structured, progressive approach to their physical and mental development to, supporting optimal performance and injury prevention.

It is important to understand the impact of growth and maturation on the athletic development of youth female players and how this may differ to boys.



Incorporating strength and conditioning at a young age helps youth female players athletes build a **solid foundation of athletic development** which will help them prepare for the increasing demands of the game as they progress from youth to senior football.

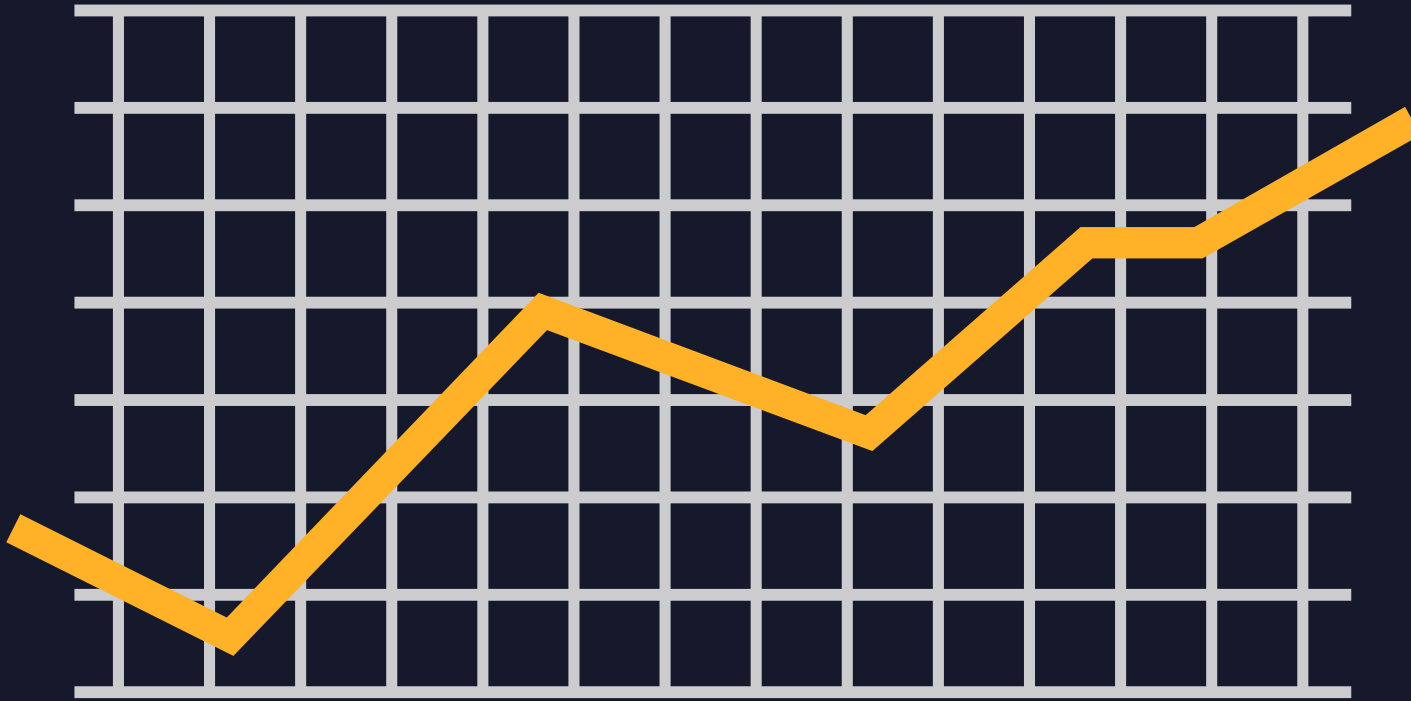


Maturation has been shown to **impact girls different to boys**, with an observed **plateau or decrease in relative strength and aerobic fitness**. This has been associated with an increased injury risk in youth female players (16-19 years), which is likely a consequence of the performance gap between an increase in match and training load and players physical capabilities.



Take home messages

1 **Maturation may impact the athletic development of youth female players**



It is **important to monitor** maturity status of youth players as part of regularly monitoring practices.

2 There is a need for a **greater focus** on the **athletic development** of youth female footballers from a younger age.



3 It is **important** to implement **age-appropriate strength and conditioning**. Strength and conditioning programs **should be tailored** to a players developmental stage.



References

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