Theme 6

Considering age or maturity levels to support fair competition and foster social connections

Average Team Age (Relative Age Effect)

Recent trials at Stoke City Football Club have considered using mixed age competitions to overcome the issue of relative age effect and thus remove any bias of age. They mixed players to ensure that the average age of each team was the same. Teams needed to include young people born throughout the year rather than just at the start of the academic year (e.g. September to December).

How could this be used in the School Games?

Average Team Age (Relative Age Effect) is suitable for young people under the age of 10 as research shows this is when it has its greatest impact. Simple solutions such as ensuring teams have a mixture of young people born throughout the year rather than just in the period of September to December can ensure the removal of the age bias and provide a more positive and engaging experience for young people.