

THE DISTRIBUTION OF KICK-OUTS DURING THE ULSTER SENIOR GAELIC FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

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Introduction Research in Gaelic football has lagged considerably behind that of other field games (Reilly & Collins, 2008). Presently, there is no data relating to effective game strategies. Kick-outs from the goalkeeper represent an opportunity for teams to retain possession of the ball and initiate attacks from any area of the pitch. Thus, the aim of the present study was to evaluate the distribution of kick-outs during the Ulster Championship.

Methods Video footage from the games played in the Ulster Championship in 2010 were analysed using the Dartfish TeamPro version 5.5 software. The tagging facility was used to record key events relating to kick-outs throughout each match. A series of chi square tests of independence were used to analyse categorical variables in terms of the proportion of kick-outs where possession was retained. Ordinal and ratio scale variables were compared between kick-outs where possession was retained and kick-outs where possession was lost using a series of Mann-Whitney U tests.

Results & Discussion There were a total of 335 kick-outs, of which 187 (55.8%) were retained and only 53 (15.8%) resulted in a score. The position of the receiving player had a significant influence on the proportion of kick-outs retained ($p = .005$) with the most successful positions being fullbacks ($5/5 = 100\%$), corner backs ($20/25 = 80\%$), half backs ($36/52 = 69.2\%$) and midfielders ($48/83 = 57.8\%$). Length of kick-out also had a significant influence on retention of possession ($p = .003$) with 26/31 (83.9%) of kick-outs of less than 45m being retained compared with 69/124 (55.6%) of kick-outs of 45-65m and 92/180 (51.1%) of kick-outs of 65m or longer.

Table 1. Regained Possession

Regained Possession	YES	NO
Tyrone V Monaghan	24	22
Tyrone V Down	26	21
Monaghan V Fermanagh	28	18
Tyrone V Antrim	32	15
Fermanagh V Cavan	19	25
Donegal V Down	20	17
Armagh V Monaghan	20	21
Derry V Armagh	18	9
Total	187	148
%	55.8%	44.2%

Conclusion These results illustrate the varied distribution of kick-outs employed by goalkeepers. This information can be used to encourage coaches to develop strategies that maximize the team's ability to retain possession of the ball and initiate attacks.

References

1. Reilly, T. & Collins, K. (2008). *Eur J Sports Sci*, 8(5): 231-240.