

DO ATTACKING GAME-PATTERNS DIFFER WHEN COMPARING FIRST AND SECOND HALVES OF SOCCER MATCHES IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2010?

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Introduction

In Soccer, the change in game-patterns seems to depend on the elapsed playing time. This study aimed to investigate differences in successful attacking patterns according to the goals scored in the two halves of the World Cup 2010 (WC2010) matches.

Method

This is a lag-log study, following an observational, nomothetic and multidimensional design (Anguera, 1992). Field formats were combined with a system of categories, according to seven criteria: Start of the offensive phase; Development of defense/attack transition; Progress of ball possession; Finishing of the offensive phase; Patterns of field space position; Centre of the game/Ball position; Spatial patterns of teams interaction. The sequences were classified according to occurrence in the 1st or 2nd halves. After determining the reliability (Cohen's Kappa>0.9), 7 matches were coded. 481 attacks and 20683 conducts were registered to the 1st half; 464 attacks and 19734 conducts were reported to the 2nd half. The attacking sequences were analyzed using the GSEQ Software.

Results and Discussion

In the WC2010, the number of goals scored during the 2nd half doubled the number of goals (n=14; 3.0%) scored in the 1st half (n=7; 1.5%). Additionally, the teams performed a higher number of attacks during the 1st half (481 vs. 464). The goals scored in the 1st half showed a higher probability to be preceded by ball conduction or dribble, carrying the centre of the game from lateral mid-offensive (7: $z=2.42$) to central offensive zones, leading to situations of 1xGk ($z=3.30$). In the 2nd half, crosses or assistances were held from lateral offensive zones, in strain contexts, and goals were scored in the same spatial pattern of team's interaction as in the 1st half. Shots on target in both halves occurred in defence/attack transition, and, after ball recovery, a long pass from defensive to offensive field zones was performed. Shots on target tended to happen in mid-offensive lateral spaces in the 2nd half (9: $z=1.96$), while in the 1st half it occurred mostly from the lateral offensive zone (10: $z=2.63$). In the WC2010, attacking through the wings showed more efficacy in achieving situations of 1xGk, due to less strain contexts in field lateral zones.

Conclusion

Only the goal game-patterns seemed to differ between 1st and 2nd halves. However, the teams presented identical patterns of shots on target, wide shots, and shots stopped by the opponent.

References

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