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Multiple-cases study of the effects of defensive team tactics on movement intensity and match performance in soccer World Cup 2014

Albin Tenga

Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway

Soccer teams' playing formation (Bradley et al., 2011), game structure (Tenga et al., 2015) and performance level (Vogelbein et al., 2014) have been shown to affect match performance. In the present study the effects of different defensive team tactics, namely man-oriented, zone-oriented and aggressive group-pressure, on teams' movement intensity and defensive performance was explored during soccer match play. A comparative multiple-cases study of Argentina (n=5), Chile (n=3) and Netherland (n=4) national teams' 90-minute matches was conducted. Results show that type of defensive organisation had a significant influence on HI distance ($F_{2,9} = 4.6, P = 0.041$) and Sprint distance ($F_{2,9} = 7.6, P = 0.012$), as well as a strong tendency to significant influence on the number of conceded free kicks ($F_{2,9} = 4.1, P = 0.054$) per match. For example, Chile (342 ± 85.9 m) performed significantly more Sprint distance per match than both Argentina (182.0 ± 17.6 m; $P=0.015$) and Netherland (290.8 ± 57.6 m; $P=0.056$). Regarding defensive performance, Netherland tended to concede more free kicks per match (21.4 ± 7.2) than Argentina (9.3 ± 2.2 ; $P=0.060$), but not Chile (18.0 ± 8.5 ; $P=0.323$). The differences specific to defensive organisation were evident, especially in teams' movement intensity. Chile's aggressive group-pressure proved to be the most physically demanding and that man-oriented defence practiced by Netherland showed the highest risk of conceding free kicks. Employing zone-oriented defence, Argentina reached the final with the least high intensity activities and lowest number of conceded free kicks per match.

Biography

Albin Tenga has a PhD in Sports performance analysis (soccer) from Norwegian School of Sport Sciences and has accomplished postdoctoral studies from the same university. He is accredited Performance Analyst of highest scientific level (5) by the International Society of Performance Analysis of Sport (ISPAS). He has published more than 15 international peer-reviewed articles and has been serving regularly as an ad hoc journal reviewer for more than 5 reputed international sports scientific journals. He possess a rare combination of practical experience in soccer coaching, theoretical understanding of sports performance analysis as well as research skills.

albin.tenga@gmail.com

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