

# LA VARIAZIONE DEL NUMERO DI GIOCATORI NEGLI SSG MODIFICA LE OPPORTUNITÀ DI AZIONE DURANTE L'ALLENAMENTO

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## RIASSUNTO

**Obiettivi:** Questa ricerca ha esaminato gli effetti determinati dal numero di giocatori coinvolti negli SSG (con differenza numerica tra le squadre) sulle opportunità di mantenimento del possesso, di tiro in porta e di collaborazione con i compagni durante l'allenamento. In studi condotti precedentemente, è stato ipotizzato che manipolando il numero di giocatori si possono alterare i valori di variabili di prestazione chiave, come la distanza interpersonale tra i giocatori e il tempo per intercettare tiri e passaggi.

**Metodi:** 15 calciatori (età  $19.60 \pm 1.99$ ) sono stati divisi in tre squadre, le quali sono state messe a confronto in tre condizioni diverse di SSG: 5vs5, 5vs4, e 5vs3. Le variabili dipendenti analizzate sono state la distanza interpersonale (*interpersonal distance*, ID) tra il portatore di palla e il difensore diretto e la distanza relativa del difensore necessaria per intercettare la traiettoria di un tiro (*relative distance to intercept a shot*,  $RDI_{shot}$ ) o di un passaggio (*relative distance to intercept a pass*,  $RDI_{pass}$ ).

**Risultati:** Le analisi statistiche hanno evidenziato una media di valori di ID significativamente inferiore nel 5vs5 rispetto al 5vs4 e al 5vs3, e significativamente inferiore nel 5vs4 rispetto al 5vs3. Inoltre, si è osservato che la media di valori di  $RDI_{shot}$  e di  $RDI_{pass}$  era significativamente maggiore nel 5vs3 rispetto al 5vs5.

**Conclusioni:** Questi risultati rivelano che, manipolando il numero di giocatori negli SSG, si possono modificare i valori di variabili spazio-temporali chiave (come la distanza interpersonale e il tempo di intercettazione), al fine di influenzare la natura delle relazioni interpersonali tra i giocatori durante l'allenamento. Nello specifico, si è osservato che quando si mantiene la parità numerica, le opportunità di mantenere il possesso della palla tendono a ridursi, mentre quando la differenza numerica tra le due squadre aumenta, emergono più opportunità di passaggio e di tiro in porta. Pertanto, nelle prime fasi di apprendimento è consigliabile manipolare le variabili di gioco con l'intento di promuovere la superiorità numerica per la squadra in possesso. Tale strategia può essere utile per favorire il processo di apprendimento dei giocatori con un livello di capacità percettive e motorie inferiore, poiché si fornisce loro più tempo per decidere ed agire quando sono in possesso di palla e si enfatizzano determinate opportunità di azione (tiro in porta e passaggio al compagno). In seguito, con il progredire dell'apprendimento, gli allenatori possono modificare il contesto di gioco al fine di evidenziare maggiormente le possibilità di azione più efficaci per il raggiungimento di una prestazione di successo.

# VARYING NUMBERS OF PLAYERS IN SMALL-SIDED SOCCER GAMES MODIFIES ACTION OPPORTUNITIES DURING TRAINING

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of the numbers of players involved in small-sided team games (underloading and overloading) on opportunities for maintaining ball possession, shooting at goal and passing to teammates during training. These practice constraint manipulations were assumed to alter values of key performance variables identified in previous research, such as interpersonal distances between players and time to intercept shots and passes. Fifteen male soccer players (age:  $19.60 \pm 1.99$  years) were grouped into three teams and played against each other in different versions of small-sided soccer games, in which the number of players was manipulated in three different conditions: 5 vs. 5, 5 vs. 4 and 5 vs. 3. Dependent variables were the values of interpersonal distance between an outfield attacker and nearest defender (ID), and the relative distance of a defender needed to intercept the trajectory of a shot ( $RDI_{shot}$ ) or pass ( $RDI_{pass}$ ). Statistical analyses revealed that mean ID values were significantly lower in 5 vs. 5 than in 5 vs. 4 and 5 vs. 3 conditions, and significantly lower in 5 vs. 4 than 5 vs. 3. They also revealed that mean values of  $RDI_{shot}$  were significantly higher in 5 vs. 3 than in 5 vs. 5 conditions. Finally, results showed that the mean values of  $RDI_{pass}$  were significantly higher in 5 vs. 3 than in 5 vs. 5. Findings revealed how task constraints in SSGs can be manipulated to vary values of key spatial and temporal performance variables (interpersonal distance and time to intercept) to influence the nature of interpersonal interactions between competing players during practice. We observed that these manipulations tended to decrease opportunities for maintaining ball possession during training when equal numbers of attackers and defenders existed in SSGs and led to more shots and passes emerging when the number of defenders was decreased relative to attackers.

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