Characterization of offensive actions in sequences with the game tied or with one goal difference in high level handball games

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Introduction

The National Teams show increasingly tactical and balanced games, often with a draw in the final results or only one goal difference. Even in the most unbalanced games, it is important to understand and study what happens when the game is tied or with one goal difference. Consequently, the study of these game sequences is becoming increasingly more important, both for coaches and researchers.

Aim

Describe and analyze the performance of winning and losing teams in game situations where the score is tied or with a one-goal difference.

Methodology

In order to develop this study, the different phases of the research process were recognized and followed the protocols of the Observation Methodology. The sample consisted of games from the 2020 European Men’s Handball Championship, namely, one game from each group between the teams that proceeded to the main round, the main round, the semi-finals, 5th-8th, 3rd-4th, and the final game. This makes a total of 35 games. However, only 32 games were analyzed because 3 ended in a draw. We studied several variables, the most important of which were: attacking efficiency, technical faults and shooting effectiveness.

Results

It is evident that the losing teams present less efficiency when the game is tied or with only one goal difference. On the other hand, the winning teams stand firm with 59.7% attacking efficiency against 43.9% demonstrated by the losing teams. This difference is evident in the shooting efficiency, with the winning teams having 70.2% shooting efficiency and the losing teams only 58.7%. It is also relevant to note that, at these moments, the losing teams have more technical faults (25.2%) than the winning teams (14.9%).

Defeated Teams

- Offensive sequences, n = 635
  - End of exclusion
    - new sequence, n = 56
    - end of attack, n = 20
    - shot, n = 418
    - technical faults, n = 109
  - End of attack
    - opponent’s action, n = 32
  - Goal, n = 245
  - No Goal, n = 174

Winning Teams

- Offensive sequences, n = 753
  - End of exclusion
    - new sequence, n = 75
    - end of attack, n = 20
    - shot, n = 560
    - technical faults, n = 74
  - End of attack
    - opponent’s action, n = 24
  - Goal, n = 393
  - No Goal, n = 167

- Attack efficiency: 43.9%
- Technical faults: 25.2%
- Shooting effectiveness: 58.7%

Attack efficiency: 59.7%
Technical faults: 14.9%
Shooting effectiveness: 70.2%

Conclusion

This study shows that winning teams have higher efficiency and fewer lost balls in these moments of the game, which may help explain their success in the final outcome of the game. It should also be noted that the winning teams have more shooting situations and fewer exclusions of their players, which also can help to explain and understand their success.