Comparing the number of passes between the four top teams at the 2014 FIFA® World Cup

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The present study aimed to compare the number of passes performed by the four semi-finalists of the 2014® FIFA World Cup. The sample comprised 2372 team possessions of the 4 semi-finalists (Germany, Argentina, Netherlands and Brazil) of the 2014 FIFA® World Cup. Descriptive analysis was performed, as well as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test. Mann-Whitney U was used to compare the mean number of passes in the team possessions of each team. Significance level was set to p<0.05. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 22 was used for statistical procedures. Results displayed that the teams who reached the final (Germany and Argentina) obtained higher mean number of passes in relation to those who were eliminated in the semi-finals (Netherlands and Brazil) (p<0.001). Besides that, the winner team (Germany) performed a significantly higher number of passes in relation to Argentina, Netherlands and Brazil (p=0.033, p<0.001 and p<0.001, respectively). From these results, it is possible to infer that there is a possible difference in the offensive playing methods between the teams. Also, it was possible to observe that a style with more passes per possession and therefore slower was more effective than more direct styles, with lower number of passes.

Keywords: Soccer, Match Analysis, Number of Passes.