Comparative study of the number of players participating in team possessions of the semi-finalists of the 2014 FIFA® World Cup

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The aim of the present study is to compare the number of players participating in team possessions of the four semi-finalists of the 2014 FIFA® World Cup. The sample comprised 2372 team possessions performed by the four 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 test was performed to compare the mean number of players (NP) who participated in the team possessions between each one of the teams. The significance level was set to p<0.05. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 22 was used for statistical procedures. Results demonstrated that the teams who reached the final (Germany and Argentina) obtained higher means of NP in relation to the teams who were eliminated in the semi-finals (Netherlands and Brazil). (p<0.001). It is concluded that the teams who reached the final possibly displayed during the competition a predominantly offensive style with constant support and covering through the high number of players participating in the team possessions, and thus making this variable (NP) a potential predictor of success in this competition.

Keywords: Match Analysis, Soccer, World Cup.