# The Impact of Tactical Styles on Consequences of Soccer Games

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*Abstract:* Measuring and evaluating tactical behavior stands as a crucial objective in the analysis of performance in professional soccer. At the highest level of competition, a specific tactical approach can be the determining factor between triumph and defeat. Such tactical behavior is primarily assessed through a couple of variables, including ball possession, interceptions, and passes completed. Within this study, the authors have delineated possession play by considering three variables: Possession, Acc. opposition half, and Great chances per game. Additionally, defensive counter-attacking play has been represented by five variables: Goals conceded per game, Tackles per game, Clearances per game, Great chances per game, and Duels won per game. To gauge the influence of different tactical approaches on match outcomes, the authors meticulously analyzed 64 matches from the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 380 matches of the 2021-2022 English Premier League season. Significantly, the authors discovered that the specific tactical approach employed by a team does not exhibit a direct correlation with the final match result. However, the number of Great chances per game can notably impact a team's winning percentage. Consequently, this research yields valuable suggestions for coaches and players to strategically plan their training sessions and match tactics with the ultimate goal of attaining victory.

*Keywords:* style of play, ball control, defensive counterattack, great chance per game

## 1.    Introduction

In the 2023 UEFA Champions League final, Manchester City faced Inter Milan. Prior to the match. People believed that it was a dialogue between two different tactical styles - ball control versus defensive counterattack [1]. Under the leadership of Guardiola, Manchester City has gradually become a dominant team known for its strategy in recent years and has won many awards(1-1). Inter Milan, on the other hand, is a typical representative club of the Italian chain defense counterattack [2]. Inter Milan has more chance of killing the game in this Champions League final. However, in the end, Manchester City won the game 1-0 and their first Champions League championship. When the data showcase the champions of major leagues and cup competitions in recent years, the game's styles are vastly different. This intrigued us and inspired our research question: whether various tactical styles will influence the result of the competition. The authors hypothesize that tactical styles will influence the outcome. Consequently, the null hypothesis is that different competition styles will have

no impact on the outcome of the competition and the ownership of the champion, while other scholars support that different competition styles have an effect on the outcome of the competition [3].

The belief stems from the background where different tactics have different definitions. Possessing strategy is an offensive strategy (as in football) in which a team tries to keep possession of the ball for extended periods of time [4]. In general, it illustrates the transition from defense to offense, as the defending team seeks to capitalize on the unpreparedness of the opposing team's defense [5]. The authors believe that the relationship between playing style and consequence is inequitable in different competitions because various tactics will be necessary in different competitions. All in all, our research paper aims to help the coach establish their own game style by examining the impact of two different playing methods, defensive counterattack and possessing strategy, on the results of cup and league matches.

## 2.     Methodology

The dataset was sourced from https.//www.sofascore.com/. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, are provided. A regression model was used to predict the relationship between the undefined percentage, rank, and position, Accurate per game, Acc. position half, Great opportunities per game, Accurate per game, Acc. position half, Great opportunities per game.

Then, the authors will show a data visualization according to the modeling relationship and the analysis. A total amount of 444 official games over two competitions (Premier League 2022/23, n=380; FIFA World Cup 2022, n=64) were monitored and recorded via the Football Dog Inc They were further analyzed using the "Sofa soccer" - website dedicated to collecting and collecting football data (www.Sofa soccer. com). This website enables us to find meaningful variables related to the tactical styles teams play.

This paper studies two kinds of tactical styles on the pitch--possession play and defensive counterattack. The authors found that several variables can intuitively reflect the quality of the two playing styles. Our research was first divided into offensive behavior and defensive behavior to distinguish between the two football styles. For possession play, the team that has possession of the soccer ball is on the offense. Therefore, there are six offensive factors (Possession, Accurate per game, Accuracy own half, Accuracy opposition half, Accuracy Cross balls, Great chances per game) that can play an important role in the quality of the game as one general strategy of offensive play that all soccer players should employ is Passing and Moving. A defensive counterattack means a team that does not have possession of the ball. A good defensive soccer team will learn to communicate and form walls of defense against the offense and always look for opportunities to counterattack with the ball [6]. Due to the above theory, seven factors (Goals conceded per game, Tackles per game, Interceptions per game, Clearances per game, Possession lost per game, Duels won per game, Great chances per game, Acc long ball) can be added into the evaluation system.

Besides, the authors also studied the effects of the two tactical styles in the cup and league as these two kinds of competitions have a huge difference. Knock-out football tournaments, such as the World Cup Finals and the Champions League, have witnessed thrilling matches throughout history. Unlike league football, which is a long-lasting endeavor, cup competitions are more like a fast-paced sprint. In these tournaments, a team's fate can be sealed by a moment of brilliance or an unfortunate mistake, determining whether they emerge as victors or suffer defeat [7].

## 3.     Results

Table 1: Possession in the English Premier League

| Summary output | | |
|---|---|---|
| Regression Statistics | | |

Table 1: (continued).

| Adjusted R Square | 0.640217759 | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Coefficients** | **P-value** |
| Intercept | 0.386056571 | 0.205988879 |
| Possession | 0.47007005 | 0.509136593 |
| Acc. opposition half | -0.489140948 | 0.498244641 |
| Great chances per game | 0.162705292 | 0.003488827 |

Table 1 shows an Adjusted R≈0.640218, indicating that the three independent variables, Possession, Acc. opposition half, and Great chances per game, can explain approximately 64.0218% of the data with strong explanatory power. In the P-value analysis, the authors observe that the value for Great Chances per game is $0.003489 < 0.05$, suggesting that this independent variable is likely correlated with the dependent variable, the Undefeated percentage. Moreover, its coefficient value is positive, indicating that in the English Premier League, when a team's Great chances per game value is high, the team's Undefeated percentage is also likely to increase.

Table 2: Counterattacking in the English Premier League

| **Summary output** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Regression Statistics** | | |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.841983941 | |
| | **Coefficients** | **P-value** |
| Intercept | 0.375673372 | 0.378535 |
| Goals conceded per game | 0.205416209 | 0.008602 |
| Tackles per game | -0.02437417 | 0.148723 |
| Clearances per game | 0.005006957 | 0.450984 |
| Duels won per game | 0.012038528 | 0.217375 |
| Great chances per game | 0.124146918 | 0.007425 |

Table 2 shows an Adjusted R≈0.841984, indicating that five independent variables, Goals conceded per game, Tackles per game, Clearances per game, Great chances per game, and Duels won per game, can explain approximately 84.1984% of the data with strong explanatory power. In the P-value analysis, the authors find that the values for Goals conceded per game and Great chances per game are $0.008602 < 0.05$ and $0.007425 < 0.05$, respectively, suggesting that these two independent variables likely correlate with the dependent variable Undefeated percentage. Moreover, their coefficient values are positive, indicating that in the English Premier League, when a team's Goals are conceded per game, and Great chances per game values are high, the team's Undefeated percentage is also likely to increase.

Table 3: Possession in the World Cup

| **Summary output** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Regression Statistics** | | |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.504105863 | |
| | **Coefficients** | **P-value** |
| Intercept | -28.76924481 | 0.069843716 |
| Possession | -31.02204707 | 0.104561595 |

Table 3: (continued)

| Acc. opposition half | 72.37487519 | 0.0028766952 |
|---|---|---|
| Great chances per game | 5.260906544 | 0.007394071 |

Table 3 shows an Adjusted R≈0.504106, indicating that three independent variables, Possession, Acc. opposition half, and Great chances per game, can explain approximately 50.4106% of the data with strong explanatory power. In the P-value analysis, the authors find that the values for Acc. opposition half and Great chances per game are 0.028767＜0.05 and 0.006884＜0.05, respectively, suggesting that these two independent variables are likely correlated with the dependent variable rank. Moreover, their coefficient values are positive, indicating that in the World Cup, when a team's Acc. opposition half and Great chances per game values are high, their rank is also likely to increase.

Table 4: Counterattacking in the World Cup

| Summary output | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Regression Statistics** | | |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.468578028 | |
| | **Coefficients** | **P-value** |
| Intercept | -4.6167683 | 0.85132883 |
| Goals conceded per game | -3.915733561 | 0.043639961 |
| Tackles per game | 0.37870722 | 0.441176657 |
| Clearances per game | -0.020369902 | 0.925732844 |
| Duels won per game | 18.28108666 | 0.722261912 |
| Great chances per game | 5.87729062 | 0.005193863 |

Table 4 shows an Adjusted R≈0.468578, indicating that five independent variables, Goals conceded per game, Tackles per game, Clearances per game, and Duels won per game, and Great chances per game can explain approximately 46.8578% of the data with strong explanatory power. In the P-value analysis, the authors find that the value for Great Chances per game is 0.005194＜0.05. What's more, the value for Goals conceded per game is 0.04363, and the regression coefficient of goal conceded is estimated at -3.9, indicating a negative relationship between the independent variable (goal conceded) and the dependent variable (rank). As a result, these two independent variables are likely correlated with the dependent variable rank. Moreover, their coefficient values are positive, indicating that in the World Cup, when a team's Goals are conceded per game, and Great chances per game values are high, the team's rank is also likely to increase.

## 4.    Discussion

Some scholars argue that possession is not only an attractive soccer style but also the most effective way to break down defenses and score goals. Teams with solid possession tend to have better team chemistry, as practicing possession-oriented play enhances understanding among teammates. On the other hand, counterattacking is seen to exploit space before the opposition organizes defensively, even if a team has less possession. Possession and counterattacking approaches have their merits in different situations [8].

However, the above research demonstrates that neither possession nor counterattacking tactics directly impact match outcomes in leagues and cups.

As the following one scholar and a website supposed. The former believed when a team is focused on defending and waiting for the opposition to make a mistake, they may not be as organized or

focused on their defensive duties as they should be [9]. This can lead to errors such as missed tackles, poor marking, and miscommunications, resulting in goals for the opposition. Additionally, counter-attacking often requires a high level of athleticism and speed from the defenders. If the defenders are not able to keep up with the opposition's attackers, they may be caught out of position and unable to recover in time to prevent a goal [9].

The latter believed the correlation between possession and points in individual games this season is minimal. Out of the 90 Premier League matches played, 35 were won by the team with more possession, while 33 were won by the team with less possession. In terms of overall points, there is a slight difference, with 127 points earned by teams with more possession compared to 121 points earned by teams with less control. However, this difference can be considered relatively insignificant [8].

The key factor influencing a team's undefeated record and higher rank is primarily the creation of Great chances per game, according to our research. These are situations where a player is expected to score, often in one-on-one scenarios or from close range, with clear access to the goal and moderate pressure on the shooter. Teams that create such opportunities need coordinated teamwork aligned with their tactical configuration. Just like the following scholar said. Soccer is a sport with limited goals, so teams that focus on quality chances rather than quantity are more likely to score at least once. In contrast, groups that spread their expected goals over many lower-quality chances sacrifice the higher chance of achieving at least once in exchange for occasional higher-scoring games [10].

Our study also has limitations. certain non-numerical factors reflecting ball control and defensive counterattacks, like passing direction, game intensity, and game context, are not represented in the data [6]. Additionally, variables like the strength of individual opponents need to be controlled to understand better the macro-level impact of playing methods on match results. In conclusion, the key findings will be summarized.

## 5. Conclusion

The authors initially hypothesized that tactical styles would influence outcomes. However, our analysis leads us to conclude that neither possession nor counterattacking directly affects match results. The decisive factor is the creation of high-quality chances. This study emphasizes that regardless of the chosen tactic, teams aiming to improve their win rate should prioritize building coordinated teamwork to generate more Great chances per game. Therefore, the authors recommend that coaches focus not only on tactical choices but also on fostering team cohesion to create effective scoring opportunities.

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