

# From Russia, with tactic?

CARLOS ELVIRA ARANDA , LUIS MARÍA CAMPOS

*Sports Research Group, University of Alicante, Spain*

### ABSTRACT

Russia will host the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Football has changed and new space-time concepts have emerged in recent years to help understand the performance of a football team. We need analyse football from a holistic perspective. Every team of football is understanding like a superorganism with two fundamental characteristics: division of labour and a communication system. In the future new concept, altruistic cooperation, will help know a complexity in football. **Key words:** FOOTBALL, TACTIC, SUPERORGANISM, SPACE.

#### Cite this article as:

Elvira Aranda, C., & Campos, L.M. (2018). From Russia, with tactic?. *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise*, 13(1), 251-253. doi:<https://doi.org/10.14198/jhse.2018.131.22>

---

 **Corresponding author.** *University of Alicante, Faculty of Education, C/ San Vicente del Raspeig, s/n. 03690 San Vicente del Raspeig, Alicante. Spain.*

E-mail: cea.elvi@gmail.com

Submitted for publication March 2018

Accepted for publication March 2018

Published March 2018

JOURNAL OF HUMAN SPORT & EXERCISE ISSN 1988-5202

© Faculty of Education. University of Alicante

doi:10.14198/jhse.2018.131.22

To the Editor,

Russia will host the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The 32 classified teams and more than 600 international players will meet before the watchful eye of 1 billion people to guard the most desired trophy for the next four years. But football has changed in recent decades. The champion team is no longer the one with the best players, but the best group. New space-time concepts (Clemente et al., 2013, Frencken et al., 2011) have emerged in recent years to help understand the performance of a football team. So, should we analyse a football team from a holistic perspective?

### **The next era: the superorganism**

The main idea comes from the concept "superorganism" (Wheeler, 1911). A superorganism is a group of individuals self-organized by a division of tasks and united by a communication system (Hölldobler & Wilson, 2009). The term describes a group or colony of members that operates as a single unit (Wheeler, 1911). Every superorganism fulfills two fundamental characteristics: division of labour and a communication system.

### **A correct division of space?**

In a colony of ants or bees each member has a specialized function to ensure the survival of the entire group. That is why it is known as a division of labour. In soccer, this division of work refers to the space assigned to each player during the game. Different studies use the concepts centroid, stretch index or team coverage area to provide a solution to how football teams generate, occupy and take advantage of that space (Clemente et al., 2013, Frencken et al., 2011).

### **The ball as a way of communication**

If in a traffic jam the cars tend to be organized by lights and horn, in football all the players are related to each other by the ball (Duarte et al., 2012). The action of passing the ball shows the tendencies of a team in relation to its communication channels between players. In a simple way, it gives us information on the style of play and how it is carried out.

### **The future, what else?**

But wait, that is not all! The correct development of any society is not limited to the fact that all their members fulfil their duties and have good relations. We are people and therefore we tend to make mistakes. That is why it is necessary to be altruistic in functions that do not belong to us. When a player is dribbled by the opponent he always has a partner doing the coverage. This leads us to understand a new term such as "altruistic cooperation" (Hölldobler & Wilson, ser 2009). Or is it that we wouldn't help a partner for the good of the team?

## **REFERENCES**

- Hölldobler, B., Wilson, E.O. (2009). *The superorganism: the beauty, elegance, and strangeness of insect societies*. London, England: W.W. Norton.
- Duarte, R., Araújo, D., Correia, V., & Davids, K. (2012). Sports Teams as Superorganisms: Implications of sociobiological models of behaviour for research and practice in team sports performance analysis. *Sports Medicine*, 42(8), 633-642. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03262285>
- Wheeler, W.M. (1911). The ant-colony as an organism. *Journal Morphology*, 22, 307-325. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jmor.1050220206>

- Clemente, F. M., Couceiro, M. S., Martins, F. M., & Mendes, R. (2013). An online tactical metrics applied to football game. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology*, 5(5), 1700-1719. <https://doi.org/10.19026/rjaset.5.4926>
- Frencken, W., Lemmink, K., Delleman, N., & Visscher, C. (2011). Oscillations of centroid position and surface area of soccer teams in small-sided games. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 11(4), 215-223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17461391.2010.499967>

