Soccer Match Analysis of Sri Pahang Versus Sabah : The Initial 10 Minutes

Mohd Harridon[1,2,3], Jalalludin Abu Jaafar[3], Mohamad Amirul Mustafa[3], Norhadi Ubaidillah[3], Shaikh Anuar Shaikh Abd Ghani[3]

[1]Aviation Physical Fitness Cluster Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology,
[2]Malaysia Civil Defence Force,
[3]Sky Orbital Soccer Centre

mdharridon@unikl.edu.my

Abstract. Soccer teams usually employ individuals to actuate match analyses upon their teams and opponents in order to gauge the efficiency of their teams and also to measure the credibility of the opponents. This shows the importance of match analyses and this paper analyze the match between Sri Pahang and Sabah with the intention of dissecting the high and low points of the two teams.

1. Introduction

Soccer remains a competitive field where numerous teams are seeking edges or any form of advantage in order to remain at the top. There are teams that focused more upon physical fitness in order to gain that edge and others are inclined to concentrate upon tactical plays such as altering formations throughout matches. In today's ecosystem and climate, most teams rely upon data that were collected during matches and training in order to fuel their decisions. Match Analysis is actuated by analyzing data collected during matches and usually data of the team and opposition are collected in order to make comparison and also to unearth trends or patterns that exist.

According to Sarmento and et al, there are various ways in actuating match analyses and 2 of them are the utilization of video and the other one is the usage of Computerized Match Analysis System [1]. Sarmento and et al further added that numerous categories were analyzed in matches such as low speed running, high speed running, path changes, and others [1].

Harridon agreed with the above assessments and further stated that in details observation of matches could reveal the threats of the opponents [2]. Harridon also stated that passing lanes in matches can be identified and their frequency can be numerically counted to show the intensity of possessions of the team and opponent [2].

In Malaysia, at the top league, several teams play each other to win the league title. Two teams from this league are Sri Pahang and Sabah. Both played exceptionally well in the league but with mixed results. In this paper, the match between Sri Pahang and Sabah was analyzed but only within the first 10 minutes as we were interested in the initial performance of both teams. The match was played on 16th March 2021 at Darul Makmur Stadium, at the city of Kuantan in Malaysia.

We had analyzed 12 parameters of the match between Sri Pahang and Sabah and we also made comparison between these 2 teams based upon the 10 minutes range. We also made deductions of each team and we had also produced graphical representations of the numerical values that were collected from this match.

2. Literature Review

It is vital now days to actuate match analyses upon matches since the analyses would give pertinent information that are essential for teams. Li and et al stated that several prominent parameters existed that determine the propensity of the team to win [3]. This shows that match analyses could, in some ways, show the "rightful path" to gain winnings even though this is not seen as a concrete solution.

Match analysis could also extract information with regards to the productivity of the players. Harridon stated that productivity is correlated with the physical fitness of the individuals where there are number of factors, such as food consumption, frequency of

physical training, and others, that affect the value of physical fitness of the individuals [4]. Teams are encouraged to utilize data collected during matches to evaluate the productivity of players where the assessment would lead to viable solutions.

In a team, it's imperative for the players to be able to communicate well with each other and move as one unit during attack or defend. The ability to gel well with each other is called synergy. Hertel indicated that team synergy is imperative for teams that desire to achieve commendable results but more studies are needed in order to define accurately the effect of this synergy [5]. Football teams are in an advantage position if the team has the ability to synergize well in stressful situations.

Physical fitness of players is essential in order to effectively carry out the correct techniques and tactics during matches. Running and sprinting at sporadic duration require players to have adequate level of fitness. Match analyses can capture the amount of running or sprinting done by players and this aids the coach in identifying players that are not contributing optimally during matches. Sever and Zorba measured the components of physical fitness of soccer players in order to quantify them and had related the measured parameters in relation to their defined positions (eg. defender, midfielder, striker, goalkeeper) [6]. This evidently showed the ingrained value of physical fitness and extracting them during matches is a worthwhile process.

Harridon indicated that physical fitness is vital not only for players but also vital for others in various industries such as aviation, security, and others [7]. Sacrificing physical fitness means sacrificing safety in aviation and also akin to sacrificing efficiency in soccer matches. Thus, it's important to integrate physical fitness programme in any soccer training programme and feedbacks with regards to the efficiency of the programme can be obtained by analyzing players performance via match analyses.

Another aspect that is usually captured by match analysis is the ball possessions of teams. Farias and et al had studied matches, all five seasons, and made a conclusion that teams that have significant amount of ball possession have higher chances to win matches [8]. This gives insights upon the importance of capturing ball possessions of teams in every match. Teams are also encouraged to pass more often as it creates more passing lanes and more opportunities to score.

Anzer and Bauer utilized data that were collected from match analyses to produce a model that predict the production of goals [9]. They also surmised that their approach or method is able to assess the performance of players more accurately and they extensively relied upon data that were collected in the league in Germany [9]. This, as we pointed out earlier, is a norm in modern football where data are compiled and used for the purpose of gaining an outright edge over opponents.

During match analyses, several parameters were collected and analyzed. The parameters are different from each other and according to Harridon this approach is called classification where data or information were classified [10]. Harridon stated that the classification of data is important in order to gain a comprehensive and orderly analyses and to unearth more significant views of the situations [10].

Strafford and et al mentioned that another primary aspect of match analysis is the set pieces component where Strafford and et al analyzed comprehensively the corner kicks of teams from the English Premier League [11]. They further elaborated the statistical values of goals generated from corner kicks and indicated the analyses could aid in the fabrication of optimum training related to corner kicks [11].

3. Methodology

The approach of our match analysis is shown in Figure 1 where we analyzed various parameters and made comparison between the two teams.
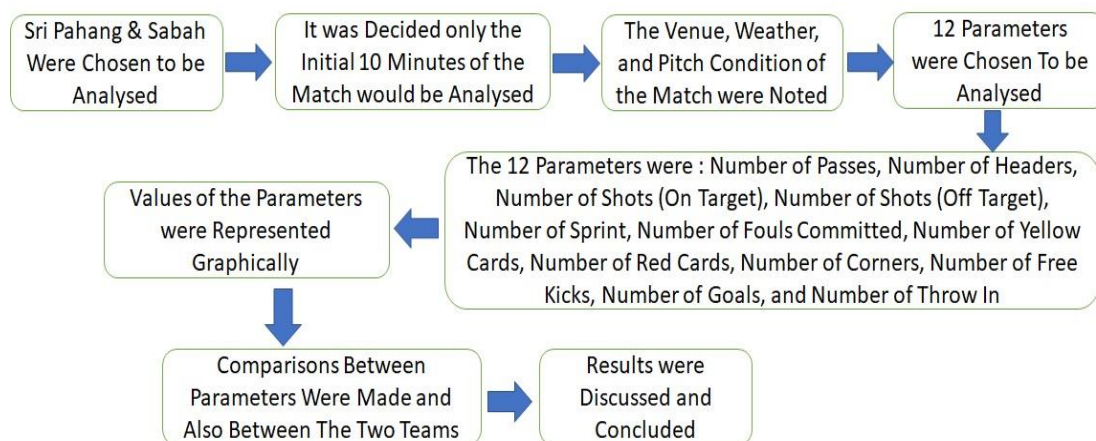

Figure 1. The Methodology of the Match Analysis

We had chosen Sri Pahang and Sabah to be our subjects of analysis. We arbitrarily decided only the initial 10 minutes of the match was to be analyzed as we were interested in the intensity of the teams and the approaches taken by each team at the start of the match. We took note of the venue, weather, and pitch condition of the match. Information regarding these is shown in the Results Section.

We had decided to collect 12 parameters of the match. Those 12 parameters are : Number of Passes, Number of Headers, Number of Shots (On Target), Number of Shots (Off Target), Number of Sprint, Number of Fouls Committed, Number of Yellow Cards, Number of Red Cards, Number of Corners, Number of Free Kicks, Number of Goals, and Number of Throw In.

The parameters or data were collected from a video of the match where the video was observed. This approach allowed us to pause and playback any scenes or plays and thus had given us latitudes to confirm the data we had collected. The data or results collected were tabulated and were also represented graphically to ease analyses. Several parameters were compared and comparisons between the two teams were made. The comparisons and results were then discussed and concluded.

4. Results

The information and data collected pertaining to the match between Sri Pahang and Sabah are shown in this section.

Venue : Darul Makmur Stadium, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia
Date : 16th March 2021
Start Time : 9.00pm
Weather : Not Raining
Pitch Condition : Dry

Table 1.   0th till 5th Minute

Parameters	Sri Pahang	Sabah	Total
Number of Passes	24	30	54
Number of Headers	3	5	8
Number of Shots (On Target)	1	1	2
Number of Shots (Off Target)	0	0	0
Number of Sprint	1	1	2
Number of Fouls Committed by	2	0	2
Number of Yellow Cards	0	0	0
Number of Red Cards	0	0	0
Number of Corners	0	0	0
Number of Free Kicks	0	2	2
Number of Goals	0	0	0
Number of Throw In	2	1	3

Table 2.   5th till 10th Minute

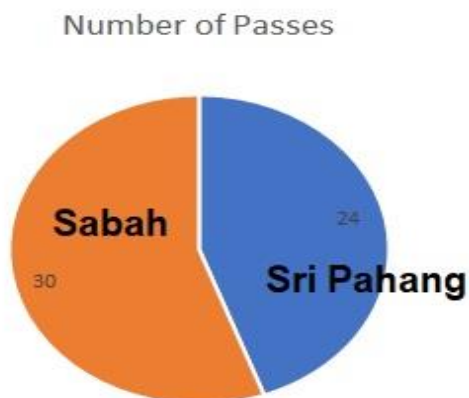| Parameters	Sri Pahang	Sabah	Total
Number of Passes	43	17	60
Number of Headers	3	0	3
Number of Shots (On Target)	2	0	2
Number of Shots (Off Target)	0	0	0
Number of Sprint	2	2	4
Number of Fouls Committed by	2	0	2
Number of Yellow Cards	1	0	1
Number of Red Cards	0	0	0
Number of Corners	0	0	0
Number of Free Kicks	0	2	2
Number of Goals	0	0	0
Number of Throw In	2	0	2

Figure 2. Number of Passes for Sabah and Sri Pahang for 0th till 5th Minute

Figure 3. Number of Passes for Sabah and Sri Pahang for 5th till 10th Minute

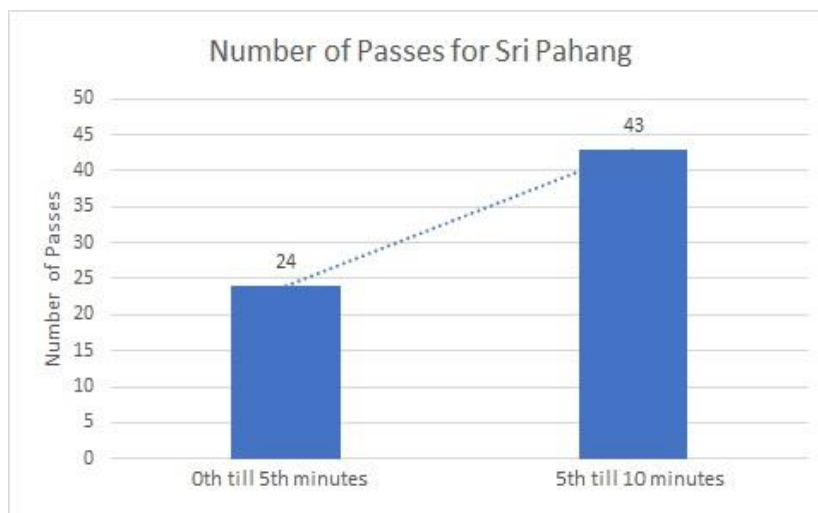Figure 4. Number of Passes for Sabah and It's Trend

Figure 5. Number of Passes for Sri Pahang and It's Trend

5. Discussion

From 0th till 5th minute, Sabah edged Sri Pahang with the number of passes but Sabah's prominence is minuscule with only 6 extra passes. Total passes of both teams were 54 passes for this period of time. However, from the 5th till 10th minute, Sri Pahang was superior in the number of passes with 26 extra passes than Sabah. In this period, Sri Pahang had improved tremendously from only 24 passes in the 0th till 5th minute to 43 passes in the 5th till 10th minute. This is an improvement of 19 passes which showed Sri Pahang had increased their tempo and perhaps their commitment towards the match.

Sabah however was seen to not be in possession as the match progressed as their passes had drooped from 30 passes to 17 passes. This subsequently had affected their number of shots (on target) where they did not garner any shots in the 5th till 10th minute. In contrast, Sri Pahang had 2 shots on target at this period. This led us to believe that if a team is in control or in possession of the match, the team has more chances to take shots at the goal.

In the 0th till 5th minute, Sri Pahang had committed 2 fouls in contrast to zero fouls by Sabah. In the 5th till 10th minute, this pattern continued where Sri Pahang committed another 2 fouls and Sabah committed zero fouls. In total, from 0th till 10th minute, Sri Pahang committed 4 fouls. This perhaps indicated that Sri Pahang was committed to win the ball or committed to retain possession.

Fouls committed were in correlation with the number of free kicks given. In the 0th till 5th minute, Sabah were given 2 free kicks while in the 5th till 10th minute Sabah were given 2 free kicks as well. This might aid the attack of Sabah but not that much. Peering at the statistics of sprints, it seems both teams have the same number of sprints which is 1 per each team in the 0th till 5th minute while in the 5th till 10th minute both teams had actuated 2 sprints each.

We can possibly say that in the initial play of the match both teams were not urgent in their play as the pace of the play is not fast as evidently shown by the low number of sprints. Some may say that the players were conserving energy or perhaps opportunities were not there to warrant sprints. Harridon indicated the importance of physical fitness in any tasks in order to produce acceptable results [12]. This is similar in soccer where if the physical fitness of players is optimum, they could be actuating sprinting more frequently as thus creating matches that are fast pace and exciting.

But we can observe that early on in the match Sri Pahang seems aggressive with one player from Sri Pahang obtaining one yellow card. Sabah players were precarious and did not obtain any form of cards. We can say Sabah's players were cautious in their actions during the early stage of the match. Playing in front of their home crowd, it's understandable that Sri Pahang is eager to appease their supporters and hence their aggressiveness and commendable possession play throughout the early stage of the match.

It can be seen that numerous information were unearthed from match analysis that could aid in the alleviation of the teams. According to Castells and et al, match analysis can provide valuable information upon the workloads of players [13]. They stated that match analysis is a tool which adds benefits to team prying for edges [13]. We concurred with this and evidently the data we had collected did indeed provided insights of the players.

On another note, looking back at our data, it seems that with regards to aerial duels, both teams were almost equal in terms of number of headers. Pertaining to the first 10 minutes of the match, Sri Pahang produced 6 headers while Sabah produced 5 headers. Only one header separated them. We can say both teams are prepared to go the extra mile to win balls in the air.

6. Conclusions

The match between Sri Pahang and Sabah were analyzed. From the match, 12 parameters were extracted and provided data and insights that were useful for both teams. Possession wise, Sri Pahang showed more percentage of possession early in the match through its superior number of passes. This subsequently led to 3 shooting opportunities which were numerically superior than Sabah which managed only 1 shot. The match analysis also gave us insights upon the tempo of the game and also the level of aggressiveness of both teams. Overall, as also indicated by literature review, match analysis is a tool which is beneficial for teams that are seeking to push the limit.

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