

Road to the finals: Fixture congestion impacts on successful performance in NBA, a study case of 2014/2015 finals

Pedro T. Esteves^{1,2}, Kazimierz Mikolajec³, Sofia Silva¹, & Damian Banys³

¹ Polytechnic Institute of Guarda, Guarda, Portugal

² Research Centre in Sports Sciences, Health Sciences and Human Development, CIDESD, CreativeLab Research Community, Portugal

³ Academy of Physical Education, Katowice, Poland

Introduction

Fixture congestion has received increasing attention within the research community in different team sports such as football (e.g., Folgado et al. 2015). However, in basketball this topic has not been consistently addressed in the past. This study aimed to analyse the impact of fixture congestion on the performance of top-level basketball teams.

Methods

Official statistics of 162 games of the teams participating in NBA 2014/2015 finals were retrieved from the official NBA website (<http://www.nba.com> (2016)). The following variables were considered in this study: number of games won and lost, field goal percentage, number of offensive and defensive rebounds, assists and steals. The analysis was carried according to three fixture cycles: (i) two consecutive games; (ii) one day interval between two games; (iii) two or more days between two games.

Results

The data analysis showed that the frequency of games won or lost was significantly dependent on the fixture congestion cycles ($t^2(2, N = 162) = 7.98, p < 0.5, \phi_{\text{Cramer}} = .22$). A smaller number of games lost occurred with a two or more days interval between games ($n = 2$; 6.45%), comparatively with the two successive games ($n = 13$; 32.5%) and one-day interval between games situation ($n = 28$; 30.77%). There were also differences on field goal percentage, $F(2,159) = 3.29, p < 0.5$) between the fixture congestion cycles, with greater efficacy for the two days of interval or more ($M = 49.10, SD = 5.09$) than for two successive games ($M = 47.01, SD = 5.89$).

Discussion

These results suggest that fixture congestion may interfere with shooting efficacy and competitive outcome. Apparently, when games occur with a minimum of two days of interval of time, shooting efficacy increases while chances of losing a game decrease.

Conclusion

In conclusion, fixture congestion appeared to impact on the performance of top-level basketball teams. This preliminary work stimulates further investigation to re-address this topic by using larger datasets in order to confirm the observed results.

References

Folgado, H., Duarte, R., Marques, P., & Sampaio, J. (2015). The effects of congested fixtures period on tactical and physical performance in elite football. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 33(12), 1238-1247.