

Tactical behaviour of youth football players in small-sided games: Floater player changes the team orientation

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INTRODUCTION

Small-sided Games (SSGs)

A training format derived from official match with manipulations in:

- 1) Number of players;
- 2) Pitch size;
- 3) Playing rules (e.g., floater, touch)

To simulate situations in official match and guide players' behavior towards intended performance outcomes, relative to each phase of the game.

Floater (Floating player)

Players who support both teams in their attacking phase of the game. Playing inside the pitch OR along the sideline, which may lead to different moving patterns of other players.

Aim of the study

To determine the influence of floaters (playing along the length of pitch) on team tactical behavior in small-sided games.

METHOD



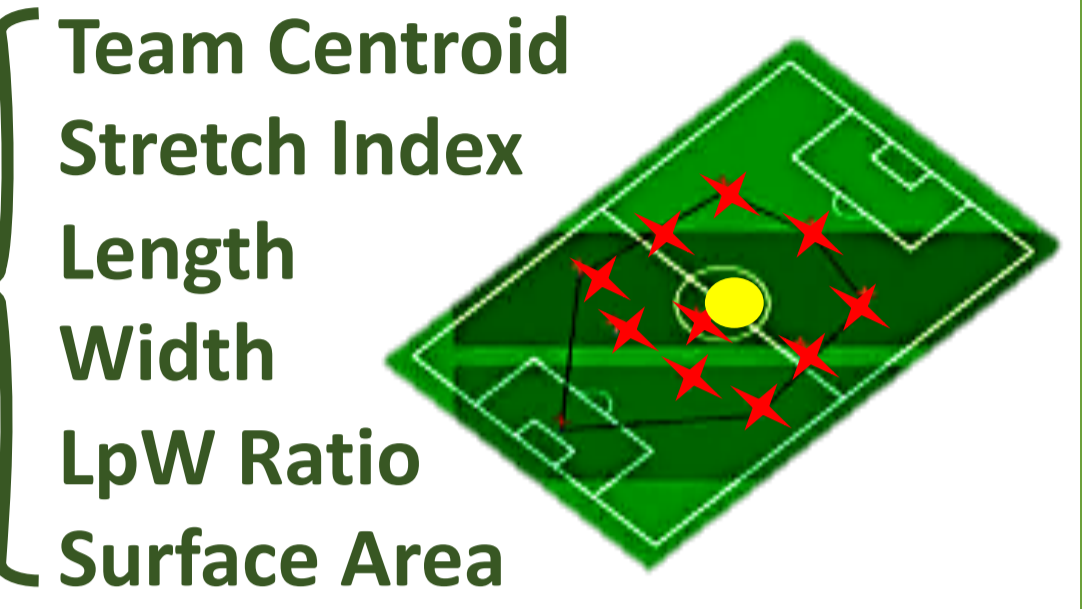
30s per SSG × 17 (No-Floater SSG)
 30s per SSG × 20 (Floaters SSG)



Positional data

Tactical Measures

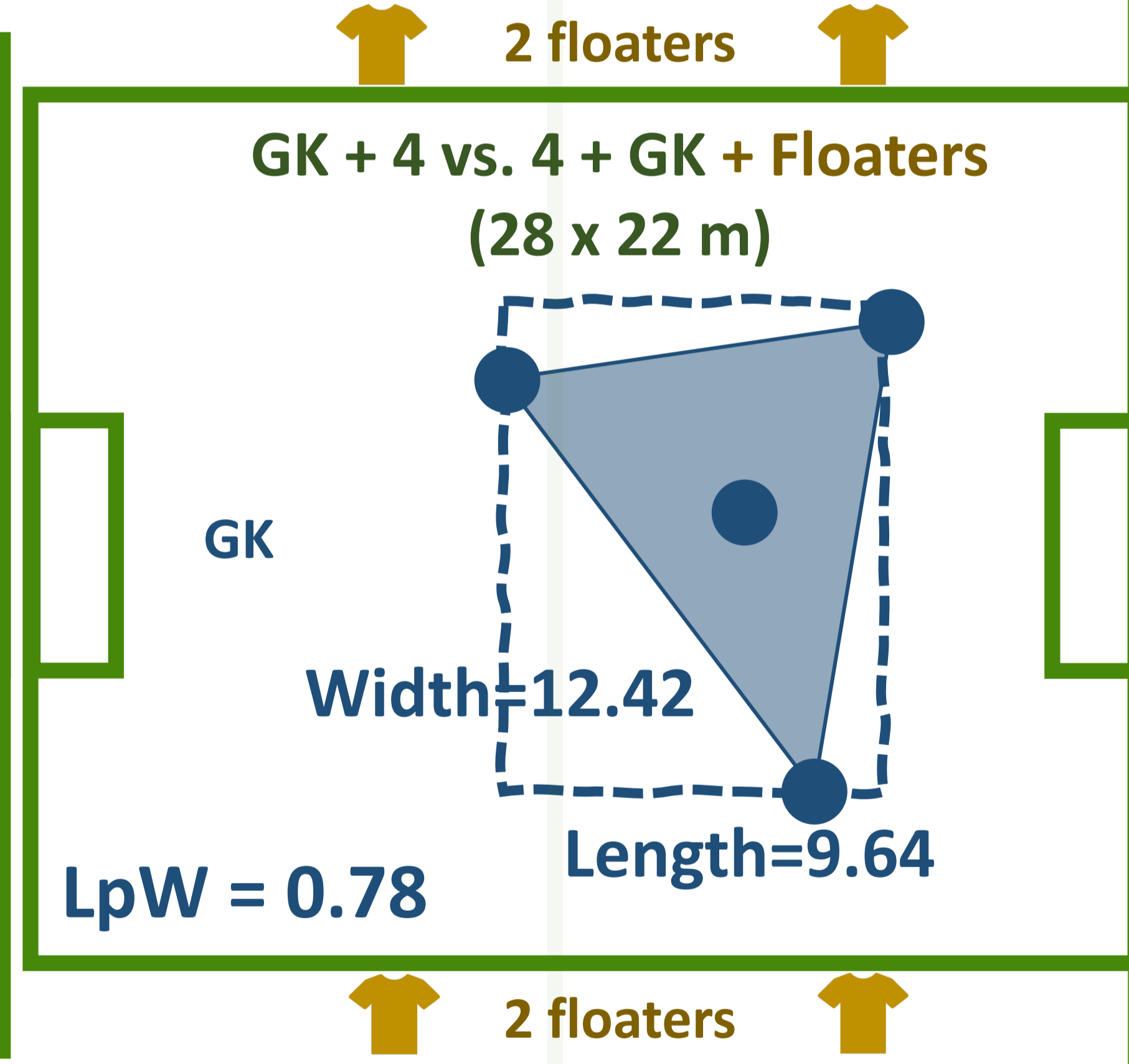
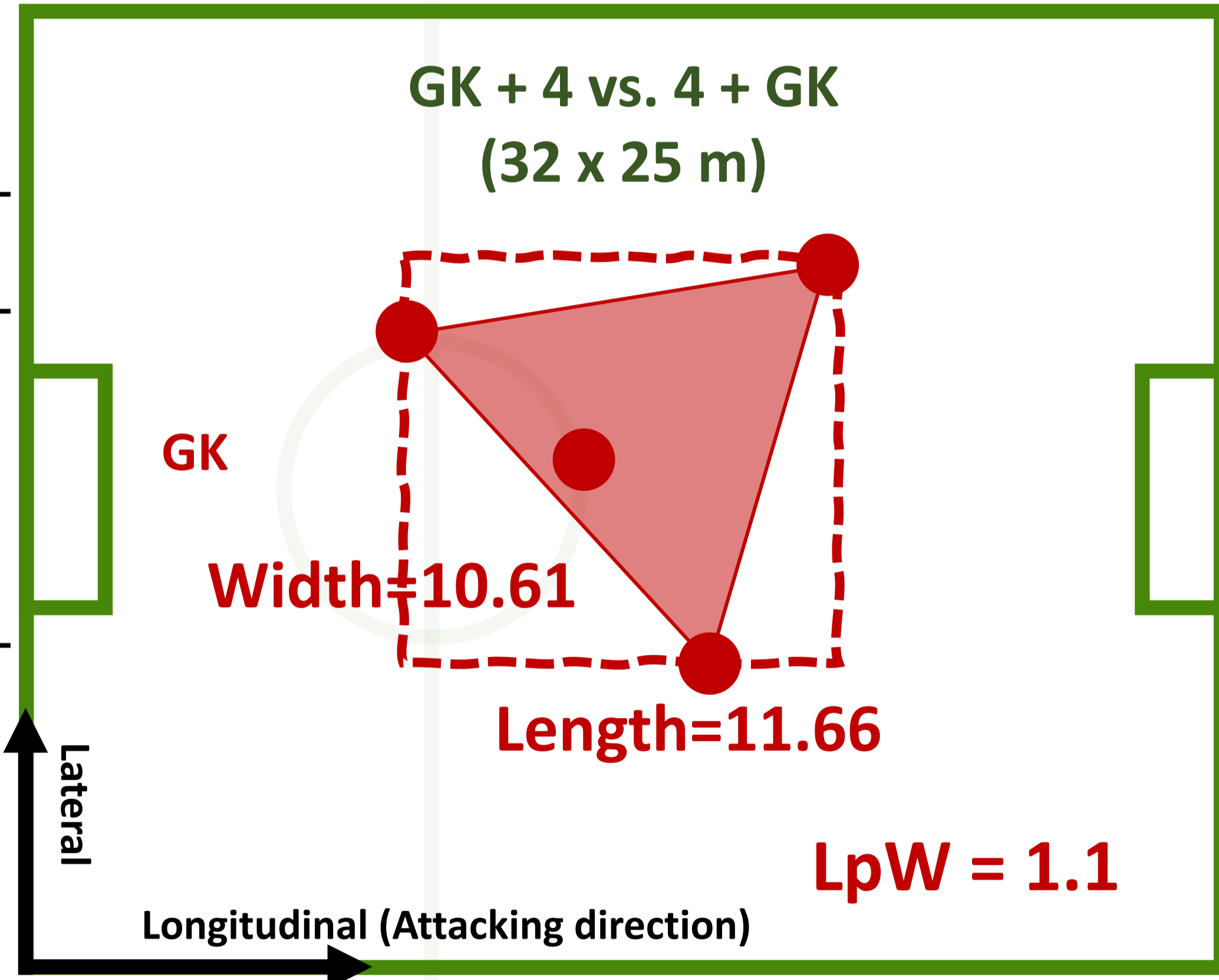
Statistical Analysis



RESULTS

Man-U test		
Tactical Measures	SSGs	d
Length	F<NF*	0.773
Width	F>NF*	1.287
LpW	F<NF**	1.787
SI_x	F<NF*	0.901
SI_y	F>NF*	1.173

F = Floaters SSGs; NF = No-Floater SSGs.
 LpW = Length per Width Ratio.
 SI_x = Longitudinal Stretch Index.
 SI_y = Lateral Stretch Index.
 * Significant differences at P<0.05.
 ** Significant differences at P<0.001.
 d = Cohen's d, effect size.



DISCUSSION

When floaters playing along the length of pitch, team tends to:

- widen dispersion
- play more compacted in attacking direction

For practice, SSGs with floaters can help:

- manage drills according to aims of training & playing style

In the Future

- Segment attacking and defending phases
- Consider interaction with opponents
- Involve floaters movement
- Modify floater rule (e.g., play inside the pitch)