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Impact of International Tournament Absences on Team Performance: A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Indicators

June 2025


Conference: Impact of International Tournament Absences on Team Performance: A Comparative Analysis of Offensive Indicators · At: Covilhã (UBI), Portugal

 João Campos ·  Bruno Travassos ·  Nuno Mateus · [Show all 5 authors](#) ·  Diogo Coutinho

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The absence of key players due to international tournaments may disrupt team performance in professional football (Pérez, 2021). This study analysed offensive performance indicators in 522 matches played by 58 professional teams across the top divisions of England, Spain, Germany, Italy, and France during the 2023-2024 season. Matches were divided into three conditions: before players left for international duties (PRE), during their absence (TOURNMT), and after their return (POST). Data were collected from Wyscout and analysed using ANOVA and Cohen's d for effect size estimation. Findings revealed significant tactical shifts during TOURNMT. Teams exhibited increased total passes ($p < .001$), successful passes ($p < .001$), progressive passes ($p = .005$), and deep completed passes ($p = .031$) compared to PRE, suggesting an adaptation toward a possession-oriented style. In contrast, long passes ($p < .05$) decreased, aligning with prior research that links high long-pass frequency to loss of possession (dos Reis et al., 2017). This shift likely reflects an attempt to control possession and optimise offensive sequences, as seen in teams prioritising shorter, high-frequency passing patterns to enhance offensive efficiency (Zani et al., 2021). Additionally, TOURNMT saw higher total shots ($p = .008$), shots on target ($p = .025$), and goals ($p = .003$) than PRE, reinforcing the effectiveness of adjusted offensive strategies to compensate for the absence of key players. Interestingly, teams' performance metrics largely reverted to PRE levels in the POST phase, with long passes ($p = .007$) and successful crosses ($p = .015$) increasing. This suggests that while player absences necessitate temporary adjustments, teams ultimately return to their pre-tournament playing styles upon their return. However, the transient increase in possession-based metrics during TOURNMT highlights the adaptability of teams and the potential for alternative tactical approaches to optimise offensive play during key player absences (Deb et al., 2024). These findings provide valuable insights for coaches, suggesting that emphasising short passing, controlled ball circulation, and structured positional attacks can help mitigate performance fluctuations when key players are absent. This study expands on football performance literature by illustrating how international tournament absences influence in-game tactical adaptations, offering practical applications for squad management and strategic planning.

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Impact of International Tournament Absence on Player Performance: A Comparative Analysis of Offensive and Defensive Metrics

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The absence of key players due to international tournaments may disrupt professional football (Pérez, 2021). This study analysed offensive performance in matches played by 58 professional teams across the top divisions of England and France during the 2023-2024 season. Matches were divided into three categories: before international duties (PRE), during their absence (TOURNMT), and after their return (POST). Data were collected from Wyscout and analysed using ANOVA and Cohen's d. Findings revealed significant tactical shifts during TOURNMT. Teams exhibited a decrease in long passes ($p < .001$), successful passes ($p < .001$), progressive passes ($p = .005$), and defensive passes ($p = .031$) compared to PRE, suggesting an adaptation toward a possession-oriented style. Conversely, short passes ($p < .05$) increased, aligning with prior research that links high long-pass possession (dos Reis et al., 2017). This shift likely reflects an attempt to control the game during offensive sequences, as seen in teams prioritising shorter, high-frequency passing. Additionally, TOURNMT saw high offensive efficiency (Zani et al., 2021). Additionally, TOURNMT saw high shots on target ($p = .025$), and goals ($p = .003$) than PRE, reinforcing the use of offensive strategies to compensate for the absence of key players. Interestingly, most metrics largely reverted to PRE levels in the POST phase, with long passes (

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




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


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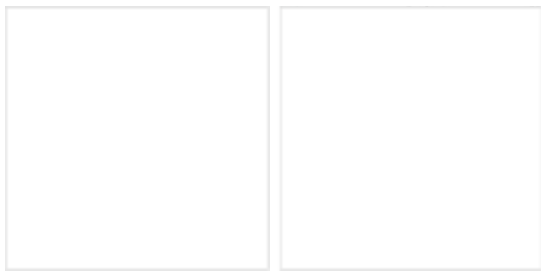
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