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## Game rhythm and stoppages in soccer. A case study from Spain.

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to quantify and analyze the participation/pause game times and stoppages of 11-a-side soccer. A total of 617 players of 44 Spanish men's teams and 33 matches of the 2007/08 and 2008/09 men's soccer players of 2 nd division $A$ and $B$ and 3rd division were studied. The methodology used is observational and systematic, active and non-participating and with an observational instrument based on a

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category system．The variables studied were： Stoppages and Game Rhythm．The most frequent stoppage is out of bound（mean $\pm$ SD）（59．03士

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10．15），followed by fouls（37．33士 7．09）．The stoppage which registers the longest duration（in hours，minutes and seconds）is foul（16＇35＂$\pm$ 3＇48＂），followed by out of bound（14＇30＂士 3＇26＂）． Regarding game rhythm the real time of each match totaled an average of 1h36＇14＂士 2＇03＂ seconds．The actual time of play is on average $49^{\prime} \pm 4 \prime 44$＂while the pause time is $47^{\prime} 14^{\prime \prime} \pm$ 5＇23＂seconds．In the description of the implications of pause time in the game dynamics of soccer， some regularities can be observed；such as the fact that the most frequent stoppages are those made due to fouls and out of bound and that the duration of the majority of these stoppages varies within a range of 4 to 7 seconds．The pauses have shown to be a major element in the study of soccer game rhythm because they take at least half the total time of the match．Consistent with this，it is understood that game rhythm can easily be improved with regulatory modifications such as the elimination of interruptions because of substitutions．

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