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**EXTENDED
ABSTRACT**

Comparison Between Top 3 and Bottom 3 Teams in Euro 2024

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I. INTRODUCTION

Success in elite football depends on tactical adaptability, technical precision, and physical output. [1] and [2] highlighted these factors as key performance indicators. [3] emphasized the importance of balancing possession and direct play, while [4] found that efficient use of movement and execution time contributes to better outcomes. Rising performance standards [5] and attacking strategies [6] further shape competitive results. Therefore, the objective of this study is to compare the possession, passing accuracy, and goals scored between the top 3 and bottom 3 teams in UEFA Euro 2024, aiming to identify key gameplay differences that influence success.

II. METHODS

Teams were selected based on the final Euro 2024 ranking table from the official UEFA website, identifying the top three and bottom three. Gameplay statistics such as possession, passing accuracy, and goals scored data were downloaded from the official UEFA website [7]. The secondary data for final team rankings and match statistics for Euro 2024 were extracted from UEFA's official website, widely recognized as an authoritative source in academic research due to its role as the governing body of European football. Data were organized and processed using Microsoft Excel, while comparative statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi to identify performance differences between the selected teams. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated for each variable. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to assess normality. An independent sample t-test was used to compare the two groups. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$, and effect sizes were reported to determine the magnitude and relevance of any differences observed.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Possession

Top-performing teams averaged 55.56% possession, while bottom teams averaged 41.78%, showing a mean difference of 13.78%, which was statistically significant ($p = 0.004$). This indicates that possession is a critical differentiator between successful and unsuccessful teams in Euro 2024. This finding aligns with [3], who emphasized that possession-based strategies provide better control over the tempo and territory of the match, allowing teams to dictate play and reduce opposition threats. [1] also reported that successful teams in Brazil exhibited higher possession, which correlated with tactical adaptability and sustained performance throughout matches.

B. Passing Accuracy

Top teams recorded an average passing accuracy of 89.33%, compared to 82.56% for bottom teams. The difference was statistically significant ($p = 0.001$), with a very large effect size (*Cohen's d* = 2.358), indicating that elite teams demonstrate greater technical precision and passing discipline. This outcome supports findings by [4], who found that successful World Cup teams displayed superior passing sequences and time-efficient execution, especially during transitional phases. Precise passing contributes to better build-up play, reduces turnover risk, and enables greater control of match tempo.

C. Goal Scored

Top teams scored a total of 13 goals, compared to 8 goals by bottom teams. Although top teams outperformed in scoring, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.211$), with a moderate effect size (*Cohen's d* = 0.614). This result suggests that goal output, while important, might not fully differentiate team success in small samples or short tournaments like the Euro 2024 group stages. Scoring depends heavily on the quality of chances, finishing efficiency, and situational factors like opponent defense or game tempo. This aligns with [2], who highlighted that scoring patterns can vary widely even among successful teams, depending on match context.

TABLE I
DESCRIPTIVE VALUES FOR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Indicator	Top Teams (M ± SD)	Bottom Teams (M ± SD)	t	d
Possession (%)	55.56 ± 9.15	41.78 ± 8.51	3.31	1.559
Goals Scored	1.44 ± 1.13	0.89 ± 0.60	1.30	0.614
Passing Accuracy (%)	89.33 ± 2.74	82.56 ± 3.01	5.00	2.358

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Top-performing teams in Euro 2024 demonstrated significantly superior possession and passing accuracy compared to bottom teams. While goal differences were not statistically significant, moderate practical effects suggest meaningful performance gaps. These findings highlight technical execution and ball control as pivotal elements in competitive football success at the elite international level. Future studies should widen the sample across multiple competitions, embed advanced metrics such as expected-goals, packing rates, and possession-value models, contextualise possession and passing by match state, opponent

calibre, and game phase, and dissect position-specific and style-of-play variations to clarify how technical superiority translates into competitive advantage.

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