

ADG Executive Summary

Introduction

Attacker Defender Goalkeeper (ADG) is an alternative to the penalty shootout. ADG features a series of 10 contests where an attacker kicks off from 32 yards and has 20 seconds to score a goal against a defender and a goalkeeper.

ADG combines the skill, speed, athleticism and dynamic beauty of modern football, with the climactic drama and tension of penalties.

What's Wrong with the Penalty Shootout?

1. Exposes Players to Psychological Trauma, Racism and Death Threats

Death threats were made against Danish and Colombian players after they missed penalties at the 2018 World Cup. Chelsea striker Tammy Abraham received racial abuse and death threats after missing a penalty in the 2019 UEFA Super Cup. Three English players received racial abuse after missing penalties in the 2020 Euro final. FIFA, IFAB and FIFPRO and any group that is concerned about player welfare, need to act before there's a catastrophic real-life tragedy.

2. Fails to Showcase the Game

Every time a showpiece match ends with a goalkeeper guessing the wrong way and a ball dribbling into a goal, or a player crumbling to the ground at the penalty spot, the sport is devalued. In contrast, ADG provides a tie-breaker format where fans can see spectacular and exhilarating goals.

3. Team Kicking First has 20% Advantage

This is patently unfair and contrary to the game's stated goals of improving fair play.

How does ADG work?

The referee tosses a coin and the team that wins the toss, decides whether to attack or defend in the first ADG contest. The teams receive an additional substitution. The referee meets separately with the teams and records their five attackers.

The attacker receives the ball at the ADG mark, which is 32 yards from the goal line. Having seen the attacker, the opposition field their defender. The defender and goalkeeper must be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play.

Half the field is in play. The attacker kicks off and has 20 seconds to try and score a goal. The contest will end if any of the following occur:

- A goal is scored
- The ball goes out of play
- The goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands inside the penalty area
- The 20 seconds elapses
- The attacker commits a foul

If the defender or goalkeeper commits a foul, the attacker is awarded a penalty kick, and the 20 second time period is disregarded for the remainder of that contest.

Teams take turns attacking and defending. Teams play a total of ten ADG contests. At the completion of the contests, the team with the most goals is the winner. If scores remain level, the same players from the first contest, will compete in the first sudden death contest.

The Advantages

1. Reduces Psychological Trauma, Racism and Death Threats

While missed penalty kicks are usually the contributing factor in deciding a shootout, it will be the goals that decide ADG. This distinction is crucial, as it changes a negative natured competition into a positive natured one. Indeed, while the shootout creates a malignant environment where players are routinely exposed to psychological trauma, racism and death threats, ADG creates heroes. In fact, there's considerable first-hand evidence that a missed penalty kick in a critical match fosters serious long-term psychological trauma.

2. Showcases the Game

ADG showcases the skill, speed, athleticism and dynamic beauty of modern football. Conversely, if the match was a cagey scoreless draw, supporters still have the opportunity to see brilliant and exciting goals during ADG.

3. Removes Advantage of Kicking First

Data reveals that the team who takes the first kick in the penalty shootout wins 60% of the time. As the team who wins the toss can always elect to kick first, it's an inherently unfair situation for the opposition. The scoring rate for penalties by professional players in the shootout since 1970 has been 73%. So, the team kicking second is usually playing catch-up and therefore experiences greater pressure with each kick. ADG's scoring rate is estimated at 20%. The dramatically lower scoring rate removes the expectation that the player will always score. Of course, when the associated psychological pressure is removed, there won't be any advantage in attacking first in ADG.

4. Coach and Strategy are Vital

After selecting his five attacking players, the coach instructs the remaining players which of the opposing team's attackers they should defend against. Furthermore, the coach can also strategise with his players on the best way to defend against their specific opponent. Modern football has brought the coach centre stage and this is a great opportunity for them to utilise their knowledge and tactical skills to influence the outcome of the match. Contrast this with the shootout lottery, where the extent of their involvement is usually limited to asking players if they are willing to take a penalty kick.

5. All Players Compete

As every player competes in ADG, it's a fairer test of a team's overall football ability.

6. Encourages Fair Play during the Match

Teams who have received yellow and red cards are at a disadvantage during ADG. This is fairer for teams who have played within the laws and the spirit of the game.

7. Encourages Attacking Play during the Match

ADG counteracts a scenario of a team playing totally defensively, in the belief that their best chance of winning is via the penalty shootout. This is especially common when a team has had a player sent off and is referred to as "playing for penalties."

While the likelihood of receiving yellow or red cards during the shootout is almost non-existent, these sanctions are more conceivable during ADG. As any additional sanctions will likely hinder teams as they progress through the elimination stages of tournaments, there's more incentive for teams to attack and try and win the game in normal play.

Teams will be discouraged from substituting creative attacking players during the match, as their skills will be invaluable if ADG eventuates. By keeping these players on the field it increases the likelihood of a winning goal during normal play.

ADG Kick-off Positions

- The attacker receives the ball at the ADG mark, which is 29.26m (32 yards) from the goal line and equidistant from the touchlines.
- The defender and goalkeeper must be at least 9.15m (10 yards) from the ball until it is in play.
- The referee is positioned for a kick-off.
- One assistant referee is positioned on the goal line and assists the referee with decisions in a similar way to an additional assistant referee.
- The attacking team's goalkeeper remains behind the goal line assistant referee.
- The other assistant referee is positioned within the centre circle of the disused half of the field and supervises the players who are currently not competing.



ADG Kick-off Positions for Players and Referees