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Director: Fernando Emilio Valladares Fuente

Email: fernando.valladares@upr.edu.cu

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Editorial

Beach Soccer: where the goal is not only to win

Fútbol playa: donde el gol no solo es ganar

Futebol de praia: onde o objetivo não é apenas vencer

Fernando Emilio Valladares Fuente^{1*}  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4952-1846>

Daniel Alejandro Ayala Obando¹  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4314-4499>

¹Pinar del Río University Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca, Faculty of Physical Culture "Nancy Uranga Romagoza ", Pinar del Río, Cuba.

²Faculty of Physical Culture. Central University of Ecuador. Quito, Ecuador

*Corresponding author: fernando.valladares@upr.edu.cu



There, where the sand kisses the sea and the waves greet the rocks, a ball runs from brother to brother in search of a victory that few would notice that it is reduced to a victory by superiority. It is much more than a sport, although it is generally attributed as a derivative of the soccer that we all know. But it is not precisely that, because beach soccer has earned its own autonomy, its indisputable originality; that goes from sports to recreation and from recreation to permanent care towards the environment that surrounds the

coast, its best abode, where it is possible that millions of years ago species evolved from the sea to the land.

Beach soccer originated in Brazil in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This sport was part of a natural spectacle on the beautiful beaches of Rio de Janeiro. But it did not take long to become an international sports passion promoted by its practitioners in France, Spain and Brazil; who helped this playful phenomenon to obtain worldwide recognition.



This sport, as a popular contagion, grew rapidly and tourist and recreational activities in the world soon began to think of this alternative to offer a service of health, leisure and physical activity to its users. So, the focus early was inclined more as a way of distraction, use of free time than in debating the rules of the game, the characteristics of the field and the relationship with other sports with similar aspects such as soccer and futsal.

All these last topics that have been mentioned, in addition to the interaction with the athletes and the environment in which it is played, have been issues addressed by science but gradually and unfortunately not as widespread as it deserves; this is perhaps the fundamental objective of this editorial.

If it is a question of exploring in the scientific literature what the first approaches to beach soccer have been, perhaps it coincides with this statement that is already exposed, since from the 90s, when it is deduced, its emergence was, it was only in the 2000s, precisely in Brazil, where research begins on the somatotype of the athletes of this sport (Fazolo *et al.*, 2005).

As it was expected that this sport required strength, endurance and agility on a sandy terrain and practically without shoes, it was very necessary to have research that delved into the state of health, particularly regarding the cardiovascular condition in the athlete (Castellano, Casamichana, 2010).

Considering its relationship with similar sports such as soccer and futsal, very interesting preliminary results have been obtained, for example; in recent years, both in soccer and beach soccer, the number of goals has decreased, but not in futsal, which has behaved differently. As a similarity between the three, it has been proven that most of the goals have been produced in the last period of the game. Examining the influence of the first goal in the final part of the game, there is a 70 % probability of winning for soccer and futsal, however, for beach soccer, only 60 % prevails, so it is suggested that for that good results are guaranteed, the characteristics of the athletes, the interaction between the physical, tactical, psychological aspects are studied, in addition to the weight of these athletes in relation to each team sport (Leite, Barreira, 2014).

And as these similarities and differences are striking, other studies have been carried out, mostly in order to inform coaches, trainers and organizations what the characteristics of these athletes should be. In the case of Leite, (2016); this time he makes a comparison between athletes of the three sports and states that the energy consumption in the aerobic metabolism for a soccer athlete is identified with an intensity average between 50 and 75 ml·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹; for futsal, between 50-55 ml kg⁻¹ min⁻¹, while for the beach soccer athlete the duration of intensity in their efforts is less than 2 seconds and the presence of muscle strength is more than 90 %.

Obviously, not all athletes have these characteristics and regularly get injured in training and in games. This has been the object of study by Japanese scientists who have been interested in compiling the most frequent types of injuries and their treatment in a preventive and recuperative way (Shimakawa, *et al.*, 2016).

There is no doubt that the strength in the beach soccer player must be basically greater than in the other variants. However, this is not always the case in practice and athletes are often observed who, without apparently showing this muscular strength, score goals with great skill and exercise a technique that would only be possible to evaluate in



studies such as those proposed by [De Lira et al. \(2017\)](#), who develops a cross-sectoral study based on muscle strength around the knee.

All these studies have had as essential characteristic, a concern towards the competitive, towards the technical. On the contrary, the scientific approach of this sport to its environmental dimension has been very reduced, which inevitably prevails, specifically because of the environment in which it is carried out, the beach.

Have most people realized that the beaches, especially those in insular regions and low-lying areas, have been threatened by the loss of their biodiversity and extension? Has everyone understood that this threat stems from climate change, salinization and rising sea levels globally?

It is very possible that all human beings are not aware of this reality or at least have ignored it, being able to help prevent pollution, erosion or expulsion of toxic gases into the atmosphere.

But, on the other hand, there are organizations that do remain active and constructive in this effort. This is the case of the Ecoflag movement, led globally by Mr. Hiroyuki Ito, president of the Japan National Beach Soccer Network, who has dedicated himself for many years to taking action with his athletes and enthusiasts to protect the environment from coastal areas where they usually train and compete.

Not only in Japan this movement has gained great value and recognition, in any contest that the event is held environmental ads, ecological products and sanitation actions are shown in different countries such as Brazil, the United States, and others.

Currently, teams have been incorporated into this sport with this environmental profile, such as the Ecoflag Pinar Beach Soccer team (Cuba), which has been made up of soccer players, who have been motivated by the attractiveness, development and education of this sport.

It is already part of the Pinar beach soccer show that the young people, before competing, prepare the ground with ecological means, clean up the coastline and protect the area and its biodiversity, since it is clear that their coordinators have transmitted the well-felt message that the goal here does not only imply winning but taking care of the space so that others continue playing and enjoying.

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The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents



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