

USFC 2016: Fermanagh v Antrim, Preliminary Round, 15.05.16, Brewster Park.

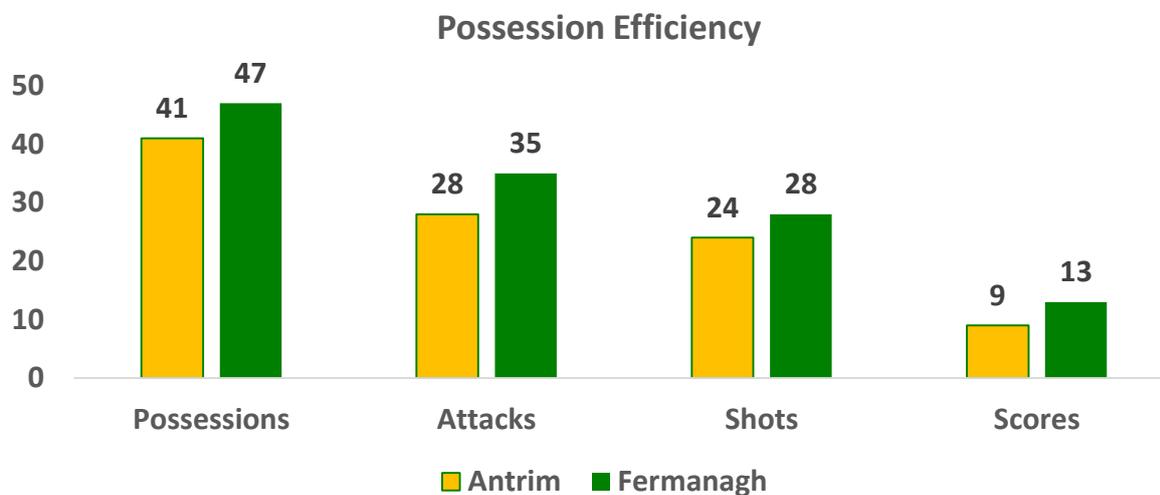
Performance analysis has become a major component of the coaching process. A combination of statistical information and video clips allow coaches to analyse performance and provide feedback on both individual and team performance. The same process also allows a coaching team to establish the positives and negatives from each performance, and should provide them with a guide as to the exact needs of the team in subsequent training sessions.

Throughout the Ulster Senior football championship 2016, Ulster GAA will be providing statistical analysis, supported by video clips analysing each game.

Possession

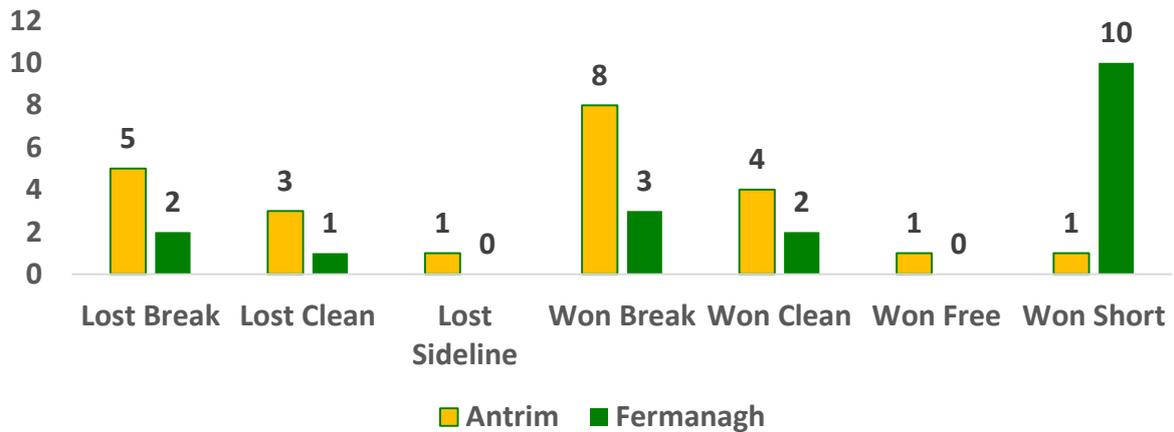
Possession is considered a key factor in match analysis, despite the fact little evidence exists to suggest superior possession share relates to successful outcome. In many sports, possession is measured as percentage of time spent on the ball. However, in GAA, it is more pertinent to assess possession as a count – the number of possessions each team has during a game.

On Sunday past, Fermanagh enjoyed a greater number of possessions (47 versus 41). They were able to sustain this advantage through the various stages of possession, and ultimately secure the greater number of scores required to win the match. Interestingly the winning margin of 6 points matched the possession advantage they enjoyed.



Both teams recorded an even number of turnovers (22 each), which points to the kick out contest as the significant factor in the possession count. Antrim only claimed 3 Fermanagh kick outs, conceding 10 short. Based on Antrim's success rate when forcing Fermanagh to take longer kicks (38%), had they forced the other 10 kicks to be taken long, they could have secured an extra 3-4 possessions in this match – which, when we take into account that this would reduce Fermanagh's count by the same number, would likely have balanced the possession count.

Kick Out Breakdown

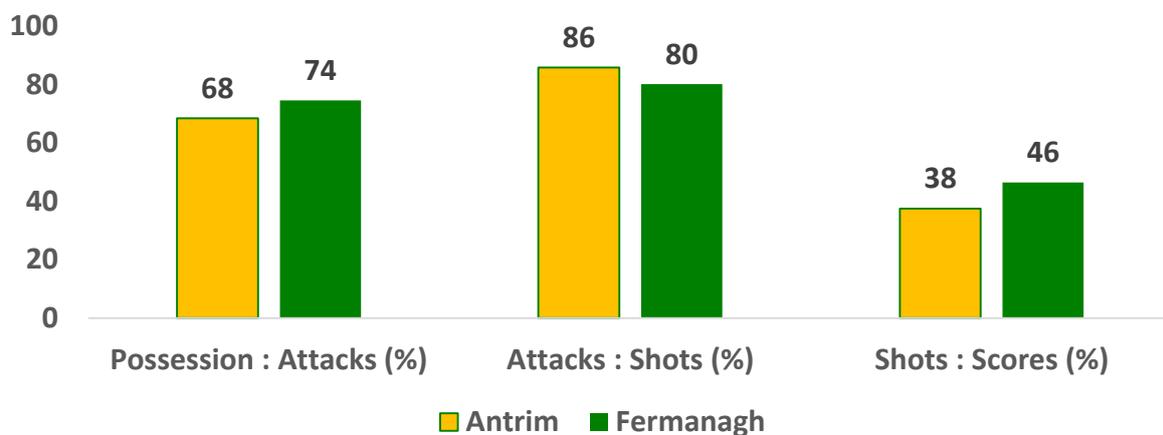


Efficiency in Possession

A key reason that higher possession count does not necessarily point to winning outcomes is the ability of a team to convert possession to the scoreboard. By breaking down each possession to stages it can help establish where / how a team is failing in their use of possession. When a team secures possession inside their opponent's 45m line it can be considered an attack.

To compound Antrim's lower possession count, they were also less effective at penetrating Fermanagh's defensive zone, only getting 68% of their possessions inside the attacking third. Of their 22 turnovers, half (11) were as a result of stray kick passing – when reviewing the video of the game it was clear to see that Antrim attempted to kick long into the attacking zone on numerous occasions, with many of these attempts intercepted by the Fermanagh defence.

Possession Conversion

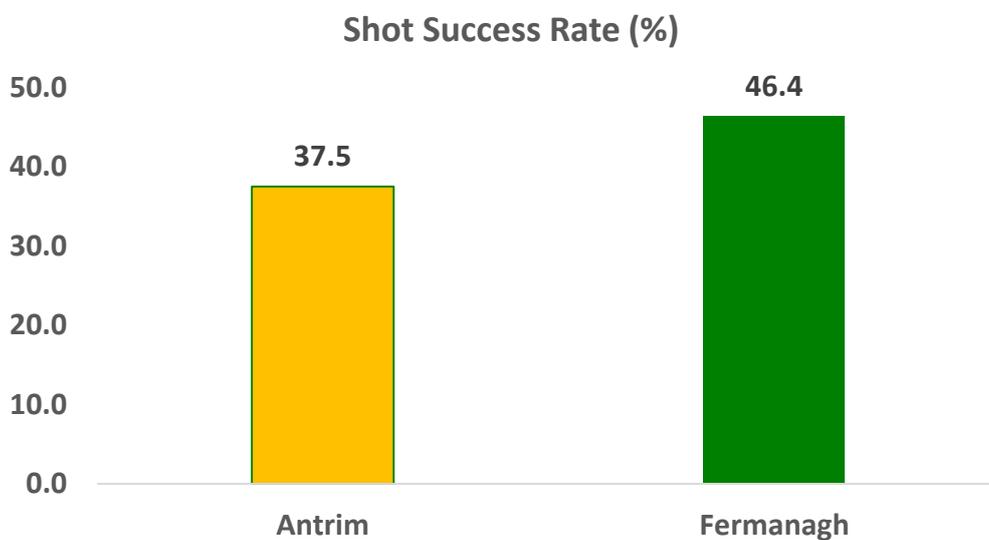


Antrim were very effective at creating shooting chances when they did penetrate the defensive zone (86%). However, despite creating shooting chances, their efficiency in front of goal was poor.

Shot Success Rate (%)

Shot success rate (%) is a measurement that has been linked with successful outcome, with the dominant teams of recent seasons also proving the most clinical in front of goal. While they may not have significantly more possessions, nor a greater number of shots, they are successful with a greater number of efforts, and this ultimately leads to a winning outcome.

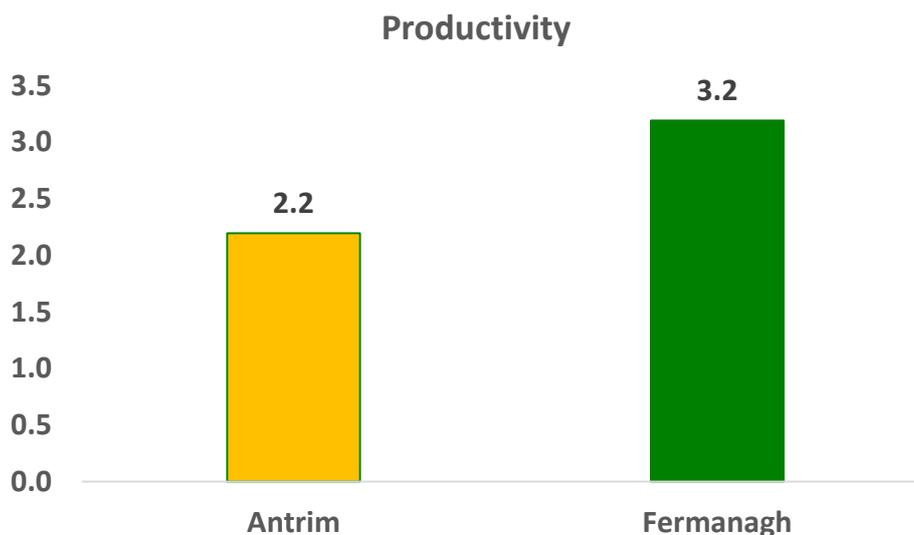
On Sunday, both teams displayed Jekyll and Hyde tendencies. In the first half Fermanagh returned a score from an acceptable 1 out of every 2 shots (50%). However, in the second half this slipped to 40% success. Antrim, were the opposite, with only 2 from 11 shots successful in the first half (18%), but an excellent 54% of their shots successful in the second half. Neither team will be satisfied with their overall shot success rates from this game, and despite some excellent scores, and an excellent half each, there were a number of issues evident in terms of both shot selection and shot execution.



Productivity

Productivity is a measure which calculates how many points a team delivered from every 10 possessions. While not true in all games, a typical threshold for a winning performance is 3.0.

In the preliminary round match, Fermanagh achieved this threshold, achieving a return of 3.2 points per 10 possessions, vastly superior to Antrim's 2.2. When we factor Fermanagh's better productivity with a greater share of possession it becomes clearer to understand the basis of their 6 point victory.



Fermanagh – lessons for training

Overall, Fermanagh will be reasonably happy with their performance on Sunday. That said, there are a few issues they will need to address ahead of their Quarter Final clash with Donegal.

- Shot success rate of 46.4% was too low, and was significantly lowered by their poor second half performance in front of goal;
- General possession use in the second half, with a fall of 20% in their ability to penetrate the attacking zone in the second half (64%) when compared with the first half (84%);
- Defensive effectiveness in the final third may be of concern as they progress to meet Donegal, who are typically highly accurate in front of goal. Fermanagh allowed Antrim a shot 86% of the time they entered the attacking zone, and were lucky not to get punished more heavily on the scoreboard – owing mainly to Antrim’s poor finishing than good defending.

Antrim – lessons for training

Antrim will no doubt be disappointed with their performance, and, as with most defeats, will be looking at the numbers and rueing this game as a chance that got away. They will be hoping to address a couple of key issues ahead of their first qualifier match.

- Challenging opposition kick outs - Having only won 3 (17%) of Fermanagh’s kick outs they will have to review their approach to allowing short kick outs, and attempt to force opposition to kick long, where they are more likely to enjoy success;
- Penetration of the attacking third. Antrim struggled (68%) to get sufficient possession into the attacking third, with a significant volume of the possession kicked to Fermanagh defensive players;
- They will be keen to repeat their shooting from the second half, when they scored from 54% of their attempts. However, an 18% return in the first half proved very costly, and efforts will need to be made to ensure this is not repeated in future games.