**Visual exploratory activity in elite women’s soccer: An analysis of the UEFA Women’s European Championship 2022**

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Women’s soccer is currently experiencing a dramatic increase in popularity and professionalism (Griffin, 2020; Okholm Kryger et al., 2021). Recent research has developed understanding of the technical and tactical determinants of success in elite women’s soccer, with literature finding the more successful teams are those who maintain longer spells of possession (Ivan-Baragano et al., 2022; Maneiro, 2020; Soroka & Bergier, 2010), make more passes resulting in goal scoring opportunities (Kubayi & Larkin, 2020), and have high interconnectivity and more successful ball transfers and effective ball movements (de Jong et al., 2022). Despite this, a lack of research exists on analysing how elite female players visually explore their environment to support skilled soccer performance. The study aimed to describe the visual exploratory activity (VEA) of elite female central midfield players, using matches from the UEFA Women’s EURO 2022 as exemplar elite performance data. A secondary aim was to understand the relationships between VEA, performance with the ball and specific contextual and situational factors. Thirty female central midfield players (*M* age = 26.7 years, *SD* = 3.8) from the eight teams who competed in the knock-out stages of UEFA Women’s EURO 2022 were analysed. Television broadcast and UEFA tactical footage were combined to analyse players across the seven knock-out stage matches, totalling 1,038 individual ball possessions. The mean scan frequency in the 10 seconds before receiving the ball was 0.35 (scans/second), which can be compared with elite youth (0.42 scans/second) and professional (0.44 scans/second) male soccer respectively (Aksum et al., 2021; Jordet et al., 2020). Results showed pitch location when receiving the ball as the main predictor of scan frequency, with highest scan frequencies observed in central defensive pitch locations. Results further showed scan frequency as being related to action result (*p* < 0.003). Therefore, pitch location appears an important variable when understanding VEA in elite women’s soccer.