

Colombian football league

1st Kaleth Molina Diaz

20232020096

kmolinad@udistrital.edu.co

2nd David Felipe García León

20231020202

dfgarcial@udistrital.edu.co

Abstract—The following paper addresses the analysis of the Colombian Football League system from a complex systems perspective, using concepts such as synergy, entropy, chaos theory, adaptability, recursion, butterfly effect and domino effect. The Colombian league behaves as a dynamic system in which the interactions between actors—teams, players, managers, fans and regulators—generate emerging patterns and behaviors that cannot be predicted simply by analyzing individual components.

I. INTRODUCTION

Football is a highly complex sport, where multiple factors interact to produce outcomes that are difficult to predict. The Colombian football league is no exception, being a highly interconnected system that involves a wide range of actors and factors, from teams and players to sponsors, media and regulators. In this paper, several concepts from systems theory will be applied to explain the emergent behaviors and dynamics that affect the development of the league.

II. SYSTEMS THEORY CONCEPTS

A. Chaos Theory

Chaos theory manifests itself in the Colombian league in the way that small events can have large repercussions on the development of the championship. A seemingly insignificant change, such as an unfair expulsion of a player or a goal in the last minute, can trigger a series of unexpected results that radically alter the order in the standings. This non-linearity characteristic of chaos shows that traditional predictions about the favorite teams or the probabilities of success can be made obsolete by a single incident. This concept is especially observed in short tournaments, where a streak of victories or defeats can determine the immediate future of a team.

B. Sinergy

Synergy is one of the fundamental pillars of success in team sports. In the Colombian league, the results obtained by teams are not simply the sum of the individual skills of their players. Synergy occurs when positive interactions between team members and the coaching staff produce a performance that is higher than expected. Teams with modest rosters but high cohesion, such as La Equidad or Aguilas Doradas, have managed to surprise teams with larger budgets and more talented players, proving that teamwork and strategy can exceed expectations. This synergy, however, is fragile and highly sensitive to changes in the team structure, such as the rotation of key players or a change of coach.

C. Entropy

Entropy, in the context of the Colombian league, reflects the degree of uncertainty that builds up as the season progresses. Injuries, sanctions, weather changes, and other external factors can disrupt the structure of the championship, increasing the disorder and making predictions about the final results difficult. A clear example is how teams that start the season in a solid way, such as Junior or Millonarios, can suffer fluctuations in their performance due to accumulated fatigue, the unexpected sale of players, or controversial refereeing decisions that change the course of the competition. This phenomenon reflects the tendency towards chaos as the system becomes more complex and less predictable.

D. Adaptability

Adaptability is a key quality in the Colombian league, especially in a context where conditions can change rapidly due to economic, political or sporting factors. Teams that are better able to adapt to circumstances – such as injuries to key players, new regulations or the loss of sponsors – tend to be more successful in the long term. A recent example is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced clubs to quickly adjust their rosters and financial strategies to survive the crisis. Those with more flexibility and adaptability managed to remain competitive in the league.

E. Recursion

Recursiveness in the Colombian league is seen in the repetitive cycles of success and failure that affect clubs. Teams tend to repeat patterns of behavior, such as the constant rotation of coaches in search of a winning formula or fluctuations in performance due to internal crises. This perpetual cycle is particularly visible in mid-level teams that oscillate between qualifying for international tournaments and relegation, reflecting a repetition of circumstances that seem to be on a loop.

F. Butterfly effect

The butterfly effect illustrates how small changes can create big effects in the Colombian league system. A key decision by a referee, an unexpected signing or a tactical change can have significant repercussions throughout the season. For example, a player being sent off in a crucial match can completely alter a team's strategy, affecting their performance not only in that match, but in subsequent matches, which can influence the league's overall standings.

G. Domino effect

The domino effect describes how a small event can trigger a cascade of consequences throughout the league. When a team enters a financial crisis, as happened with Cúcuta Deportivo, the repercussions are felt throughout the league. The sale of players, the loss of sponsors and the drop in performance affect other teams by disrupting the transfer market and changing the competitive balance. This effect shows the interconnectedness of the system and how the collapse of a single team can destabilise the national football ecosystem.

III. IMPACT OF EXTERNAL FACTORS ON THE COLOMBIAN LEAGUE

A. Economic conditions

The fluctuations of the Colombian economy directly affect clubs. In periods of economic recession, teams tend to have fewer resources to sign players, which alters the dynamics of competition and can increase entropy in the system.

B. Government policies and sports regulations

Changes in football regulations (such as relegation rules, salary caps or the number of foreigners allowed) can create ripple effects throughout the league. This section may include an analysis of how decisions by Colombian football governing bodies have altered the course of several seasons.

C. Technological intervention

With the implementation of VAR (Video Assistant Referee), the impact on refereeing decision-making and how this affects team performance can be analysed under the framework of chaos theory. A goal disallowed by VAR can drastically change the trajectory of a match and, by extension, the season.

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