In Australian Football, stronger teams are more likely to be both the scorer of the previous and next scoring event (O’Shaughnessy 2006). However, there is little evidence that has investigated the progression of scoring events across the duration of a complete match in the Australian football league (AFL). Previous research suggests that scoring events can be described by a Poisson process, that is, scoring events are a sequence of independent events, whereby events early in games have little to no impact on events late in games (Merritt & Clauset 2014). Despite this apparent random nature of scoring events, different scoring behaviours occur during different time ranges of competition. Merritt and Clauset (2014) observed 3 common patterns in the frequency of scoring events in American football, baseball and basketball. These patterns are; a non-linear increase in scoring frequency at the beginning of game periods, a stable scoring frequency during the middle of periods and a sharp increase in scoring frequency at the end of a game period (Merritt & Clauset 2014). The increase in scoring frequency towards the end of game periods has also been observed in professional soccer, with the frequency of scoring events greater in the last 15 minutes of the second half (Alberti et al. 2013; Michailidis, Michailidis & Primpa 2013). Merritt and Clauset (2014) suggest that this increased frequency may arise from an increase in the amount of risky actions taken due to the impending loss of position at the end of these game periods. Additionally, the last game period should have the greatest scoring frequency as there are no scoring opportunities available following this time period (Merritt & Clauset 2014). This phenomena has been observed in professional soccer, with scoring frequency significantly (p < 0.001) greater in the second half (55.1%) when compared to the first half (44.9%) (Alberti et al. 2013). Although a logical line of thinking, this phenomena has not been extensively investigated, with another study failing to find a significant difference between scoring frequency from the first and second half in professional soccer (Michailidis, Michailidis & Primpa 2013).

In many team sports, there is a change in possession following a scoring event. Sports that are free-flowing in nature (large number of scoring events), a score from one team is likely followed by a score from the other team (Gabel & Redner 2012). This may explain why there is an increased probability of scoring observed when the period of time between scoring events are low in professional basketball (De Saá Guerra et al. 2013). The fast-break has the highest scoring success rate in basketball (De Saá Guerra et al. 2013). The fast-break is often initiated following a turnover early on in the opposing team’s possession. This could suggest that increasing the exposure to scoring event types with the highest success rate, may increase the frequency of scoring events. However, these type of scoring events are often associated with an increased risk of negative consequences. Therefore, it remains to be seen if teams with a greater frequency of high success rate scoring events types have more desirable game outcomes.

The progression of scoring events may also be influenced by which team is leading and the size of the lead. By being behind, it has been observed that there is a tendency for the score differential to reduce (Gabel & Redner 2012). This observation was suggested to arise from the winning team coasting, or as a result of an increased motivation from the losing team (Gabel & Redner 2012). This psychological mindset from opposing teams may be influenced by the size of the score differential. A small deficit in basketball at half-time increased the likelihood of winning and scoring frequency, in particular right after the half-time break, for the losing team (Berger & Pope 2011). This was attributed to an increased exertion by the losing team (Berger & Pope 2011). The larger the score differential, the less exertion

This was driven by an increased exertion of effort from players (Berger & Pope 2011). This increased exertion decreased with an increasing lead size, with another study finding that a lead of greater than 28 points in basketball

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