

## **Shot Performance – Pressure or Not to Pressure**

Pressure is defined as a member of the opposing team that is within 5 yards of the person with the ball, closing in on them. If successful, the pressuring player is within 3 yards of the ball carrier and is directly impacting their play. A pressure could be on a player or a lane and is not applied to static opposition.

In any sport, pressure directly impacts play as it is essential in playing defense – defensive end vs offensive tackle, or Gary Payton vs Michael Jordan. Often, defense (pressure) impacts the opposition's goal. It impacts FG % in basketball. Keeping with that idea, often the best scorers, score, even with pressure. It is in the face of adversity that successful teams still score regardless of the circumstances.

## **Shooting– Pressures vs Non-Pressure**

On average, most teams are worse when they must work for their shot. Take the United States for example. They have taken 46 shots so far in the 2022 World Cup. Of those, the shooter has been pressured 19 times, roughly 40% of the time. They scored 0 of those 19 goals. Not one. Conversely, they have a 14% shot success rate when they are not pressured. Now where it starts to get fun is -

## **Argentina's Shot Performance**

Argentina have also been under pressure on their shots for roughly 40%. Of those shots, they have had a much higher success rate against pressure, 15%. Considering goals are so hard to come by and in a competition such as the World Cup, it could be one small way to explain why Argentina is here in the final and not the United States.

## **Comparative Insights: France vs. Argentina**

When comparing the two teams in the final:

1. **Vs Pressure:** Argentina has a higher shot success rate under pressure (15%) compared to France (9%) and France is still in the Top 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is quite the gap for teams vying for the cup.
2. **Vs Non-Pressure:** As one would expect, both teams perform better when not under pressure, but Argentina's higher success rate suggests they are better at finishing overall as both teams have roughly the same number of shots taken, Argentina 99 and France 94, respectively.

## **Conclusion & Next Steps**

Pressure on the shooter is only one piece of the puzzle. Argentina appears a little less fazed when dealing with opposition, maintaining a higher-than-average shot success rate in challenging situations. Combine that with their top-rated finishing ability overall and you got your hands full. As for future analysis, it would be useful introduce weights as Costa Rica has a 25% success rate against pressure on 11 total shots, 4 being pressured. If we normalized the rates with a process called 'logging', we would then reduce the effects outliers have. Weights would allow for a more normalized view. Add in a view at which teams are great at pressuring and now we've started to get a more holistic view.

## Pressure v No Pressure - Goal Success

How Teams Perform When Pressured vs Not Pressured While Shooting the Ball

