

CHAPTER 69

Stadiums x covid-19: a new way to twist

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ABSTRACT

Amid the global pandemic, football stadiums have been recruited to fight COVID-19 and others have been used behind closed doors. Thus, this research aims to examine how football stadiums have been utilized in the face of COVID19. The results indicate use as field hospitals, shelters, testing sites, storage for donations and materials, or isolation centers in single cheer for life.

Keywords: Stadiums. Football. COVID-19. Utilize. To cheer.

1 INTRODUCTORY

The new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) appeared in the city of Wuhan/China in December 2019. The virus is easily transmitted causing infections to severe respiratory syndromes by the disease COVID-19, with this, it progressed rapidly throughout China forcing the local government to close its doors (MINISTRY OF HEALTH, 2020).

In 2020, it has spread across Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Europe, mainly affecting Italy and Spain. Without delay, it attacks the United States, Canada, and Mexico (BIANCHINI, 2020; BRAUN, 2020). Afterward, it arrived in South America (HALLAL, 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11 declares a global pandemic and governments have adopted countermeasures: quarantine, cancellation of activities that have agglomerations of people, and closings of cities and countries (FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2020b).

Resulting in the drastic reduction of the capitalist system, including sport. In football, FIFA has postponed the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup Qatar (FIFA, 2020). Italy and Spain canceled matches. The English Premier League stopped, and the French with Ligue 1 ended the league by consecrating Paris Saint-Germain champion. In Holland, the Eredivisie ended without declaring the champion.

CONMEBOL postponed Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana (ESPN, 2020). The championships of Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Ecuador, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia, and Bolivia stopped and/or postponed. In Brazil, the CBF could not even start the Brasileirão, stopped the Copa do Brasil, and, in a cascade effect, the State Championships in progress.

On the opposite side, K-League and Bundesliga, South Korea, and Germany stopped games initially. But, in May, the matches resumed with a medical protocol, without spectators, and behind closed doors, pointing to a scenario of greater hope (DUARTE, 2020).

However, linked to football, are the stadiums or arenas, which are natural stages of the show and depend on the modality to remain active. However, in the midst of the pandemic they were recruited to fight COVID-19 and others have been used behind closed doors. Thus, this research aims to examine how football stadiums have been used in the face of COVID-19.

For the present study, we used the methods of bibliographic and documental research (SÁ-SILVA, ALMEIDA E GUINDANI, 2009). These are distinguished by their sources, conventional writings are used in bibliographic research (articles, theses, dissertations, books, etc.) and in documentary research materials that have not received analytical treatment (reports, photos, videos, reports, etc.). Then, following the precepts of Sá-Silva, Almeida, and Guindani (2009), we organized the text and produced the analyzes within the scope of the study.

With COVID-19 imposing restrictions on football, stadiums were closed and took on a new connotation and a different way of cheering. Now the practices inside the arenas happen with a single crowd or even, unusually, against the virus that hit humanity hard.

From the data collected, we found cases of direct action against COVID-19 around the world. We started with Asia, in South Korea, the Olympic Stadium in Seoul was transformed into a test site serving people who arrive on foot or by car with a “drive-thru” system. In addition, the stadium functioned as a place of quarantine for people who had nowhere to go (RUPTLY, 2020).

In Europe, the Signal Iduna Park, from the German club Borussia Dortmund, was used as a provisional test center (BUNDESLIGA, 2020). Tottenham English was the first in the Premier League to open the doors against the coronavirus, making the parking lot available at the Tottenham Hotspur Football Stadium to serve as a quick test site (VEAL, 2020). In Spain, Real Madrid's Galaticos joined the fight against COVID -19, hosting the Santiago Bernabéu to serve as a depository for medical donations (GLOBO ESPORTE, 2020).

The African continent also adhered to other ways of cheering and transformed Teslim Balogun Stadium, in Lagos/Nigeria, into a center for shelter and isolation of people suspected of or with the disease (TVC NEWS, 2020). In Kenya, Machakos Stadium, by government decision, converted its facilities, including the lawn, to serve as a hospital (CGNT AFRICA, 2020).

Leaving for South America, in Uruguay, the Centenario stadium welcomes homeless people and homeless people in order to contain the spread of COVID-19 (GAZETA DO POVO, 2020). In Brazil, we identified São Paulo (Pacaembu), Fortaleza (President Vargas), Rio de Janeiro (Maracanã/Célio de Barros), and Brasília (Mané Garrincha), all serving as field hospitals to expand the capacity of healthcare services (FREE RATCHET, 2020; FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2020a).

On the other hand, in the leagues that “opened the doors” we find actions to generate the presence of somewhat curious fans, for example, inflatable dolls with posters simulating fans in South Korea; a sound system with chants of fans and boos against the opponent, flags and decorative banners, installation of banners with photos of fans and posthumous tributes to the victims of COVID-19 through the minute of silence (FOX SPORTS, 2020; GLOBO) SPORT 2020b).

2 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Football stadiums in the face of COVID-19 act with another purpose, to increase the capacity of health services, contributing to society and presenting only one crowd, that of life. Serving fans as field hospitals, shelters, testing sites, storage for donations, and materials or isolation centers, the stadium and arenas will go down in history as a space that in the pandemic became a hybrid in face of its original function.

In those stadiums that have managed to come back with closed basements, TV cheering habits are more prevalent than ever. However, this action also brought changes in the way of cheering, inserting puppets in place of fans, ambient sound system simulating chants; banners, banners, and solitary flags.

The sport that has always sought to link examples to a healthier life, now sees its installations “hand in hand” for life, in addition to unveiling possible new forms of uses for the act of cheering, which are beyond the standards conventionally constructed throughout history.

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