# Data analysis is really helping the Dutch national women's soccer team

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Credit: KNVB/Media

The European Football Championship for Women, in the Netherlands this summer, is the background of a large and innovative data research project. The Dutch football union is cooperating with Leiden University and Sportinnovator. The research is going to find links that have thus far remained unknown.

## Optimize the game

To be able to perform optimally in top sport, optimal conditions are necessary. In the past, good shoes and a decent ball were enough, but

today super computers are of help. Scientists of Leiden University's Sport Data Center know how to use this to optimize the football game. A large data investigation is supposed to give new insights.

## Extreme computing power

'What we do, is look at football from a mathematical point a view', says professor Joost Kok. 'As if the players are moving parts.' Kok's computers have an extreme computing power. 'We can see the what the players are doing with respect to each other. How they cooperate and what patterns can be observed. And whether certain actions lead to the result you wish for. That can be of help making a plan for field tactics. On the long run, it can also improve scouting, training and coaching.'

## Decisive information

Peter Blangé is the performance manager of the KNVB. As a former top sportsman, he recognizes the added value of data analysis. 'It can provide you with decisive information and new insights. It is one to collect the data, but something else to use it for the best. Then, you'll improve both individual players and whole teams.'

## Step further

At the next EC, all duals of the Dutch team will be scrutinized. National coach Sarina Wiegman: 'As a staff, we are always looking for ways to improve our possibilities. This approach is going to deliver data that will take us a step further than before. That can be very interesting. We are looking forward to the results. Apart from the games of the OrangeLions, other matches will be monitored meticulously as well.

## Golden Standard

The KNVB and Leiden University are cooperating under the flag of Sportinnovator. This is a programme that wants to stimulate the cooperation between sports, businesses, the authorities and sciences. It is initiated by the government. The aim: enlarge the output of knowledge and innovation in sports. NOC*NSF's Maurits Hendriks is a member of the Topteam Sports of Sportinnovator. 'In the end, it is all about the question: what does it ask of a sports professional, to perform on the highest level. We call that the Golden Standard. If we can define this for women's soccer, we will be yet a step further.'

The results and conclusions of the investigation will be published after the European Championship.

Provided by Leiden University

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