Science says strikers in red who move the ball creatively win more

By Agence France-Presse, adapted by Newsela staff on 06.13.18
Word Count **477**
Level **620L**

Barcelona FC's Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi (center) moves the ball between two players of the Mamelodi Sundowns during an International Club friendly match on May 16, 2018, between Barcelona and Mamelodi at FNB Stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa. Photo by: Lefty Shivambu/Gallo Images/Getty images

Soccer fans are excited for the 2018 World Cup. It starts on Thursday, June 14. Teams compete to bring home a trophy. It is the biggest soccer competition in the world. Scientists are excited, too. They will follow every move of the players and ball. Scientists study soccer because it teaches us about science. It also shows us a lot about people's minds and bodies.

Adidas Made A Slower Ball

Adidas has made each ball for the World Cup since 1970.

This year's ball is the Telstar 18. Some goalkeepers say it's too hard to hold onto. Scientists say the new ball is very stable, though.

The Telstar 18 is white, black and grey, with gold letters.

Eric Goff is a scientist in Virginia. He was part of a team that studied the ball. The scientists studied how it will fly when kicked into the air.

They compared the Telstar 18 to the Brazuca. The Brazuca was used in Brazil in the 2014 World Cup. A lot of people did not like it. The Telstar 18 flies through the air differently, the scientists found.

Goff said the Telstar 18 ball is harder to kick at high speeds. That might make it harder for strikers. They are the ones who try to score goals. It could be good news for goalies, though. They try to block goals from being scored. Balls kicked at high speeds will reach the goal a little slower.

Wearing Red To Win?

A winning team needs great players and coaches. It might also need a great uniform. Scientists have shown that uniforms can give a team an edge. Red uniforms help the most.

Iain Greenlees studies sports and mental health. His studies have shown that wearing red uniforms helps players.

The studies say that players in red jerseys are viewed differently. They are seen as more commanding and skilled. Players in red see themselves this way, too. So do their opponents, who may not perform as well because of this.

Greenlees points out that the difference made by any color is small. After all, Brazil holds the most World Cup titles of any country. Its team is known for its famous yellow jersey, not red. The defending champions, Germany, wear white.

Play Creatively To Win

Great soccer players like Pele and Lionel Messi have something in common. They mix skill with surprise moves. Their exciting plays can change a whole match.

Pele was famous for the over-the-head bicycle kick. Other players pass the ball without looking. These tricks do not only excite the fans, they are an important part of winning.

Scientists found that creative plays win games. Most soccer plays do not include a lot of creative moves. Important scoring plays do, though.

The scientists said that creativity can be very important. Teams should keep it in mind when choosing players, they said.

Quiz

1 Read the section "Adidas Made A Slower Ball."

Which sentence from the section explains what a team of scientists learned about the Telstar 18 soccer ball?

(A) This year's ball is the Telstar 18.

(B) He was part of a team that studied the ball.

(C) The scientists studied how it will fly when kicked into the air.

(D) Goff said the Telstar 18 ball is harder to kick at high speeds.

2 Read the paragraph below from the section "Play Creatively To Win."

> *Great soccer players like Pele and Lionel Messi have something in common. They mix skill with surprise moves. Their exciting plays can change a whole match.*

Which question is answered in the paragraph?

(A) What kinds of surprise moves do great soccer players have?

(B) What do great soccer players have in common?

(C) Was Pele or Lionel Messi more exciting to watch?

(D) How do Pele and Lionel Messi feel about playing soccer?

3 Which section of the article gives information about why scientists are excited about the 2018 World Cup?

(A) Introduction [paragraph 1]

(B) "Adidas Made A Slower Ball"

(C) "Wearing Red To Win?"

(D) "Play Creatively To Win"

4 What does the section "Wearing Red To Win?" show the reader?

(A) some reasons why wearing red uniforms helps soccer players

(B) some problems soccer players have with wearing red uniforms

(C) some ways scientists studied red soccer uniforms

(D) some soccer teams that have won championships in red uniforms

Answer Key

1 Read the section "Adidas Made A Slower Ball."

Which sentence from the section explains what a team of scientists learned about the Telstar 18 soccer ball?

(A) This year's ball is the Telstar 18.

(B) He was part of a team that studied the ball.

(C) The scientists studied how it will fly when kicked into the air.

(D) Goff said the Telstar 18 ball is harder to kick at high speeds.

2 Read the paragraph below from the section "Play Creatively To Win."

> *Great soccer players like Pele and Lionel Messi have something in common. They mix skill with surprise moves. Their exciting plays can change a whole match.*

Which question is answered in the paragraph?

(A) What kinds of surprise moves do great soccer players have?

(B) What do great soccer players have in common?

(C) Was Pele or Lionel Messi more exciting to watch?

(D) How do Pele and Lionel Messi feel about playing soccer?

3 Which section of the article gives information about why scientists are excited about the 2018 World Cup?

(A) Introduction [paragraph 1]

(B) "Adidas Made A Slower Ball"

(C) "Wearing Red To Win?"

(D) "Play Creatively To Win"

4 What does the section "Wearing Red To Win?" show the reader?

(A) some reasons why wearing red uniforms helps soccer players

(B) some problems soccer players have with wearing red uniforms

(C) some ways scientists studied red soccer uniforms

(D) some soccer teams that have won championships in red uniforms