Optimal football strategies: AC Milan versus FC Barcelona

Christos Papahristodoulou*

Abstract

In a recent UEFA Champions League game between AC Milan and FC Barcelona, played in Italy (final score 2-3), the collected match statistics, classified into four offensive and two defensive strategies, were in favour of FC Barcelona (by 13 versus 8 points). The aim of this paper is to examine to what extent the optimal game strategies derived from some deterministic, possibilistic, stochastic and fuzzy LP models would improve the payoff of AC Milan at the cost of FC Barcelona.

Keywords: football game, mixed strategies, fuzzy, stochastic, Nash equilibria

*Department of Industrial Economics, Mälardalen University, Västerås, Sweden; christos.papahristodoulou@mdh.se Tel: +4621543176
1. Introduction

The main objective of the teams’ managers is to find their optimal strategies to win the match. Thus, it should be appropriate to use game theory to analyze a football match. Moreover, as always with game applications, the access of accurate data to estimate the payoffs of the selected strategies is very difficult. According to Carlton & Perloff (2005), only a few mixed strategy models have been estimated in Industrial Economics. In addition to that, contrary to professional business managers who have a solid managerial, mathematic or economic education, team managers lack the necessary formal knowledge to use the game theoretic methods. Football managers, when they decide their most appropriate tactical move or strategy, rely more on their a-priori beliefs, intuition, attitude towards risk and experience.

In a football game if we exclude fortune and simple mistakes, by players and referees as well, goals scored or conceived are often the results of good offensive and/or bad defensive tactics and strategies. There are a varying number of strategies and tactics. As is well known, tactics are the means to achieve the objectives, while strategy is a set of decisions formulated before the game starts (or during the half-time brake), specifying the tactical moves the team will follow during the match, depending upon various circumstances. For instance, the basic elements of a team’s tactics are: which players will play the game, which tasks they will perform, where they will be positioned, and how the team will be formed and reformed in the pitch. Similarly, a team’s strategies might be to play a short passing game with a high ball possession, attacking with the ball moving quickly and pressing high up its competitors, while another team’s strategy might be to defend with a zonal or a man-to-man system, and using the speed of its fullbacks to attack, or playing long passes and crosses as a counter attacking (see http://www.talkfootball.co.uk/guides/football_tactics.html).

Consequently, both managers need somehow to guess correctly how the opponents will play in order to be successful. All decisions made by humans are vulnerable to any cognitive biases and are not perfect when they try to make true predictions.

Not only the number of tactics and strategies in a football match is large, their measures are very hard indeed. How can one define and measure correctly “counter attacks”, “high pressure”, “attacking game”, “long passes”, “runs” etc? The existing data on match-statistics cover relatively “easy” variables, like: “ball possession”, “shots on target”, “fouls committed”, “corners”, “offside” and “yellow” or “red cards”, (see for instance UEFA’s official site http://www.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/season=2012/statistics/index.html).

If one wants to measure the appropriate teams’ strategies or tactics, one has to collect such measures, which is obviously an extremely time-consuming task, especially if a “statistically” large sample of matches, where the same teams are involved, is required. In this case-study, I have collected detailed statistics from just one match, a UEFA Champions League group match, between AC Milan (ACM) and FC Barcelona (FCB), held in Milan on November 23, 2011, where FCB defeated ACM by 3-2. Despite the fact that both teams were practically qualified before the game, the game had more a prestigious character and would determine to a large extent, which team would be the winner of the group. Given the fact that I have concentrated on six strategies per team, four offensives, and two defensive, and that FCB wins over ACM in more strategy pairs, the aim of this paper is indeed to examine to what extent the optimal game strategies derived from some deterministic, possibilistic and fuzzy LP models would improve the payoff of ACM.

Obviously, there are two shortages with the use of such match statistics. First, we can’t blame the teams or their managers for not using their optimal pure or mixed strategies, if the payoffs from the selected strategies were not known in advance, but were observed when the game was being played. Second, it is unfair to blame the manager of ACM (the looser), if his players did not follow the correct strategies suggested by him. It is also unfair to give credits to the manager of FCB (the winner), if his players did not follow the (possibly) incorrect strategies suggested by him. Thus, we modify the purpose and try to find out the optimal strategies, assuming that the managers anticipated the payoffs and the players did what they have been asked to do.

On the other hand, the merits of this case study are to treat a football match not as a trivial zero-sum game, but as a non-constant sum game, or a bi-matrix game, with many strategies. It is not the goal scored itself that is
analyzed, but merely under which mixed offensive and defensive strategies the teams (and especially ACM) could have done better and collected more payoffs. As is known, in such games, it is rather difficult to find a solution that is simultaneously optimal for both teams, unless one assumes that both teams will have Nash beliefs about each other. Given the uncertainty in measures of some or all selected strategies, possibilistic and fuzzy formulations are also presented.

The structure of the paper consists of five sections: In section 2 we discuss the selected strategies and how we measured them. In section 3, using the payoffs from section 2, we formulate the following models: (i) classical optimization; (ii) maximum of minimum payoffs; (iii) LP with complementary constraints; (iv) Nash; (v) Chance Constrained LP; (vi) Possibilistic LP; (vii) Fuzzy LP. In section 4 we present and comment on the results from all models and section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Selected strategies and Data

FCB and ACM are two worldwide teams who play a very attractive football. They use almost similar team formations, the 4-3-3 system (four defenders, three midfielders, and three attackers). All football fans know that FCB’s standard strategy is to play an excellent passing game, with highball possession, and quick movements when it attacks. According to official match statistics, FCB had 60% ball possession, even if a large part of the ball was kept away from ACM’s defensive area. All managers who face FCB expect that to happen, and knowing that FCB has the world’s best player, Messi, they must decide in advance some defensive tactics to neutralize him.

Since the official match statistics are not appropriate for our selected strategies, I recorded the game and played it back several times in order to measure all interesting pairs of payoffs. Both teams are assumed to play the following six strategies: (i) shots on goal, (ii) counter-attacks, (iii) attacking passes, (iv) dribbles, (v) tackling and (vi) zone marking. The first four reflect offensive strategies and the last two defensive strategies. Most of these variables are hard to observe (and measure). It is assumed that the payoffs from all these strategies are equally worth. One can of course put different weights.

(i) shots on goal (SG)

Teams with many SG, are expected to score more goals. In a previous study (Papahristodoulou, 2008), based on 814 UEFA CL matches, it was estimated that teams need, on average, about 4 SG to score a goal.

In this paper all SG count, irrespectively if they were saved by the goalkeeper or the defenders, as long as they are directed towards the target, and irrespectively of the distance, the power of the shot and the angle they were kicked. SG from fouls, corners, and head-nicks are also included.

According to the official match statistics, FCB had 6 SG and 3 corners. According to my own definition, FCB had 14 SG. The defenders of ACM blocked 13 of them (including the 4 savings by the goal-keeper). Xavi turned one of the shots into goal. On the other hand, the other two goals scored do not count as SG, because the first was by penalty (Messi) and the other by own goal (van Bommel). Similarly, according to the official match statistics, ACM had 3 SG and 4 corners, while in my measures ACM had 13 SG. FCB blocked 11 of them (including a good saving by its goalkeeper), and two of them turned into goals (by Ibrahimovic and Boateng).

(ii) counter-attacks (CA)

The idea with CA is to benefit from the other team’s desperation to score, despite its offensive game. The defendant team is withdrawn into its own half but keep a man or two further up the pitch. If many opponent players attack and loose the ball, they will be out of position and the defendant team has more space to deliver a

---

1 Since a game theoretic terminology is applied, we use the term “strategy” in the entire paper, even if we refer to tactics.

2 Pollard and Reep (1997) estimated that the scoring probability is 24% higher for every yard nearer goal and the scoring probability doubles when a player manages to be over 1 yard from an opponent when shooting the ball.
long-ball for the own strikers, or own players can run relatively free to the competitors’ defensive area and probably score. This tactic is rather risky, but it will work if the defendant team has a reliant and solid defense, and excellent runners and/or ball kickers.

In this study CA have been defined as those which have started from the own defense area and continued all the way to the other team’s penalty area. On the other hand, a slow pace with passes and/or the existence of more defenders than attackers in their correct position do not count.

According to that definition, FCB had 15 CA and ACM 13.

(iii) attacking passes (AP)

The golden rule in football is “pass and move quickly”. There are not many teams which handle to apply it successfully though. FCB mainly, and ACM to a less extent, are two teams which are known to play an entertaining game with a very large number of successful passes. In a recent paper (Papahristodoulou, 2010) it was estimated that ACM, in an average match, could achieve about 500 successful passes and have a ball possession of more than 60%. (For all Italian teams see for instance, http://sport.virgilio.it/calcio/serie-a/statistiche/index.html). Similarly in a previous study (Papahristodoulou, 2008), FCB achieved even higher ball possession. Moreover, very often, the players choose the easiest possible pass, and many times one observes defenders passing the ball along the defensive line.

There is a simple logic behind this apparently attractive strategy. By keeping hold of the ball with passes, the opponents get frustrated, try to chase all over the pitch, be tired and disposed and consequently leave open spaces for the opponent quick attackers to score.

Given the fact that the number of passes is very large, compared to the other observations, the payoff game matrix will be extremely unbalanced and both teams would simply play their dominant AP strategy. To make the game less trivial, I have used a very restrictive definition of AP, assuming the following criteria are fulfilled:

Only successful passes and head-nicks, which start at most approximately 15 meters outside the defendant team’s penalty area, count.

The passes and head-nicks should be directed forward to the targeted team player who must be running forward too (i.e. passes to static players are excluded).

Backward passes count as long as they take place within the penalty area only.

Neither long crosses, nor passes from free kicks and corners count.

Consequently, FCB had 17 successful AP and ACM had 13 ones. ACM managed to defend successfully 14 times while FCB defended successfully every third pass that ACM attempted.

(iv) dribbles (D)

Dribbling, i.e. the action to pass the ball around one or more defenders through short skillful taps or kicks, can take place anywhere in the pitch. Moreover, since D in this paper is treated as offensive strategy, only the offensive ones are of interest. The action will be measured if it starts no more than 15 meters outside the defendant team’s penalty area and the player must move forward. Dribbling counts even if the player turns backward, as long as he remains within the penalty area. If the offensive player manages to dribble more than one player but with different actions subsequently, the number of D increases analogically.

According to that definition, each team had 14 D.

(v) tackling (T)
A standard defensive strategy is to tackle the opponents in order to stop them from gaining ground towards goal, or stop their $SG$, $AP$ and their $D$. Tackling is defined when the defender uses either his left or right leg (but not both legs) to wrest possession from his opponent. Even sliding in on the grass to knock the ball away is treated as $T$. The tackle must always be at the ball, otherwise it may be illegal and often punished by the referee, especially if the player makes contact with his opponent before the ball, or makes unfair contact with the player after playing the ball.

Very often, teams, which use $T$ frequently, play a man-to-man marking, i.e. when certain defenders who are responsible to guard a particular opponent are forced into that action, because they are dispossessed or are slower than the opponents are. Man-to-man marking is particularly effective when the team has a sweeper who has a free role and supports his teammates who are dispossessed or having problems with the opponents.

Only $T$ at less than approximately 15 meters outside the defendant team’s penalty area is counted. Tackling (and head-nicks as well) from free kicks and corners are also counted, because in these cases, the defenders play the man-to-man tactic. On the other hand, $SG$, $CA$, $AP$ and $D$ stopped by unjust $T$ and punished by the referee, does not count.

According to these criteria, FCB defenders had 6 successful $T$ against $SG$, 8 against $CA$, 6 against $AP$ and 8 against $D$. Similarly, ACM had, 4, 9, 8 and 7 successful $T$ respectively.

(vi) **Zone marking (ZM)**

In ZM every defender and the defensive midfielders too, are responsible to cover a particular zone on the pitch to hinder the opponent players from $SG$, $AP$, $D$ or $CA$ into their area. In a perfect ZM, there are two lines of defenders, usually with four players in the first and at least three in the second line, covering roughly the one-half of the pitch. A successful ZM requires that every defender fulfills his duties, communicates with his teammates, covers all empty spaces, and synchronizes his movement. In that case, the defensive line can exploit the offside rules and prevent the success of long-balls, $CA$, $AP$, $D$ and $SG$. Bad communication from the defenders though can be very decisive, especially if the opponents have very quick attackers who can dribble, pass, and shot equally well.

Since measuring ZM is very difficult, the following conditions are applied to simplify that tactic.

The two lines of defenders should be placed at about less than 10 and 20 meters respectively, outside the defendant team’s penalty area, i.e. ZM near the middle of the pitch does not count. (Normally, ZM near the middle of the pitch is observed when the team controls the ball through passes or when it attacks).

To differentiate the ZM from the $T$, the own defender(s) should be at least 4-5 meters away from their offensive player(s) when he (they) intercepted the ball.

Despite the fact that offside positions are the result of a good ZM, do not count.

Precisely as in $T$, unjust actions by ZM do not count.

According to these conditions, FCB defenders had 5 successful ZM against $SG$, 6 against $CA$, 7 against $AP$ and 10 against $D$. Similarly, ACM had, 9, 7, 6 and 10 successful ZM respectively.

The payoff of the game for all six strategies is depicted in the Table 1 below. Notice that some entries are empty because both teams can’t play simultaneously offensive or defensive. When one team attacks (defends) the other team will defend (attack). The first entry refers to FCB and the second entry to ACM. Consequently, since the payoff from a team’s offensive strategy is not equal to the negative payoff from the other team’s defensive strategy, the game is a non-zero sum and the payoff matrix is bi-matrix.

There seem to be some doubtful pairs, where the defensive values are higher than the offensive ones, such as $(a_6, b_6)$. How can 8 $D$ be defended by 10 ZM? Simply, some $D$ which counts was defended occasionally by a ZM
which also counts; the ball is then lost to the offensive player who tried to dribble again, but failed. Consequently, the new D attempt does not count while the new ZM does.

Table 1: The payoff matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A = FC Barcelona (FCB)</th>
<th>B = AC Milan (ACM)</th>
<th>Σ FCB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offensive</td>
<td>Defensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b₁</td>
<td>b₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₁</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₂</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₃</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₄</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₅</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a₆</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice also that there are no pure dominant strategies. However, despite the fact that there are no pure dominant strategies, FCB gets more points than ACM from the match. For instance, FCB had 17 AP, (a₃), in comparison with ACM, which had only 13, (b₅). As a whole, FCB beats ACM in six offensive-defensive pairs by a total of 11 points, is beaten by ACM in five pairs, by 8 points, while in five pairs there is a tie. The highest differences in favor of FCB are in (a₅, b₅), i.e. when FCB plays its AP and ACM does not succeed with its defensive T, and in (a₇, b₅), when ACM tries with its D but FCB defends successfully with its T.

3. Models

In this section, I will present four deterministic models, one chance constrained, one possibilistic and one fuzzy LP. Five of them are formulated separately for each team and two simultaneously for both teams.

3.1 Classical Optimization

Let A and B represent FCB and ACM respectively, their respective six strategies aᵢ and bᵢ, with (0, 1) bounds. Each team maximizes separately the sum of its payoffs times the product of aᵢ and bᵢ of the relevant strategy pairs. Consequently, the objective functions given below, are non-linear.

Two models have been formulated: (a) unrestricted, i.e. the sum of all six strategies is equal to unit; (b) restricted, i.e. both offensive and defensive strategies must be played. Consequently, in model (b) the two conditions \( \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1 \), are modified into the four:

\[ a_1 + a_2 + a_3 + a_4 = 1, \quad a_5 + a_6 = 1, \quad b_1 + b_2 + b_3 + b_4 = 1, \quad b_5 + b_6 = 1 \]

Model (a)

\[
\text{max } A = (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_5 + (9a_1 + 7a_2 + 6a_3 + 8a_4)b_6 + (6a_1 + 5a_2)b_7 + (8a_1 + 6a_2 + a_3)b_8 + (6a_1 + 7a_2 + 8a_3 + 10a_4)b_9
\]

s.t.

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, \quad 0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \quad i=1,\ldots,6, \quad 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \quad j=1,\ldots,6 \]

Model (b)

\[
\text{max } B = (6b_1 + 7b_2 + 8b_3 + 5b_4)a_5 + (7b_1 + 6b_2 + 5b_3 + 9b_4)a_6 + (4b_5 + 9b_6)a_7 + (9b_5 + 7b_6)a_8 + (8b_3 + 6b_4)a_9 + (7b_3 + 10b_4)a_10
\]

s.t.

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, \quad 0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \quad i=1,\ldots,6, \quad 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \quad j=1,\ldots,6 \]
Model (b)\(^3\):

\[
\begin{align*}
    a_i + a_2 + a_3 + a_4 &= 1 & b_1 + b_2 + b_3 + b_4 &= 1 \\
    a_5 + a_6 &= 1 & b_5 + b_6 &= 1
\end{align*}
\]

This formulation ensures that team A for instance, will receive its respective payoffs from its offensive strategy \(a_i\), if team B will play its \(b_j\) and/or its \(b_6\). In fact, when team A or B maximize, both strategies \(b_j\) and \(a_i\) are decided simultaneously. Obviously, without the strategies of the other team, the objective function would be trivial or even erroneous since the highest payoff strategy would not be ensured.

3.2 Max-min

Let \(v_j\) be the minimal value from all four offensive strategies and \(v_2\) is the minimal value from both defensive strategies for FCB. Similarly, let \(z_j\) and \(z_2\) be the respective minimal values for ACM. Each team maximizes separately the sum of these minimal respective values. Again, the model is non-linear because each one of the offensive (defensive) strategies of one team is multiplied by the defensive (offensive) strategies of the other team.

Model (a)

\[
\begin{align*}
    \max A &= v_1 + v_2 \\
    \text{s.t.} & \quad (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_2 \geq v_1 \\
    & \quad (6a_5 + 5a_6)b_1 \geq v_1 \\
    & \quad (6a_5 + 6a_6)b_2 \geq v_2 \\
    & \quad (6a_5 + 7a_6)b_3 \geq v_2 \\
    & \quad (8a_5 + 10a_6)b_1 \geq v_2 \\
    \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i &= 1, \quad \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, \\
    0 & \leq a_i \leq 1, \quad i = 1,\ldots,6, \quad 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \quad j = 1,\ldots,6
\end{align*}
\]

Model (b)

\[
\begin{align*}
    \max B &= z_1 + z_2 \\
    \text{s.t.} & \quad (6b_1 + 7b_2 + 8b_3 + 5b_4)a_3 \geq z_1 \\
    & \quad (7b_1 + 6b_2 + 5b_3 + 9b_4)a_6 \geq z_1 \\
    & \quad (4b_5 + 9b_6)a_1 \geq z_2 \\
    & \quad (9b_5 + 7b_6)a_2 \geq z_2 \\
    & \quad (8b_5 + 6b_6)a_3 \geq z_2 \\
    & \quad (7b_5 + 10b_6)a_4 \geq z_2 \\
    \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i &= 1, \quad \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, \\
    0 & \leq a_i \leq 1, \quad i = 1,\ldots,6, \quad 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \quad j = 1,\ldots,6
\end{align*}
\]

3.3 LP formulation with complementary conditions

While the first two models assume that teams optimize separately, we turn now to a simultaneously optimal decisions. Normally, for a bimatrix game with many strategies, it is rather difficult to find a solution that is simultaneously optimal for both teams. We can define an equilibrium stable set of strategies though, i.e. the well-known Nash equilibrium. In the following two sections, I will formulate two models to find the Nash equilibrium.

As is known, the max-min strategy is defined as:

\[
\begin{align*}
    \left( a_1^*,\ldots,a_6^* \right) &= \arg \max_{(a_1,\ldots,a_6)} \min_{(b_1,\ldots,b_6)} \text{payoff}_A \left( (a_1,\ldots,a_6), (b_1,\ldots,b_6) \right) \\
    \left( b_1^*,\ldots,b_6^* \right) &= \arg \max_{(b_1,\ldots,b_6)} \min_{(a_1,\ldots,a_6)} \text{payoff}_B \left( (b_1,\ldots,b_6), (a_1,\ldots,a_6) \right)
\end{align*}
\]

A standard model to find a max-min to both teams is to use a simultaneous LP, with complementary conditions. The complementary conditions are to set the product of each one of the six respective slack, times the six

\(^3\) In order to save space, model (b) will be excluded in all subsequent formulations.
The probability $\{a, b\}$ team’s probability mixture. Consequently, the game has a saddle point. Such saddle points are known Nash equilibria if and only if it satisfies the following conditions:

$$\text{payoff}_a \left( a^*, b^* \right) \geq \text{payoff}_a \left( a_i, a_g, b^* \right) \forall \left( a_i, a_g \right) \in \left( \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \right)$$

$$\left( 0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \ i = 1, \ldots, 6 \right)$$

$$\text{payoff}_b \left( a^*, b^* \right) \geq \text{payoff}_b \left( a^*, b_j, b^* \right) \forall \left( b_j, b_g \right) \in \left( \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, \right)$$

$$\left( 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \ j = 1, \ldots, 6 \right)$$

It is also known that, if min-max and Nash equilibria coincide, the game has a saddle point. Such saddle points are rather frequent in zero-sum games but not in bi-matrix non-zero sum games.

Notice also the two extra constraints, which ensure that both teams can’t play entirely offensively or defensively. For instance, the upper bound for all offensive strategies is set arbitrarily equal to 1.2 and the lower bound for the defensive strategies is set arbitrarily equal to 0.8.

Model (a)

$$\begin{align*}
\text{max} \ A + B &= v_1 + v_2 + z_1 + z_2 \\
\text{s.t.} \ 5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4 - sla_1 &= v_1; \quad 6b_1 + 7b_2 + 8b_3 + 5b_4 - slb_1 = z_1; \\
9a_1 + 7a_2 + 6a_3 + 8a_4 - sla_2 &= v_1; \quad 7b_1 + 6b_2 + 5b_3 + 9b_4 - slb_2 = z_2; \\
6a_3 + 5a_6 - sla_3 &= v_2; \quad 4b_3 + 9b_6 - slb_3 = z_2; \\
8a_3 + 6a_6 - sla_4 &= v_2; \quad 9b_3 + 7b_6 - slb_4 = z_2; \\
6a_4 + 7a_6 - sla_5 &= v_2; \quad 8b_4 + 6b_6 - slb_5 = z_2; \\
8a_3 + 10a_6 - sla_6 &= v_2; \quad 7b_3 + 10b_6 - slb_6 = z_2; \\
\begin{array}{l}
a_1 \times sla_1 = 0; \\
a_2 \times sla_2 = 0; \\
a_3 \times sla_3 = 0; \\
a_4 \times sla_4 = 0; \\
a_5 \times sla_5 = 0; \\
a_6 \times sla_6 = 0; \\
b_1 \times slb_1 = 0; \\
b_2 \times slb_2 = 0; \\
b_3 \times slb_3 = 0; \\
b_4 \times slb_4 = 0; \\
b_5 \times slb_5 = 0; \\
b_6 \times slb_6 = 0; \\
0 \leq sla_1, \ i = 1, \ldots, 6, \\
0 \leq slb_1, \ j = 1, \ldots, 6; \\
\sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1; \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1; \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i + \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j \leq 1.2; \\
\sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i + \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j \geq 0.8; \\
0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \ i = 1, \ldots, 6, \ 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \ j = 1, \ldots, 6
\end{array}
\end{align*}$$

3.4 Nash strategies

As is known in the Nash equilibrium, each team selects its probability mixture of strategies (or pure strategy) to maximize its payoff, conditional on the other team’s selected probability mixture (or pure). The probability mixture of a team is the best response to the other team’s probability mixture. Consequently, the $\left( a^*, b^* \right)$ is a Nash equilibrium if and only if it satisfies the following conditions:

$$\begin{align*}
\text{payoff}_a \left( a^*, b^* \right) \geq \text{payoff}_a \left( a_i, b^* \right) \forall \left( a_i, b^* \right) \in \left( \sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \right) \\
\left( 0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \ i = 1, \ldots, 6 \right)
\end{align*}$$

$$\begin{align*}
\text{payoff}_b \left( a^*, b^* \right) \geq \text{payoff}_b \left( a^*, b_j \right) \forall \left( a^*, b_j \right) \in \left( \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, \right) \\
\left( 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \ j = 1, \ldots, 6 \right)
\end{align*}$$

It is also known that, if min-max and Nash equilibria coincide, the game has a saddle point. Such saddle points are rather frequent in zero-sum games but not in bi-matrix non-zero sum games.

---

4 Without these additional constraints, both teams played offensively; FCB plays 55.55% SG and 44.45% AP, while ACM plays 57.14% AP and 42.86% D.
I applied the package by Dickhaut & Kaplan (1993) programmed in Mathematica, to find the Nash equilibria. In model (a) the entire payoff matrix was used. In model (b) I used two sub-matrices; when FCB (ACM) was playing offensively and ACM (FCB) defensively.

### 3.5 Chance-Constrained Programming (CCP)

When teams are uncertain about competitors’ actions or about the payoff matrix, games become very complex. According to Carlton & Perloff (2005) much of the current research in game theory is undertaken on games with uncertainty. I move now to some more plausible models and modify the deterministic parameters and constraints.

In CCP the parameters of the constraints are random variables and the constraints are valid with some (minimum) probability.

Let us assume that the deterministic parameters are expected values, independent and normally distributed random variables with the means as previously, and variances \(^5\) given in Table 2. The first entry depicts the variance for FCB and the second for ACM.

**Table 2: The variance of the payoff matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A = FC Barcelona (FCB)</th>
<th>B = AC Milan (ACM)</th>
<th>Offensive</th>
<th>Defensive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(\sigma^2 a_1)</td>
<td>(\sigma^2 b_2)</td>
<td>(\sigma^2 b_3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offense</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>15.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>14.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, in CCP, when we maximize for one team, we assume that the other team’s values are deterministic and disregard their variance. We also assume that, Josep Guardiola, the manager of FCB, might expect that the probability of the expected value of his team’s defensive strategies \(a_3\) and \(a_5\) is at least 90%, while the probability of all four expected values of offensive strategies, \(a_1, a_2, a_3\) and \(a_4\) is at least 95%.

The first stochastic constraint is now formulated as:

\[
P\left\{ v_i \leq (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_3 \right\} \geq 1 - \alpha = F\left( \frac{v_i - (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_3}{\sqrt{9a_1^2 + 16a_2^2 + 17a_3^2 + 13a_4^2}} \right),
\]

where, \(F\) is the cumulative density function of the standard normal distribution. If \(F(K_{\alpha})\) is the standard normal value such that \(F(K_{\alpha}) = 1 - \alpha\), then the above constraint reduces to:

\[
\frac{v_i - (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_3}{\sqrt{9a_1^2 + 16a_2^2 + 17a_3^2 + 13a_4^2}} \geq (K_{\alpha})
\]

Given \(\alpha = 0.10\), the constraint is simplified to:

---

\(^5\) The variances of the payoffs are obviously very subjective and are given just to show the formulation of the model. Moreover, based on my numerous playing back of the match, the variances reflect rather well the uncertainty of the respective payoffs.
\[(5a_i + 8a_j + 11a_k + 6a_s) \geq 1.282(9a_i^2 + 16a_j^2 + 17a_k^2 + 13a_s^2) \geq v_1 \]

Similarly, given \(\alpha = 0.05\), the first defensive constraint is modified to:

\[(6a_s + 5a_g) b_1 + 1.645\sqrt{10a_s^2 + 10a_g^2} \geq v_2 \]

So, the CCP model (a) for FCB is:

\[
\text{max } A = v_1 + v_2 \\
\text{s.t. } (5a_i + 8a_j + 11a_k + 6a_s) b_1 + 1.282(9a_i^2 + 16a_j^2 + 17a_k^2 + 13a_s^2) \geq v_1 \\
(9a_i + 7a_j + 6a_k + 8a_s) b_2 + 1.282(17a_i^2 + 15a_j^2 + 10a_k^2 + 15a_s^2) \geq v_1 \\
(6a_s + 5a_g) b_3 + 1.645\sqrt{10a_s^2 + 10a_g^2} \geq v_2 \\
(8a_j + 6a_k) b_4 + 1.645\sqrt{12a_j^2 + 11a_k^2} \geq v_2 \\
(6a_j + 7a_k) b_5 + 1.645\sqrt{15a_j^2 + 14a_k^2} \geq v_2 \\
(8a_s + 10a_g) b_6 + 1.645\sqrt{11a_s^2 + 16a_g^2} \geq v_2 \\
\sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \quad \sum_{j=4}^{6} b_j = 1, \\
0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \quad 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \quad j = 1, \ldots, 6
\]

A similar formulation applies for ACM, assuming that its manager Massimiliano Allegri expects that the probability of the expected value of his team’s defensive strategies \(b_3\) and \(b_6\) is also at least 90\%, while the probability of all four offensive strategies, \(b_1, b_2, b_3\) and \(b_4\) is at least 95\%. Allegri also treats Barcelona’s values as deterministic and therefore the problem is formulated similarly.

### 3.6 A Possibilistic LP (PLP) model

No matter how well one has defined and measured the six variables, the observed payoffs are still rather ambiguous.

The ambiguity of measured values can be restricted by a symmetric triangular fuzzy number, determined by a center \(a'_i\), and a spread \(w_{n_i}\), respectively \(b'_j\), and \(w_{n_j}\) which is represented as: \(A_i = \{a'_i, w_{n_i}\}\), respectively \(B_j = \{b'_j, w_{n_j}\}\). For instance, the estimate of CA for FCB, when teams play \((a_2, b_3)\), can be restricted by a fuzzy number \(A_{2,5}\) with the following membership function: \(\mu_{A_{i,j}}(x) = \max\left(0, 1 - \frac{|x - 8|}{3}\right)\). Thus, the center is 8 (i.e. the initial value), its upper value is 11 and its lower value is 5. Consequently, that fuzzy CA variable is expressed as: \(A_{2,5} = \{8, 3\}\).

In addition to that, we can use possibility measures in order to measure to what extent it is possible that the possibilistic values, restricted by the possibility distribution \(\mu_{A_{i,j}}\), are at least equal to some certain values.

I will follow Inuiguchi & Ramik, (2000) who used possibility and/or necessity measures to de-fuzzify a fuzzy LP.

Given two fuzzy sets, \(F\) and \(Z\), and a possibility distribution \(\mu_F\) of a possibilistic variable \(\kappa\), the possibility measure is defined as:
\[ \Pi_f(Z) = \sup \min \{ \mu_f(x), \mu_Z(x) \} \]

If \( Z = (-\infty, g] \), i.e. \( Z \) is a deterministic (non-fuzzy) set of real numbers not larger than \( g \), the possibility index is defined as:

\[ \text{Pos}(\kappa \leq g) = \Pi_f \left( (-\infty, g] \right) = \sup \left\{ \mu_f(x) \mid x \leq g \right\} \]

If \( Z = [g, +\infty) \), the respective possibility index is defined as:

\[ \text{Pos}(\kappa \geq g) = \Pi_f \left( [g, +\infty) \right) = \sup \left\{ \mu_f(x) \mid x \geq g \right\} \]

The necessity measures measure to what extent it is certain that the possibilistic values, restricted by the possibility distribution \( \mu_f \), are at least or at most some certain values.

The necessity measures and the necessity index are similarly defined as:

\[ N_f(Z) = \inf \max \{ 1 - \mu_f(x), \mu_Z(x) \} \]

\[ \text{Nes}(\kappa \leq g) = N_f \left( (-\infty, g] \right) = 1 - \sup \left\{ \mu_f(x) \mid x \succ g \right\} \]

\[ \text{Nes}(\kappa \geq g) = N_f \left( [g, +\infty) \right) = 1 - \sup \left\{ \mu_f(x) \mid x \prec g \right\} \]

In my estimates, I assume a spread equal to 3 for the most “fuzzy” measures, \( CA, D \) and \( ZM \), equal to 2 for \( AP \) and equal to 1, for the less “fuzzy” value, \( SG \). Thus, I use the following fuzzy sets:

\[ A_{1,5} = \{5,1\}, A_{6,6} = \{9,1\}, A_{5,3} = \{8,3\}, A_{2,6} = \{7,3\}, A_{1,5} = \{11,2\}, A_{3,5} = \{6,2\}, A_{4,6} = \{6,3\}, A_{4,6} = \{8,3\} \]
\[ A_{4,3} = \{6,2\}, A_{5,2} = \{8,2\}, A_{4,3} = \{6,2\}, A_{4,4} = \{8,2\}, A_{5,3} = \{5,3\}, A_{6,2} = \{6,3\}, A_{6,3} = \{7,3\}, A_{6,6} = \{10,3\} \]
\[ B_{1,5} = \{6,1\}, B_{6,6} = \{7,1\}, B_{2,5} = \{7,3\}, B_{2,6} = \{6,3\}, B_{3,5} = \{8,2\}, B_{5,6} = \{5,2\}, B_{4,5} = \{5,3\}, B_{4,6} = \{9,3\} \]
\[ B_{3,3} = \{4,2\}, B_{5,2} = \{9,2\}, B_{3,3} = \{8,2\}, B_{3,4} = \{7,2\}, B_{6,1} = \{9,3\}, B_{6,2} = \{7,3\}, B_{6,3} = \{6,3\}, B_{6,6} = \{10,3\} \]

I will also make the right-hand side parameters ambiguous and use only possible measures. I assume that the certainty degrees of both defensive strategies being at least equal to 0.5, is not less than 60%. Similarly, I assume that the certainty degrees of all four offensive strategies being at least equal to 2, is not less than 90%. These bounds apply to both teams and are very moderate compared to the deterministic estimates from the previous models.

Given the symmetric triangular fuzzy values, and the assumptions above, the PLP model (a) for FCB is:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{max} \quad & A = v_1 + v_2 \\
\text{s.t.} \quad & (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_3 - v_1 + 0.9(a_1 + 3a_2 + 2a_3 + 3a_4)b_5 \geq 2 \\
& (9a_1 + 7a_2 + 6a_3 + 8a_4)b_6 - v_1 + 0.9(a_1 + 3a_2 + 2a_3 + 3a_4)b_6 \geq 2 \\
& (6a_3 + 5a_6)b_1 - v_2 + 0.6(2a_3 + 3a_6)b_7 \geq 0.5 \\
& (8a_3 + 6a_6)b_2 - v_2 + 0.6(2a_3 + 3a_6)b_2 \geq 0.5 \\
& (6a_3 + 7a_6)b_3 - v_2 + 0.6(2a_3 + 3a_6)b_3 \geq 0.5 \\
& (8a_3 + 10a_6)b_4 - v_2 + 0.6(2a_3 + 3a_6)b_4 \geq 0.5 \\
& \sum_{j=1}^{6} a_j = 1, \quad \sum_{j=6}^{6} b_j = 1, \quad 0 \leq a_i \leq 1, \quad i = 1, \ldots, 6, \quad 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, \quad j = 1, \ldots, 6
\end{align*}
\]
A similar formulation applies for ACM.

### 3.7 Van Hop’s Fuzzy LP model

Let us finally make both left-and right-hand side parameters fuzzy. Van Hop (2007) formulated a Fuzzy LP model, using superiority and inferiority measures.

Given two fuzzy numbers, $\bar{F} = (a, b, c, d)$ and $\bar{Z} = (v, c, d)$ where, $(u, v) = \text{central values and } (a, b, c, d \in R)$, i.e. the left and right spreads respectively, and if $\bar{F} \leq \bar{Z}$,

the superiority of $\bar{Z}$ over $\bar{F}$ is defined as: $\text{Sup}(\bar{Z}, \bar{F}) = v - u + \frac{d - b}{2}$, and the inferiority of $\bar{F}$ to $\bar{Z}$ be defined as: $\text{Inf}(\bar{F}, \bar{Z}) = v - u + \frac{a - c}{2}$.

Similarly, given two triangular fuzzy random variables $\bar{A} \leq \bar{B}$, the superiority of $\bar{B}$ over $\bar{A}$ is defined as: $\text{Sup}(\bar{B}, \bar{A}) = v(W) - u(W) + \frac{d(W) - b(W)}{2}$, and the inferiority of $\bar{A}$ to $\bar{B}$ be defined as: $\text{Inf}(\bar{A}, \bar{B}) = v(W) - u(W) + \frac{a(W) - c(W)}{2}$.

Let us now assume the following symmetric triangular type, fuzzy random parameters.

The four offensive fuzzy parameters (for FCB) are:

$$(\bar{\lambda}_1, \bar{\pi}) = \begin{pmatrix} (\bar{A}_{1, w_1}, \bar{V}_{1, w_1}) \\ (\bar{A}_{1, w_2}, \bar{V}_{1, w_2}) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} [6, \bar{8}, \bar{8}, \bar{8}, \bar{8}] \\ [6, \bar{1}, \bar{1}, \bar{1}, \bar{1}] \end{bmatrix}, \text{ with } p(w_1) = 0.75, p(w_2) = 0.25$$

Notice that the first row is identical to the respective deterministic values (first entries of Table 1) and has a probability of 75%. In order to be consistent with the PLP model previously, we assume that the fuzzy $\{\bar{2}\}$, is the expected value above the minimum value $v_c$. The second row consists of the respective “fuzzy” variables and has a lower probability.

Similarly, the two defensive fuzzy parameters (again for FCB only) are:

$$(\bar{\lambda}_2, \bar{\pi}) = \begin{pmatrix} (\bar{A}_{2, w_1}, \bar{V}_{2, w_1}) \\ (\bar{A}_{2, w_2}, \bar{V}_{2, w_2}) \\ (\bar{A}_{2, w_1}, \bar{V}_{2, w_2}) \\ (\bar{A}_{2, w_2}, \bar{V}_{2, w_2}) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} [6, \bar{8}, \bar{8}, \bar{8}, \bar{8}] \\ [7, \bar{8}, \bar{8}, \bar{9}, \bar{9}] \\ [5, \bar{6}, \bar{7}, \bar{8}, \bar{9}] \\ [7, \bar{9}, \bar{9}, \bar{1}, \bar{4}] \end{bmatrix}, \text{ with } p(w_1) = 0.75, p(w_2) = 0.25$$

Notice that in this matrix, the first and third rows are the respective deterministic values from Table 1, while the second and fourth rows are the true “fuzzy” ones.

In order to be consistent with the symmetric triangular fuzzy values in the PLP model previously, we keep the same spreads. Thus, we have the following fuzzy numbers:
\[ \mu_{A_{1.5}} = \mu_{A_{1.6}} = \mu_{A_{1.5}} \mu_{A_{1.6}} = 1, \mu_{A_{3.5}} = \mu_{A_{3.6}} = \mu_{A_{4.5}} = \mu_{A_{5.4}} = \mu_{A_{5.3}} = \mu_{A_{3.6}} = \mu_{A_{5.3}} = \mu_{A_{5.5}} = \mu_{A_{5.2}} = \mu_{A_{4.5}} = \mu_{A_{4.6}} = \mu_{A_{6.1}} = \mu_{A_{6.2}} = \mu_{A_{6.3}} = \mu_{A_{6.6}} = 2, \mu_{A_{6.5}} = \mu_{A_{6.4}} = \mu_{A_{6.6}} = 3 \]

Finally, based on the fuzzy numbers above, we construct an average fuzzy number for the respective offensive and defensive constraints, such as: \( (a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4) = (b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4) = (1+3+2+3)/4 = 2.25 \) and \( (a_5, a_6) = (b_5, b_6) = (2+3)/2 = 2.5 \)

Following Van Hop, the corresponding LP model (a) for FCB is:

\[
\text{max} \quad A = v_1 + v_2 - 0.75 \left( \sum_{k=5}^{6} \lambda_{21}^{\text{sup}} + 4 \lambda_{22}^{\text{sup}} \right) - 0.25 \left( \sum_{k=5}^{6} \lambda_{13}^{\text{sup}} + 4 \lambda_{14}^{\text{sup}} \right) \\
\text{s.t.} \quad (5a_1 + 8a_2 + 11a_3 + 6a_4)b_3 - v_1 + 2 + \frac{(a_1 + 3a_2 + 2a_3 + 3a_4)b_5 - 2.25}{2} = \lambda_{13}^{\text{sup}} \\
(9a_1 + 7a_2 + 6a_3 + 8a_4)b_6 - v_1 + 2 + \frac{(a_1 + 3a_2 + 2a_3 + 3a_4)b_5 - 2.25}{2} = \lambda_{16}^{\text{sup}} \\
(6a_1 + 10a_2 + 12a_3 + 7a_4)b_7 - v_1 + 2.2 + \frac{2.25 - (a_1 + 3a_2 + 2a_3 + 3a_4)b_5}{2} = \lambda_{15}^{\text{inf}} \\
(10a_1 + 9a_2 + 8a_3 + 11a_4)b_8 - v_1 + 2.2 + \frac{2.25 - (a_1 + 3a_2 + 2a_3 + 3a_4)b_5}{2} = \lambda_{16}^{\text{inf}} \\
(6a_5 + 5a_6)b_9 - v_2 + 0.5 + \frac{(2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7 - 2.5}{2} = \lambda_{21}^{\text{sup}} \\
(8a_5 + 6a_6)b_10 - v_2 + 0.5 + \frac{(2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7 - 2.5}{2} = \lambda_{22}^{\text{sup}} \\
(6a_5 + 7a_6)b_11 - v_2 + 0.5 + \frac{(2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7 - 2.5}{2} = \lambda_{23}^{\text{sup}} \\
(8a_5 + 10a_6)b_12 - v_2 + 0.5 + \frac{(2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7 - 2.5}{2} = \lambda_{24}^{\text{sup}} \\
(7a_5 + 7a_6)b_13 - v_2 + 0.7 + \frac{2.5 - (2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7}{2} = \lambda_{21}^{\text{inf}} \\
(8a_5 + 9a_6)b_14 - v_2 + 0.7 + \frac{2.5 - (2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7}{2} = \lambda_{22}^{\text{inf}} \\
(8a_5 + 9a_6)b_15 - v_2 + 0.7 + \frac{2.5 - (2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7}{2} = \lambda_{23}^{\text{inf}} \\
(9a_5 + 14a_6)b_16 - v_2 + 0.7 + \frac{2.5 - (2a_5 + 3a_6)b_7}{2} = \lambda_{24}^{\text{inf}} \\
\sum_{i=1}^{6} a_i = 1, \sum_{j=1}^{6} b_j = 1, 0 \leq a_i \leq 1, i = 1, \ldots, 6, 0 \leq b_j \leq 1, j = 1, \ldots, 6 \\
\lambda_{k4}^{\text{sup}} = \lambda_{k2}^{\text{sup}} = \lambda_{k1}^{\text{inf}} = \lambda_{2m}^{\text{inf}} \geq 0, k = 5, 6, m = 1, \ldots, 4 \]

A similar formulation applies for ACM.

4. Results

The unrestricted offensive and defensive strategies, model (a), are presented in Table 3 and the restricted ones, model (b), are presented in Table 4. The maximizing team is in bold and the other team in italics. In LP with complementary constraints and in the Nash, both teams maximize and are in bold.

In classical optimization model (a), both teams play pure strategies, FCB receives 10 points and ACM 9. It is rather surprising because FCB plays defensively and ACM plays offensively, no matter which team maximizes. In both cases, FCB plays ZM and ACM plays D, \( a_6 = b_4 = 1 \).
In model (b), the strategies change. When FCB maximizes, it plays the pure strategies AP and ZM ($a_3 = a_4 = 1$) and receives 21, under the condition that ACM plays also its pure strategies T and D, ($b_3 = b_4 = 1$). When ACM maximizes, it receives 17, by playing AP and T, ($b_3 = b_4 = 1$), given that FCB plays T and CA, ($a_3 = a_4 = 1$).

In the maximization of the minimum payoffs, model (a), both teams use mixed offensive strategies when they maximize separately. When FCB maximizes, it gets 3.95 points, if it plays offensively (75.45% AP and 24.55% SG) and ACM plays defensively (58.58% ZM and 41.42% T). Similarly, when ACM maximizes, it gets 3.37 points when it also plays offensively (42.71% AP and 57.29% D) and FCB plays defensively (46.28% ZM and 53.72% T).

In model (b), when FCB maximizes, it continues with the same offensive game but it plays 100% T as well. Given the fact that ACM continues with the same defensive game and almost equally balanced with all the offensive strategies, FCB gets 3.95 + 1.71 = 5.66 points. When ACM maximizes, it continues with almost the same weights in AP and D, and also plays almost 97% ZM and 3% T. Since FCB continues with the same mixture in defense, and also with all four offensive ones, with AP just above 30%, ACM gets 3.37 + 1.92 = 5.29 points.

In the LP with complementary constraints model (a), FCB plays mainly defensively (almost 80% T) and ACM almost offensively (51.87% SG and 45.8% CA), with two positive slacks ($sla_4 = 1.59$, $sla_6 = 1.59$), giving ACM more points than FCB!

In model (b), FCB mixes two offensive strategies (55.55% SG and 44.45% AP) and plays also 100% T. ACM shifts strategies by playing 50% SG and 50% CA, and also mixing its defensive strategies, with more weights in ZM. FCB gets more points from its defensive strategies ($v_1 = 7.67, v_2 = 6$), while ACM gets slightly more points from its defensive strategies ($z_1 = 6.5, z_2 = 6.68$). Notice though that in this case there are five positive slacks, $sla_4 = 2$, $sla_6 = 2$, $slb_4 = 1.25$, $slb_5 = 0.25$, $slb_6 = 1.93$.

In Nash, model (a), Mathematica found seven equilibria, with three of them being pure strategies and four mixed ones. The three pure strategies and one of the four mixed ones are identical in model (b) as well. Notice also that the pure strategies Nash equilibrium ($a_5 = b_4 = 1$) is identical with the solution from the classical optimization when FCB maximizes and is the only one where ACM plays offensively. Apart from the Nash payoff (9, 9), in all other equilibria FCB gets more points than ACM, with the largest difference (11, 8) when FCB plays 100% AP and ACM defends with 100% T. In another Nash equilibrium, (4.74, 4.5), the difference is approximately 5% in favor of FCB. That equilibrium is found if FCB plays 50% its $a_i$ and 50% its $a_6$, while ACM plays 52.63% its $b_5$ and 47.37% its $b_4$. In that case the product for FCB is: $(0.5*0.5263*9) + (0.5*0.4737*10) = 4.74$. Similarly the product for ACM is: $(0.5*0.5263*9) + (0.5*0.4737*9) = 4.50$.

In CCP model (a), when FCB maximizes, it plays 100% CA if ACM defends by 45.58% with T and 54.42% by ZM, giving FCB 8.77 points. On the other hand, when ACM maximizes, it mixes four strategies, with D dominating by 90.38%, given that FCB defends by about 2/3 T and 1/3 ZM, and giving ACM 8.53 points, i.e. a rather balanced game.

In model (b), both teams shift strategies. When FCB maximizes, it plays 100% AP and 100% ZM, while ACM plays all six strategies with changes in defense weights. When ACM maximizes, it shifts to two pure strategies, 100% CA and 100% T, while FCB plays all six strategies too and changes its defense weights. In this model, the offensive strategies give 8.37 points to FCB and 7.38 points to ACM. On the other hand, both teams get almost the same points (7.36 versus 7.35) from their defensive strategies.

---

6 Notice that ACM would receive 17 points too if it accepted the solution in which FCB maximizes, i.e. ($a_3 = a_4 = 1$) and ($b_3 = b_4 = 1$).
### Table 3: Unrestricted offensive and defensive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model (a)</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>$v_1$; $z_1$</th>
<th>$v_2$; $z_2$</th>
<th>Offensive strategies</th>
<th>Defensive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$v_1$</td>
<td>$z_1$</td>
<td>$v_2$</td>
<td>$z_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic Opt.</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max-min of payoffs</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>3.95; 0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.37; 0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP &amp; Compl. Constr.</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>1.56; 4.78</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.48; 0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nash</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>8.77; 0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLP</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>3.05; -0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.47; -0.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuzzy</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>0.88; 1.22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.88; 1.56</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In PLP model (a), the results are rather similar as in CCP. Both teams, when they maximize, mix their offensive strategies, with most weights in $CA$. Both teams mix also their defensive strategies (with almost identical weights) when the other team maximizes. $FCB$ gets 3.05 and $ACM$ 2.47 points. Notice though the two negative values in the defensive strategies, $v_2 = -0.5$ and $z_2 = -0.63$, indicating that the certainty degree of defensive strategies being at least equal to 0.5, should not be less than 60%, is violated. For $ACM$, the additional $-0.13$ is explained by the fact that $b_5 = 0.0029$. On the other hand, the certainty degrees of all four offensive strategies being at least equal to 2, should not be less than 90%, is valid.
Table 4: Restricted offensive and defensive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model (b)</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>$v_1$; $v_2$</th>
<th>$z_1$; $z_2$</th>
<th>Offensive strategies</th>
<th>Defensive strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic Opt.</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>3.95; 1.71</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2455</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2857</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.37; 1.92</td>
<td>0.4323</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3168</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max-min of payoffs</td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>7.67; 6.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5555</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.50; 6.68</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.4642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>0.2857</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.38; 7.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.379</td>
<td>0.1091</td>
<td>0.4463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>8.37; 7.36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4319</td>
<td>0.3176</td>
<td>0.7142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.38; 7.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1723</td>
<td>0.0781</td>
<td>0.7195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5379</td>
<td>0.1498</td>
<td>0.5537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1789</td>
<td>0.2032</td>
<td>0.4463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>3.09; 1.61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3105</td>
<td>0.4755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2209</td>
<td>0.2711</td>
<td>0.5505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.70; 1.89</td>
<td>0.4165</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>5.36; 1.22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.9841</td>
<td>0.9891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2817</td>
<td>0.5295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.96; 1.56</td>
<td>0.3535</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2808</td>
<td>0.6465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCB</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2077</td>
<td>0.5671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In PLP, model (b), both certainty degrees are satisfied. Both teams, when they maximize, play 100% ZM, FCB plays also 100% CA, while ACM mixes its CA with AP. When one team maximizes, the other team mixes all six strategies, with roughly similar weights. FCB gets 3.09 + 1.61 = 4.7 points, while ACM gets 2.70 + 1.89 = 4.59 points, again a rather balanced game.

Finally, in Fuzzy model (a), both teams, play similar strategies when they maximize, 100% T for ACM and almost 99% for FCB, and mix all four offensive strategies, with almost similar weights, when the other team maximizes. They get the same points from their offensive strategies, but ACM gets more points than BFC from its pure defensive strategy T.
In Fuzzy, model (b), while the strategies from model (a) remain unchanged, FCB plays 98.4% SG, 1.6% CA and ACM mixes about 1/3 CA and 2/3 D. Both teams mix also their defensive strategies when the other team maximizes. Again, ACM gets 0.34 more points from its T, while FCB gets 0.40 more points from its offensive strategies, leading to almost balanced game.

Notice that in all fuzzy models all inferior lambdas are positive, varying between 1.52 and 2.9.

In general, the “average” strategies from all models (a) are: FCB plays about 57% offensively, i.e. about 23% AP, 19% SG and 14% CA. Its highest weight though is in defense, ZM with about 28%. ACM plays more offensively, 61.8%, mainly through 41% D, and by about 12% CA. ACM balances its defensive strategies, by about 21% ZM and 17% T. The closest to these averages is the Nash equilibrium that gives FCB 4.34 points and ACM 3.89 points. Similarly, the “average” strategies from all models (b) are: FCB plays about 54.6% AP, 34.1% SG and 11.3% CA offensively and 42.7% T and 57.3% ZM defensively; ACM plays 32.4% CA, 31.6% D, 28.8% AP and 7.2% SG offensively and 53.7% T and 46.3% ZM defensively.

Conclusions

A number of deterministic and stochastic models where used to find out the optimal offensive and defensive strategies that FCB and ACM could have applied during their UEFA CL match, based on the selected match statistics. Since FCB won the match, the question posed was if ACM could have done better by following better strategies.

Despite the fact that the optimal strategies vary with the selected model, there are indeed four different strategies that ACM could have selected according to the following models: (i) in fuzzy model (a) ACM gets 16% more points than FCB, if it plays purely defensive, i.e. 100% T; (ii) in LP with complementary constraints model (a) ACM gets 2.5 % more points, if it plays offensively, i.e. 52% SG and 46% CA; (iii) in one Nash equilibrium where both teams get 9 points, if it plays 100% ZM in order to defend the 100% SG played by FCB; (iv) in fuzzy model (b) where ACM gets 1% less points than FCB, if it plays 100% T in defense and also 35.4% CA and 64.6% D in offense.

On the other hand, ACM does it badly with the following strategies: (i) in PLP model (a), if it relies mainly to CA (by 93%) with almost no defense; (ii) in one Nash equilibrium when FCB plays 100% AP and ACM 100% T; (iii) in another Nash equilibrium when FCB plays 53% AP and 47% ZM while ACM plays 52.4% D and 47.6% T; (iv) in classical maximization model (b), if both teams play 100% AP, and also FCB plays 100% ZM while ACM plays 100% T.

Therefore, the final suggestion to ACM is: When both teams maximize simultaneously, play offensively, start with counter-attacks with finish with shots on goal. FCB would try with tackling, but not with high success. On the other hand, excessive CA if SG does not follow it should be avoided since FCB can mix its two defensive strategies successfully. If FCB plays mainly its amazing passing game or its SG, defend with ZM instead of T.

I leave it open to the readers, the fans and the managers to conclude if ACM’s defeat can be explained because it did not followed the suggested strategies above.
References


[http://www.talkfootball.co.uk/guides/football_tactics.html](http://www.talkfootball.co.uk/guides/football_tactics.html)

[http://sport.virgilio.it/calcio/serie-a/statistiche/index.html](http://sport.virgilio.it/calcio/serie-a/statistiche/index.html)