

# Changing room playlist could give World Cup teams the edge

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Blasting out Rihanna or Kanye West could give World Cup squads that crucial psychological edge over rival teams, suggests research from Brunel University London.

Which tracks the manager spins in the dressing room to psych players up to peak performance may be key to getting them to perform at the top of their game.

Scientists at Brunel have long banged the drum for [music](#)'s performance boosting powers in sport. Now for the first time they've studied its pre-match effect in premiership football.

The right music can supercharge team spirit among elite players helping heighten bonding and strengthen feelings of togetherness, they found.

"Our study illustrated how music plays a pivotal role in enhancing group cohesion in elite football," said psycho-physiologist Marcelo Bigliassi.

The results serve as sound advice for managers, says Bigliassi:

"Managers could use pre-match music to boost feelings of unity, increase group cohesion and create a positive team atmosphere."

Pre-match prep without music can put players on the back foot by making them feel under-prepared nevermind how much they've trained, researchers found. And the game-changing positive emotions from the right pre-match sounds last long after the players walk out of the tunnel.

The same positive effects of musical prep might stretch to other team sports such as basketball, rugby and hockey, Bigliassi reckons. "I believe that a similar cluster of psychological responses would be identified for players in other team sports."

The study tracked 34 academy players at a Premiership team, aged 16-23 over a season. Upbeat tunes players knew gave the most positive vibes before a match. One surprise was how ready younger players were to go along with senior player's picks. Post To Be by Omarion, Pour It Up by Rihanna, Blood On The Leaves by Kanye West, and The Catch

Up by Drake were players' top tunes for feeling totally in the zone.

"Our findings provide a vista into the emotional, behavioural and cognitive responses to music in young elite players," said study leader Dr. Costas Karageorghis.

"The role of music in soccer is perhaps more symbolic, imaginative and figurative than thought," he added. "Music appears to intersect with the narrative of players' lives and the way in which bonds are formed among players both on and off the pitch."

A grounded theory of music use in the psychological preparation of academy soccer players is published this month in *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology*.

**More information:** Costas I. Karageorghis et al. A grounded theory of music use in the psychological preparation of academy soccer players., *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology* (2017). [DOI: 10.1037/spy0000110](https://doi.org/10.1037/spy0000110)

Provided by Brunel University

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