

The English Premier League under an American Sports League Model

John Wolohan, Ithaca College, United States, jwolohan@ithaca.edu

Keywords: Professional Sports & Competitive Balance

Abstract

This presentation will look at the English Premier League and compare it to three sports league in the United States: the National Football League, the National Basketball League and Major League Baseball.

In particular, the presentation will examine the competitive balance of the four leagues and whether the American sports league model promotes a more balanced and competitive league.

The presentation will begin by comparing the final standings of the English Premier League to the final standings of the National Football League, the National Basketball League and Major League Baseball.

Next, the presentation will examine what the English Premier League might look like under the American sports model.

In particular, the presentation will look at some of the benefits and shortcomings of both the English and American league models, such as the system of promotion and relegation, market allocations, player development and revenue distribution. The presentation concludes by giving an example of what English Football would look like under an American sports model and play-off system.

Next, the presentation shows that instead of promoting a more balanced and competitive league the English Premier League's system of promotion and relegation, with teams fighting up until the last game to prevent relegation out of the Premier League, actually decreases the competitive balanced of the league.

In particular, the presentation examines whether the League's system of promotion and relegation actually tilts the competitive balance of the league in favor of the bigger clubs by negatively impacting smaller teams with limited resources and less stability and whether an American sports league model with fixed teams would promote more competitive balance at the top and throughout the league. The presentation concludes by giving an example of what English Football would look like under an American sports model and play-off system.

Methodology / Research Design / Data Analysis

To examine the competitive balance of the English Premier League and the American sports league model, the presentation reviews the year end results of the last 15 seasons of the English Premier League, the National Football League, the National Basketball League and Major League Baseball.

Using this data, the presentation compares the number of different teams to win the league championships, the number of different teams to be runners up, the winning percentages of all the top teams, the winning percentages of all the teams in the leagues, and the winning percentages of the bottom teams.

Results / Discussion / Implications

In the last 15 years, only 4 different teams have won the English Premier League: Manchester United (10 times), Arsenal (3 times), Chelsea (2 Times), and Blackburn Rovers (1 time).

During that same time, the National Football League has had 11 different champions, the National Basketball League has had 6 different champions, and Major League Baseball has had 9 different champions. In addition, when you compare the number of times Manchester United has won the English Premier League (10 Times) to the most any team in the America sports league has won New York Yankees of Major League Baseball and the Chicago Bulls of the National Basketball League (4 times) it is clear that the American sports model is a more balanced and competitive league.