

Session: **New trends in management and marketing III.**

Abstract nr: **EASM-0073**

Comparative analysis of football team composition and results: Managerial perspectives for the big-5 European leagues

*R. Poli*¹

¹*ISSUL, Sport Science, Lausanne, Switzerland*

raffaele.poli@unil.ch

Background

Since 2005, the Professional Football Players Observatory has proposed a set of indicators comparable in both time and space on the demographics, training, international recruitment and mobility of players. Based upon a rigorous methodological approach, the resulting database statistics permit a nuanced grasp of the dynamics at work in the European labour market for professional football players. The indicators developed are available for several different levels (clubs, groups of clubs, leagues) and numerous criteria (sporting level of clubs, players' age, position, etc.). Analysed cross-checked data between indicators and sporting results now allow us to envisage scientific explications for team success. This new perspective enables us to offer proposals regarding different squad management strategies based on these findings.

Objectives and methods

The objective of this paper is to present the managerial perspectives offered through the setting up of a longitudinal research database on the career paths of footballers in the big-5 European leagues (England, Germany, France, Spain, Italy). This database includes number of information such as date of birth, position on the pitch, country of origin, age of departure abroad, number of championship matches played, number of national A-team matches, number of goals scored, and so on.

Team composition is analysed with the aid of a comparison of the aforementioned indicators measured at club level, selected in function to their impact on results obtained in their particular league. The link between the indicators and the number of points per match for teams is measured through linear regressions. Chosen indicators refer to criteria such as player experience, recruitment zones or squad stability. All the indicators are weighted according to the number of minutes played by footballers.

We also present the evolution of the intensity of the link (coefficient of determination) between the above mentioned indicators and the results, taking into account the characteristics of footballers having played the most minutes for each team in the league, up to the grouped characteristics of the 20 most played footballers.

Conclusion and application to practice

The comparative analysis of team composition in the major European leagues opens up a new field of study in the elaboration of long term orientated management models for teams with a

view to sustainability regarding results. Firstly, the study of the combined impact of different indicators on the results allows teams to compare strategies with those of their competitors. Secondly, it permits them to select player profiles to keep or recruit so as to adapt as closely as possible team composition to collective performance models, elaborated according to league level, on the basis of observations carried out during previous seasons. Top clubs such as Chelsea FC, Manchester City and Everton FC, and established companies like Scout7, Opta Sports Data and Pro Zone have already shown a strong interest for your work.

References

The Professional Football Players Observatory's website: www.eurofootplayers.org

Besson R, Poli R., Ravenel L. (2010). *Demographic Study of the Footballers in Europe*. Neuchâtel : CIES.

Poli R., Ravenel L., Besson R. (2009). *Annual Review of the European football Players Labour Market*, Neuchâtel : CIES.