

Actual Trends Of Business And Transfer Market In The Central And Eastern European Professional Football

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Aim of the research

The aim of the paper is to interpret and examine the efficiency of Central Eastern European (CEE) region's professional football clubs on the international football markets. The relevance of the paper stems from the fact that there had been no earlier complex research about the football results and efficiency of the CEE region. At the same time, it can be enlightening also on an international level, because the nine countries together can be considered a significant market. More than 25 years after the regime change and 10 years after joining the European Union they still have their particular arrangements, mixed ownership (business-state). Moreover, many championships and clubs in the region work with considerable political interference, and at the same time they give many talented players to the best championships.

The research question of the paper is how can the sports achievements, business operation and transfer market income of Central-Eastern-European football clubs in the past ten years be evaluated?

Theoretical background

The paper reviews the literature of human resources management in sport, the globalization of sport and operations of football players' transfers. The research reviews the relevant literature about sport success and financial results of leagues and clubs of the examined region.

The paper contributes to the literature of business economics, with a special regard to the unique business operations in professional sport. The region that used to achieve great success both on the level of national teams and clubs in earlier decades now lags behind Western Europe both in sport achievements and in a financial sense — mainly due to the lack of international consumers. On the other hand, it is excellent at export sales on players' level, and can be considered one of the main resources of players among all the regions in European football. The research fills a gap in the literature because there has not yet been published any paper focusing on the football of the CEE-region.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The research investigates the relationship between sport success and transfer revenues. CEE region means nine countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Common characteristics of them are the followings: post-socialist historical background (similar tradition, economy, culture, external environment) and EU membership or candidate member of the EU (Serbia).

During the research we used both secondary and primer methodology. In the secondary research we studied papers about the business operations and players market achievements of international football with a focus on Central-Eastern-Europe (using mostly UEFA and CIES studies from 2008 to 2016), then we designed a primary database to have an understanding of the place Central-Eastern-European championships, clubs and players have in international football.

The research used data of reliable statistical websites, like transfermarkt.de and uefa.com. We collected data about squad of clubs (1,261 data lines and 6 variables from 2006 to 2014 in 9 countries), value of players (2,250 data lines and 5 variables in 9 countries) and transfers (2,102 data lines and seven parameters from 2006 to 2016 in 9 countries).

Results

Both professional and financial competitiveness of the CEE region can be considered weak in European football. There is a big difference between clubs and championships even within the region, still, there are clubs in the region that can be considered competitive in international competitions and on the field of player sales. The international trend that sport success is concentrated can be noticed also in this region, too, and it also means the concentration of financial success. For players in the championships of the region, a Polish or Romanian team can mean the stepping stone towards a stronger Western-European championship. Also, they start their local and international career at an increasingly earlier age. If we observe the value of player sales compared to the size and economic power of the country, it can be seen that greatest export is conducted by Romania, Serbia and Croatia, among them due to smaller size Croatia and Serbia are the most efficient exporters.

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