Highlights

Among the multitude of interesting results for each report chapter, are those that appeared to us as the most important or surprising ones

Age

- Big-5 league players are on average aged 26. The on-pitch figure slightly decreased from 26.83 to 26.76 over the last five seasons.
- The most seasoned players are to be found in the Italian Serie A (27.60 years of age for players on the pitch and 26.77 at squad level).
- The greatest percentage of minutes played by U22 footballers was in Germany (19.4%), while the lowest was in Italy (6.7%).
- The oldest club, Fulham FC, played on average with footballers aged 29.92, a slightly higher figure than for Roma (29.81) and Osasuna (29.65).
- Borussia Dortmund fielded the youngest team of the big-5 (23.5 years of age on average), an all time low for a national champion.

Experience

- Clubs are made up of players with growing top level experience (on average 99 matches in the big-5 at squad level, with 129 for footballers on the pitch).
- Since 2006/07, no English club champion fielded a team on average composed of players with a big-5 league experience of less than 196 matches.
- The lower experience threshold is over 150 also for the last five Italian, Spanish and French league title winners.
- The percentage of minutes played by footballers with recent national A-team experience was never as high as in 2010/11 (41.2%).
- Manchester City fielded on average the highest number of active internationals (10.3 out of 11), followed by Chelsea and Inter (both 10.1).

Training

- The percentage of club-trained players increased for the second year running reaching 22.0% for the squad and 16.6% on the pitch.
- These levels are still lower than those measured during the 2006/07 season (24.3%, and 18.8%), for all leagues except Spain.
- The highest percentages were measured in France at squad level (30.4%) and in Spain on the pitch (24.8%).
- Contrary to common sense, the best ranked teams employ and field a greater percentage of club-trained footballers than bottom-ranked ones.
- Barcelona won the Spanish league title by fielding a majority of home-grown players (5.7 out of 11), a figure close to the highest one (Athlétic Bilbao, 7.0).

Origin

- The percentage of expatriate players slightly decreased for the second year running, but remains quite high (42.3% compared to 38.6% in 2006/07).
- The highest percentage of expatriates was measured in the English Premier League, both in squads (56.7%) and for players on the pitch (58.4%).
- An all time high of expatriate footballers was registered in the Italian Serie A (47.0% at squad level, + 18.3% compared to 2006/07).
- Arsenal FC averagely fielded the greatest number of expatriates (9.6 out of 11), followed by Inter Milan (9.4) and Wigan (9.1).
- While Brazil remains the most exporting country (123 players), the presence of Brazilians dropped for the second year in a row (-31 since 2008/09).
Mobility

- The average number of new signings per club increased for the third season running (10.0), but remained lower than in 2006/07 and 2007/08 (10.5 and 10.9).
- Italian clubs are by far the most active on the transfer market, with on average 13.6 players signed at the start or during the season.
- An all time high was measured in the percentage of signings carried out from a club abroad (40.8%), up to 48.4% in Germany.
- All 2010/11 national champions fielded on average players who had been for at least 2.7 seasons in their first-team squad.
- Manchester United had the greatest on-pitch stability (on average 6.2 seasons in the club, up to 8.1 for midfielders).

Performance

- At team level and according to our five key performance indicators, the best big-5 league club was Barcelona, followed by Real Madrid and Borussia Dortmund.
- If the Golden Ball was attributed according to performance in the big-5, our indicators suggest that the final trio should be Messi, Xavi and Dani Alves.
- By league, the most performing players were Messi in Spain, Sahin in Germany, Cesc in England, Nenê in France and Ibrahimovic in Italy.
- Players who made the biggest contribution to the overall performance of their teams were Nenê (PSG), Cossu (Cagliari) and Gameiro (Lorient).
- The best players by area of the game were C. Ronaldo for open play shot, Özil for chance creation, Xavi for distribution, Ribéry for take on, S. Bender for recovery.

Managers and agents

- More than one third of clubs (35 out of 98) changed trainer at least once during 2010/11.
- Manager change brought a 26% improvement in points per match, but our analysis shows that this impact diminishes over time.
- 83 companies or individual agents represent half of the players in the big-5, and 24 intermediaries manage the career of one quarter of them.
- These figures clearly indicate that a small minority of agents control a vast part of the representation market for top footballers.
- Groupe USM has the biggest number of clients in the big-5 (31); Gestifute represents players who generated the highest transfer fees during their career (390 millions €).