

Fewer club-trained players, more expatriate footballers in the big-five European leagues

The Professional Football Players' Observatory (PFPO) presents for the fourth year running its in-depth analysis of the big-five European leagues. The study reveals a decreasing number of club-trained players in contrast to a rising proportion of expatriate footballers. The PFPO was born out of an academic partnership between the International Center for Sports Studies - CIES (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland) and the Centre of Research and Study on Sport (University of Franche-Comté, France). The CIES is supported by FIFA.

The 4th edition of the Annual Review of the European Football Players' Labour Market was published today. This 100-page and well illustrated publication presents the key trends within the big-5 leagues in terms of demography, training, international recruitment and mobility of footballers.

The study reveals that the percentage of club-trained players has fallen for the fourth year in succession. Between 2007/08 and 2008/09, it went from 22% to 21%. The highest value is for France (30.3%), but after a 5% fall. The lowest value is for Italy (12.8%). The percentage of matches played by club-trained players has also shrunk: from 16.5% to 15.9%.

In contrast to the percentage of club-trained players, the proportion of expatriate players has risen for the fourth year in a row to reach 42.6%. English clubs still employ the highest proportion of expatriates (59.2%). For the first time in the history, expatriate players have been more numerous than national ones in Germany (50.2%). The best five ranked clubs per league have played with a squad made up by 54.8% of expatriates. The highest percentage has been measured for Liverpool FC (90.0%).

Among many other facts and figures, the 4th edition of the Annual Review of the European Football Players' Labour Market finds that success is not a result of chance. In terms of team make up, the variables that best account for club performance are the percentage of active full internationals among the eleven most employed players, the number of signings from abroad carried out in the ten main countries of recruitment and the experience of footballers in big-5 league clubs. The average stay of footballers in their employer club is also an important criterion explaining results. The higher is the stability of the squad, the better are the results.

For the first time in the history of this key reference publication, a chapter is fully dedicated to managers. The data comes from a database developed by cross-checking a number of sources (press, yearbooks, internet sites) and extensive personal research. It covers footballers playing during the 2008/09 season in the following leagues: English Premier League (20 clubs), French Ligue 1 (20), Spanish Primera Liga (20), German Bundesliga (18) and the Italian Serie A (20).

A sample of this year's report with the main results of the study is now downloadable from www.eurofootplayers.org. Through this website, one can also gain an insight into the approach to the comprehensive study by accessing the original database. After free registration, it is possible to query a part of the indicators by season, country, club level, player position, age, and origin.

The research of the Professional Football Players Observatory is conducted by the International Centre for Sports Studies (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland) and the Centre of Research and Study on Sport (University of Franche-Comté, France). This year the two founding organisations were joined by the Institute of Sports Science (University of Lausanne), Switzerland.

The 4th Annual Review of the European Football Players' Market can be ordered on CIES' website (www.cies.ch, item publication) or by writing an email to secretariat.cies@unine.ch. A special price is available for students and academics. Journalists can contact the authors of the study by writing an email to eurofootplayers@unine.ch

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