

European market of players' signings is reduced 45%, advancing a downward trend for the following years

- ✓ **The 2012 winter European market of players' signings was reduced 45%, going down to 271mio€**
- ✓ **Liga BBVA teams spent in winter signings only 6.5mio€ (all of them by Sevilla): the smallest investment in the last 13 years**
- ✓ **Real Madrid was not active in the winter market at all: no acquisitions, no signings. FC Barcelona got 4mio€ for the sales of two players whose contracts were up in June (Maxwell and Jonathan Soriano)**
- ✓ **FC Barcelona is the team that used the most grassroots players both in Spain and Europe. Despite many injuries, the club has not made any signings, trusting its home-made players (FC Barcelona has lined up 15 players from its development system this season)**
- ✓ **Real Madrid is Europe's football best team (ha gained 85.9% of the points played), ousting FC Barcelona. Real Madrid is also the squad with the most goals (in overall games, away games and has the best goal net difference) and has the biggest advantage over the second team in any of the top European leagues.**
- ✓ **FC Barcelona ranks second in Europe in points got at home, pacing the continent in home goals and goals surrendered at home.**
- ✓ **In the season's first half, C. Ronaldo and Messi are Europe's top goal scorers with 24 and 22 respectively**
- ✓ **Higuaín is once again Europe's most efficient striker, scoring a goal in every 63 minutes**

Madrid, February 9 of 2012- The total investment in winter players' signings was reduced 45% comparing it to last season (491mio€), dropping to 271mio€.

According to the *Football Transfer Review 2012* study, launched today at Esade Madrid and produced by Prime Time Sport –a company headed by Esteve Calzada- the decrease took place generally in all the top leagues with the exception of France's Ligue 1.

Four of the key five European leagues witnessed the reduction of their winter expenditure in players' signings. The Premier League headed the investment ranking. But the 82mio€ expended by the English league was way below the 268 expended last season. Italy's Serie A came second with 77mio€. The French Ligue 1 dramatically increased its investment this winter going from 15 to 54mio€.

According to Esteve Calzada, the low investment levels in signings are the result of the following circumstances:

- Big investments made in the 2010/11 winter and 2011/12 summer markets
- Financial difficulties experienced by the vast majority of the clubs due to excessive past expenditure and a big level of indebtedness
- A need to get adapted to the new UEFA Financial Fair Play rule, which limits the losses of a club to a maximum of 45mio€ until the 2014/15 season. This rule also affects the clubs supported by big investors.

The exceptions to this winter market tendency have come from teams with a need of improving their results on the pitch. The two that have invested the most have been Wolfsburg and Dynamo Moscow. For the first time in recent years, Manchester City did not use this market to sign any players. Real Madrid and FC Barcelona did not sign any players this winter either.

Counting this season's summer and winter signings, Chelsea tops the ranking with an investment of 110mio€, followed by PSG and Juventus. Manchester City drops to the fourth place.

The highlights of this winter market in European acquisitions were Wolfsburg (30mio€) and Dynamo Moscow (27) as the teams that invested the most; Dzsudzsák (19mio€ /Dynamo Moscow) and Vargas (17.5/Napoli) became the top signings.

Liga BBVA records the smallest investment in the last 13 years (6.5mio€)

Liga BBVA's investment in signings was drastically reduced 79%, dropping to 6.5mio€: the lowest amount in Europe and Spain in the last 13 years. The financial crisis and the many debts carried by the clubs have made the Spanish teams look for creative solutions: signing players for free, reducing the amount of players teams have on their rosters, using players from the clubs' development systems (145 have been used so far which means an increase of 6% over last season).

Of the 24 winter acquisitions in Spain, only 2 involved money (Reyes and Babá from Sevilla). All of the rest came at no cost or through loans.

Real Madrid was not active at all in the winter market. The Spanish league leader did not sale or sign players. In the other hand, FC Barcelona gained 4mio€ for the sales of two players whose contracts were up in June (Maxwell and Soriano), reaching its highest winter figure since the transfer of Ronald de Boer in 2001.

Of the 20 teams that play in Liga BBVA, 16 used the winter market to reduce their respective players' rosters. Three of them, Real Madrid, Valencia and Athletic Bilbao, were not active at all.

Sevilla also ruled the Spanish league in sales, thanks to transferring Cáceres to Juventus. After the sales mentioned above, FC Barcelona was second, Atlético Madrid was third (3.5mio€) and Espanyol (3mio€) came fourth.

Sevilla leads the league in effective usage of summer signings while Real Madrid comes last

Despite the three teams that expended the most in the summer market (Manchester City, PSG and Juventus) finished the season's first half at the top of their respective tables, we can't conclude that signings translate in short-term results on the pitch. Only 5 of 10 teams that expended the most in Europe and only 2 of the 10 that did it in Spain improved their points ratio in their leagues.

In Spain, none of the five players acquired from Real Madrid in last summer's market played more than 50% of the season's first half minutes. Coentrao played 41%, Varane 21%, Callejón 18%, Altintop only 2% and Sahin only saw action in 1% of the whole amount of minutes. This is completely opposite to what happened last year in which 4 of the 6 Real Madrid summer signings participated in more than 50% of the minutes played.

Sevilla is the club with the most participation from their last summer signings. All five of its acquisitions have been on the pitch in more than 50% of the minutes played.

In the whole Liga BBVA, the only field player who was on the pitch during 100% of the season's first half minutes was Villarreal's midfielder Bruno Soriano. Cristiano Ronaldo was only 57 minutes short of playing all the minutes as he did last season.

No European club uses more players from its development system than FC Barcelona

Despite the many injuries, FC Barcelona has not made any signings this winter, clearly trusting its home-made players. FC Barcelona has used 15 players from the club's development system on its line-ups this first half (two more than last year). This number places the club at the top of Europe in the category.

In the continent, FC Barcelona is followed by Manchester United (14). In Spain, the Catalan club is tied with Real Sociedad, which has also used 15 home-made players. In the other hand, Spanish squads Getafe and Granada have not lined up a single player from their development systems.

Real Madrid is the best European team after the season's first half

The current edition of *Football Transfer Review* also analyzes and compares the results of teams from the top five European leagues during the first half of the season. Real Madrid heads Europe having achieved 85.9% of the points played. For the first time in three years FC Barcelona (77.1%) does not lead the pack having dropped to the fourth place behind Manchester City and Manchester United. The negative side belongs to Zaragoza, which ranks last in the continent having got only 21% of the points played.

Real Madrid also paces the continent in goals scored (3.53 per outing), average of away goals (2.90) and overall net goal differential (+49).

FC Barcelona is the second best European team at home (Bayern Munich is the leader), having gained 93.3% of the points played. FC Barcelona paces the continent in home goals (4.3 per game), home goals surrendered (0.2) and net goal differential at home (+41).

Real Madrid and FC Barcelona have a bigger lead over the third ranked squad than any other top two teams in Europe. Real Madrid's lead over FC Barcelona is also the biggest in the continent.

Spanish team Granada has got the least amount of goals in Europe, but all their scores have been very important leading the continent in goal effectiveness. With an average of 0.63 goals per game, Granada averages 1.58 points per score.

Levante has been one of Europe's first half surprises, ranking fourth in Liga BBVA despite having gained only 54.4% of the points played. This means that the Spanish league fourth place is the cheapest way in Europe to qualify for the Champions League.

Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are again Europe's top scorers. Higuaín is the most effective striker

Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo continue fighting not only to become Spain's but also Europe's top scorers. At the end of the first half, the Portuguese forward (24) led the Argentinean (22) by two goals. Arsenal's Van Persie (19) is the only player in Europe who has been able to keep with their pace.

Higuaín is the most effective striker in the continent, scoring a goal every 63 minutes.

Messi and Ronaldo are also included in the TOP 3 most effective scorers of the first half. Messi is the only player in Europe who has made this TOP 3 in the last three seasons.

About Football Transfer Review

The study Football Transfer Review produced by Prime Time Sport reaches its sixth edition having become a reference in the world of football. It gathers, analyzes and comes to independent conclusions about the issues that have an influence in the making of the squads and the players' transfers in the top European and Spanish clubs.

About Prime Time Sport

Prime Time sport is a sports marketing firm founded and headed by FIFA players' agent Esteve Calzada, who formerly was FC Barcelona's general director of marketing.

The firm offers integral services for players represented: individual image rights, media relations and management of sporting and economic rights. Prime Time Sport works together with Spanish and European clubs in signing and selling players. The firm also provides consultancy on sports sponsorship to large advertisers and right holders.



Esteve Calzada

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