



BIG 4 DERBY BOOKING POINTS

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Strategy Summary:

Passions are high in big derby games, but does this automatically lead to an increase in the number of booking points in Europe's top 4 leagues? The short answer is no, but some derbies are dirtier than others.

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In Europe's top four leagues we have identified what we would describe as the big derby clashes:

Premier League

Looking at every Premier League game over the last 17 years since the 2002/03 season, the average game has seen 3.2 yellow cards and 0.15 red cards (or 35.84 booking points). We've also looked at this over the last five years to see if a similar pattern is still being seen and as a result we get on average per game; 3.4 yellow cards, 0.14 red cards and a booking points average of 37.37, providing an almost identical path.

Below are the derbies highlighted as significant Premier League clashes which we will take a further look at:

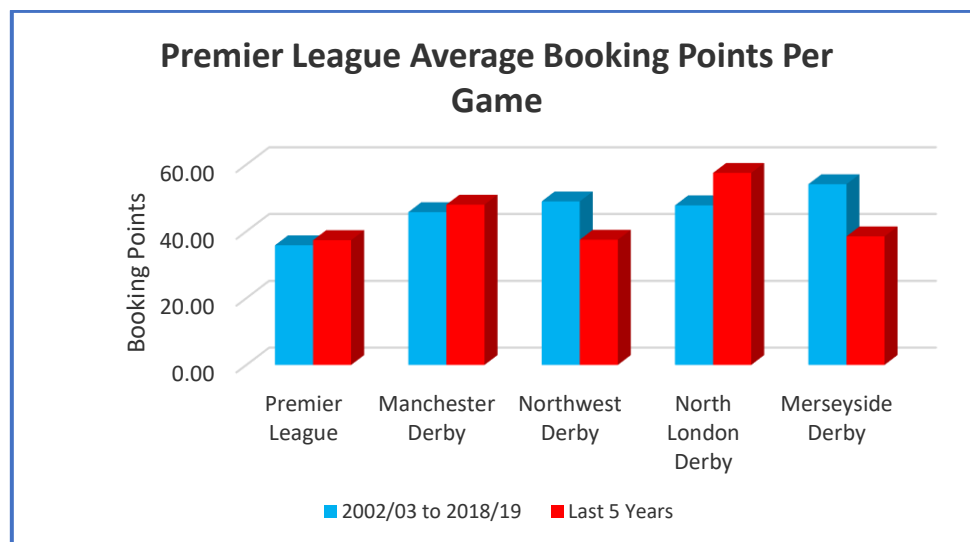
- *Man Utd v Man City (Manchester Derby)*
- *Arsenal v Spurs (North London Derby)*
- *Everton v Liverpool (Merseyside Derby)*
- *Liverpool v Man Utd (Northwest Derby)*

From the four derby matches above we have identified 160 games across the last 17 years that these have occurred. The average match has seen 49.15 booking points, with 4.2 yellow cards and 0.29 red cards in this time, which isn't considerably more than the Premier League average over the same

period. That works out at around an extra caution per game and with spread betting companies drastically increasing the booking points line for these big derby games, that can give us an angle to make some money on selling.

There are, however, some derbies which are more affected than others. The **Merseyside derby** is certainly one of the biggest in English football, with both teams relishing the opportunity to get one over the other. Across the last 34 league matches between Liverpool and Everton, there's been 14 red cards and 149 yellow cards. In terms of booking points, it's produced 54.1 per derby since 2002/03, but if we look at this over the last five years excluding this season, we can see this has considerably tailed off. There's been just 38.5 booking points per game from their last 10 matches as it seems the rivalry has somewhat softened, as the Toffees fail to keep up with their red neighbours.

Interestingly, the **North London derby** has only seen an average of 47.8 booking points per game from their 34 matches over the last 17 years, which is relatively low seeing as they hate one another. But given Spurs' meteoric rise to be at much shorter odds for the Premier League title over the last decade, we've seen the booking points per game rise to 57.5, with 50 yellow cards and 3 red cards being seen in the last 10 clashes over a five-year period, making it the Premier League's most ferocious derby over that period. The other derby that has seen a rise in booking points in recent years is the **Manchester derby**, as City are another improving team that now sees them as one of - if not the best - performing side over the last five years, that in turn has heated this rivalry. Finally, the **Northwest derby** has taken a huge dive in ferocity as although the rivalry clearly remains amongst the fans, the departure of Sir Alex Ferguson's as well as key player rivalries has meant that on the field this is very much a tamer affair.



Looking in further detail we can see that over the last five years the two 'dirtiest' sides who remain in the league have been London clubs Chelsea and West Ham. Comparing how they've fared against each other we can see that on average per game there's 4.8 yellow cards, 0.1 red cards and a booking points average of 50.5 over their last 10 games, which is certainly a considerable margin above the league average as it seems the mixture of two dirtier teams and the added local rivalry does have an effect. Meanwhile, the fairest teams have been Liverpool and Brighton, who although have only faced one another four times since the Seagulls were promoted for the 2017/18 season, they've had an average of just 0.75 yellow cards, zero red cards and 7.5 booking points per game in their four meetings, which is almost next to nothing!

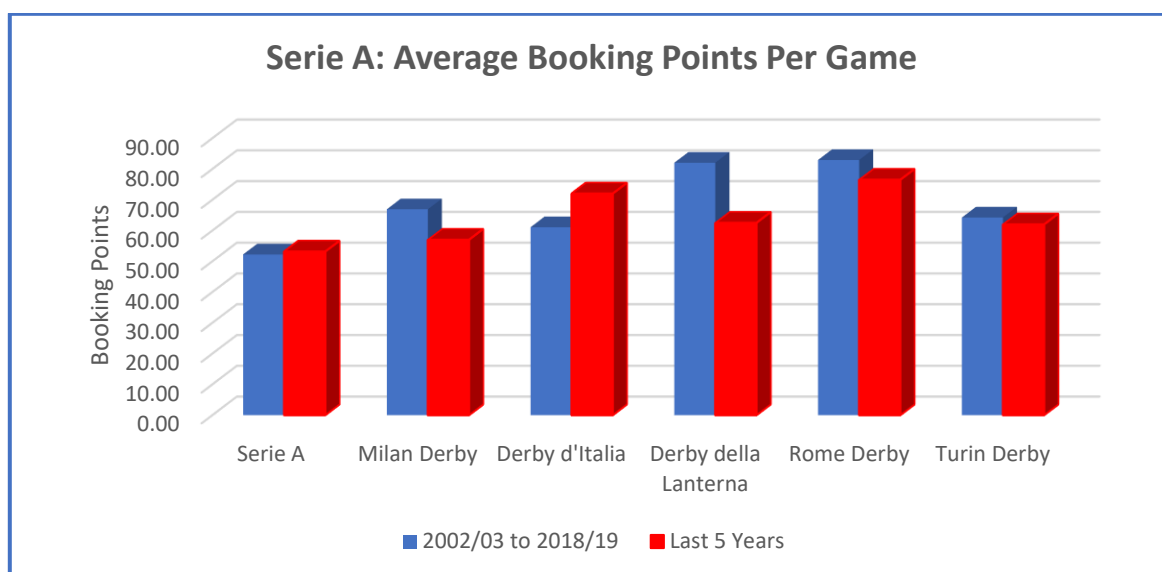
Serie A

Taking every Serie A game over the last 17 years since 2002/03 we can see that the average booking points per game in this time was 52.23, with 4.49 yellow cards and 0.29 red cards per game. This is considerably more than what is seen in the Premier League, as the culture for more 'hot heads' may be prevalent as well as the perception of fouls being seen differently. This league also hasn't seen any drastic deviations on the average booking points over the last five years either.

We have identified the following derbies as the significant Serie A clashes which we will take a further look at:

- Milan Derby (Inter v AC Milan)
- Derby d'Italia (Inter v Juventus)
- Derby della Lanterna (Genoa v Sampdoria)
- Rome Derby (Lazio v Roma)
- Turin Derby (Juventus v Torino)

From the five derby matches above we have identified 142 games over the last 17 years that these teams have gone head to head. On average per match, there's been 71.41 booking points, 5.94 yellow cards and 0.48 red cards. When comparing that to the Serie A average in the same period we can see an increase of over an extra yellow card per game being seen, resulting in nearly an extra 20 booking points. This is down to the increase in bookings that occur in the big Italian derbies which we'll be divulging a little further into below.



It is a well-known fact that the top Italian clubs seem to have it in for each other, which can lead to some very aggressive matches. The **Milan derby** is certainly one of the biggest in Italian football, with both sets of fans basing their whole season around who gets over the other at local San Siro theatre. Over the last 17 years there's been an average booking points per game of 66.91, 5.88 yellow and 0.32 red cards. That's an extra 14 booking points per game compared to the league average, but the most interesting factor is the tail off seen over the most recent five. The logical answer is both sides have gone from title challengers up to as late as 2011/12, to neither of them even getting close to lifting the trophy since and so it's understandable the 'fire' has been somewhat tamed.

On the contrary, Inter's rivalry with Juventus in the **Derby d'Italia** seems to be growing by the day. Indeed, that's certainly correlated with the Turin-based outfit's climb to become the giants of Italian football. To take the most recent meeting as an example before the Covid-19 break, we saw four yellow cards and a red, which by their standards is a rather tame affair.

The derby that remains the fiercest is the **Rome derby**, or **Derby della Capitale**. An intra-city hatred between Lazio and Roma adds to the whole occasion, with an average of 82.94 booking points per game, which works out at almost a 60% increase on the league average, though from a betting perspective the bookmakers seem to have this one sussed out.

The fixture where there may well be some deviation and therefore a betting angle on the other hand is the **Derby della Lanterna**. Taking place at Stadio Luigi Ferraris, it sees Genoa take on city rivals Sampdoria. Between the 2007/08 campaign to when Sampdoria got relegated in 2010/11 they had some ferocious games, averaging 8.13 yellow cards, 1.13 red cards at 109.38 booking points per game, while since their one year sabbatical from the league for the 2011/12 season in Serie B, an average of just 66.43 booking points per game from their 14 clashes says it all.

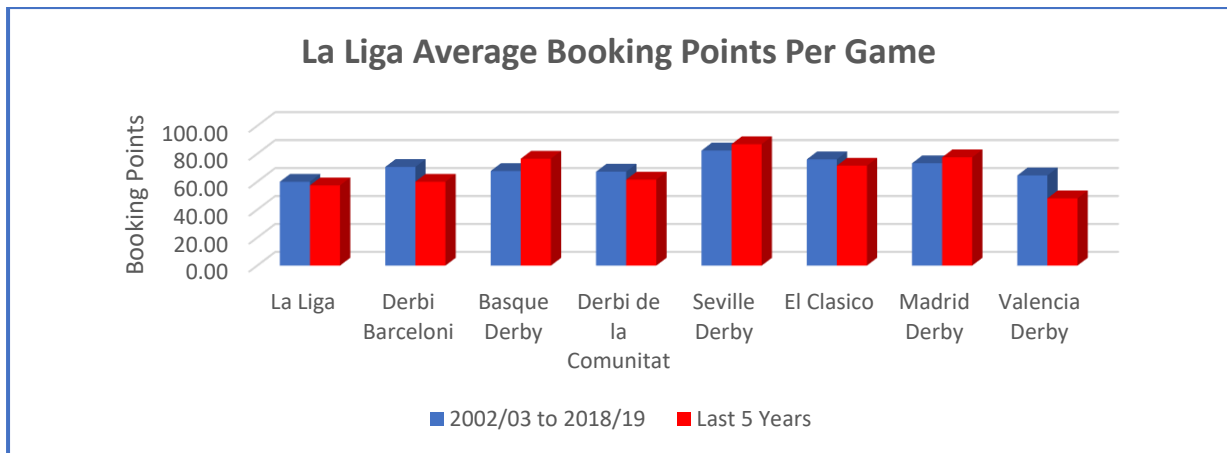
La Liga

Looking at every La Liga game since the 2002/03 season, we can see that the average booking points per game over this period was 59.99, with 5.23 yellow cards being given and 0.31 red cards. This is almost double that of the Premier League and more than the average Italian match as it seems these Latin countries follow a similar trend and style.

We have identified the following derbies as the significant La Liga clashes which we will take a further look at:

- Derbi Barceloni (Espanyol v Barcelona)
- Basque Derby (Athletic Bilbao v Real Sociedad)
- Derbi de la Comunitat (Villarreal v Valencia)
- Seville Derby (Sevilla v Real Betis)
- El Clasico (Barca v Real Madrid)
- Madrid Derby (Atletico Madrid v Real Madrid)
- Valencia derby (Levante v Valencia)

Using the seven derby matches above we have collected every time these specific sides have gone head to head in the league over the last 17 years. We have a pool of 212 games that on average per match there's been 6.24 yellow cards and 0.38 red cards. In terms of booking points this is averaging at 71.91 per game, which is only a small increase from the La Liga average. This small incremental increase may be because of such a large number of derby matches that occur throughout the season and that the actual difference between every game and the derbies alone isn't too significant.



Although all these derbies over the last 17 years have seen more bookings points on average than the league norm, we have identified three clashes which have produced the most cards out of them all. The obvious one being **El Clasico**. The most recognised derby game in the world football it's no surprise that these two go hammer and tong at one another. The rivalry has seen 6.50 yellow cards on average per game, 0.44 red cards and 76.03 booking points, while in the last five years there's been on average at least one red card every other game, with some terrible sportsmanship being seen.

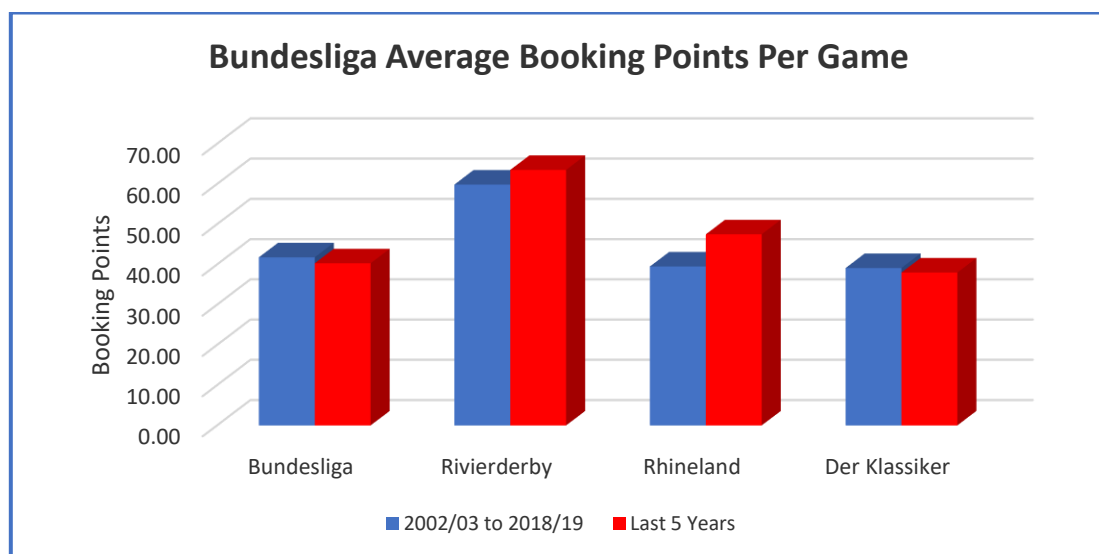
Another crunch match is the **Seville derby** - between Sevilla and Real Betis. This head to head has been one of the most booked games in Europe's top five leagues over the last 17 years, seeing 7.07 yellow cards, 0.46 red cards and 82.32 booking points on average per game and over the last four years this has risen to as much as 86.88 booking points per game, which is a big differential from the La Liga average that we can look to exploit. Finally, the **Madrid derby** continues to grow in stature with Diego Simone's men climbing the Spanish ranks to be fighting it out at the head of the table consistently, even winning it in 2013/14. Indeed, the last five seasons has seen as much as 7.50 yellow cards per game between them, averaging at 77.50 booking points, making it a rival to both the aforementioned clashes for the crown of most ferocious in the European sphere.

The two derbies we like for some potential value are the **Derbi de la Comunitat** and **Valencia derby**, with Valencia playing Villarreal in the former and Levante in the latter. The interest is due to the decreased number of cards that have actually occurred throughout these fixtures in more recent times, which could present a good opportunity to sell on the spreads. The Derbi de la Comunitat has seen only a slight decrease over the last five years from it's last 17 year average (67.19 – 61.5 booking points), but the Valencia derby has decrease over 15 booking points per game, as Levante's inability to keep up with their neighbours looks to be an opportunity to make a profit.

Bundesliga

First of all, if we take every Bundesliga game over the last 17 years dating back to the beginning of the 2002/03 campaign, we can identify on average per game there's been 3.72 yellow cards, 0.18 red cards and 41.78 booking points. That figure is some 20 booking points fewer than in Spain and 10 short of Italy, such is the nature of the game in Germany. A contributing factor to that is the fact that unlike those leagues where local derbies are a regular occurrence, the Bundesliga rarely sees two clubs from the same city take each other on, with the majority of local teams fighting it out amongst different standards of leagues. For that reason, we've only got three derby matches of particular significance we want to look at for the sake of this study:

- Revierderby (Schalke v Borussia Dortmund)
- Rhineland Derby (FC Koln v B.M'gladbach)
- Der Klassiker (Dortmund v Bayern)



Taking these three derby matches, we have collected every match where they've met (either home or away), making a total of 88 games over the last 17 years. There's been 4.07 yellow cards, 0.26 red cards and 47.22 booking points on average, making a very minor difference from the Bundesliga average. The likes of the Augsburg, Bavarian and Munich rivalries not being played on a regular basis anymore is probably the reason there isn't a huge difference between the league average and derby average.

Both the **Der Klassiker** and **Rhineland derbies** have seen fewer booking points per game than all the other league games' average since 2002/03. The former between Dortmund and Bayern has only really come to light over the last few seasons, with the Black & Yellows now consistently fighting it out further up the league, and so it's not surprising that that fixture has seen a rise in booking points in recent year. However, there still hasn't quite been enough history for this to be seen as a 'classic' matchup just yet.

Perhaps the one and only clash in German football that could be within that bracket is the **Revierderby** between Schalke and Dortmund. It has been going for 94 years which has certainly seen some interesting encounters over the years, with an overwhelming hatred for one another. Over the last 17 years this derby has seen on average 5.03 yellow cards, 0.38 red cards and 59.85 booking

points. That's a fairly considerable jump from the league average and could well be a spread to buy given you get the right price.

Conclusion:

When it comes to these derby matches it is evident that almost all of them have had more yellow and red cards than your average game in that same league/country, but we wanted to find matches which may provide more booking points than anticipated by the bookies, or most likely, much tamer affairs than they previously envisaged.

Premier League:

North London derby – Buy if spread ≤ 55

Merseyside derby – Buy if spread ≥ 35

Serie A:

Derby della Lanterna – Sell if spread ≥ 75

La Liga:

Valencia Derby – Sell if spread ≥ 65

Bundesliga:

Rivierderby – Buy if spread ≤ 50