



Head To Head Records

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Strategy Summary:

Europe's top leagues see teams play each other just twice per season, so when we see one side has a commanding head-to-head record over their opponent, can we take something from this or is it just a coincidence?

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DOES WINNING CONSISTENTLY AT HOME AGAINST A SPECIFIC OPPONENT PRESENT A VALUE OPPORTUNITY?

Looking at teams' past five home matches against a side they are hosting, we see little affect in terms of profitability for backing teams with a good record or laying sides with a bad one. This is not that surprising – current teams will be hugely different to the sides that met five years earlier.

However, if we restrict the samples to the previous three seasons, we see some strong arguments for backing home teams that have won their last three home matches against their opponents (ignoring matches where those results weren't in consecutive seasons due to promotion/relegations).

Looking across the top seven European winter leagues (Premier League, La Liga, Serie A, Bundesliga, Ligue 1, Eredivisie and Portugal's Primeira Liga), we have 1863 relevant matches over a 10-year period spanning from 2009/10 to 2018/19 for which football betting odds are available. Backing the home sides in these matches would have resulted in a 0.8% profit, compared against a -18.7% loss for the draw and a -19.2% loss backing the away side.

League	Matches	H Win %	Draw %	A Win %	HW ROI %	D. ROI %	AW ROI %
All	1863	64.20%	19.27%	16.53%	0.77%	-18.66%	-19.17%
Premier L.	249	65.06%	17.67%	17.27%	1.71%	-24.96%	4.45%
La Liga	307	69.06%	20.20%	10.75%	3.27%	-13.16%	-43.34%
Serie A	289	57.09%	22.15%	20.76%	-2.49%	-11.03%	-14.73%
Bundesliga	254	65.35%	15.75%	18.90%	6.27%	-31.10%	-9.15%
Ligue 1	221	52.94%	25.79%	21.27%	-8.81%	-4.38%	-8.98%
Eredivisie	295	64.41%	18.31%	17.29%	-1.77%	-13.73%	-20.87%
Primeira L.	248	74.19%	15.32%	10.48%	6.44%	-33.88%	-35.48%

Table 1: Table of Europe's Top 7 Leagues of H2H matches having won the last three from 2009/10 – 2018/19

Of course, when a side has won three home head-to-heads on the trot, they're doing something right and inevitably they're typically the stronger outfit. As such, and especially with that home advantage, many of these selections have been accompanied by short prices.

Holland is a case in point and although there was a hard-hitting 20.9% loss backing the away team to end the run of three defeats, the top sides have borne the brunt of that. It's a different story when excluding the traditional big three of Ajax, PSV and Feyenoord, as well as AZ Alkmaar (who have finished in the top six in eight of the 10 seasons over this period and the top four on six occasions). Backing the visitors to end a three-game losing streak against those clubs would be unwise, but across the rest of the division there was a very healthy 15.2% to be made (Table 2).

League/Team	Matches	H Win %	Draw %	A Win %	HW ROI %	D. ROI %	AW ROI %
Eredivisie	295	64.41%	18.31%	17.29%	-1.77%	-13.73%	-20.87%
Ajax	45	73.33%	20.00%	6.67%	-12.31%	38.71%	-49.62%
PSV	56	87.50%	8.93%	3.57%	9.21%	-49.45%	-82.59%
Feyenoord	29	68.97%	17.24%	13.79%	-2.45%	-26.66%	-5.00%
AZ	25	76.00%	20.00%	4.00%	10.16%	-20.64%	-51.36%
Big 4	155	78.06%	15.48%	6.45%	0.94%	-14.94%	-53.46%
The Rest	140	49.29%	21.43%	29.29%	-4.76%	-12.39%	15.22%

Table 2: Breakdown of Eredivisie's H2H matches having won the last three from 2009/10 – 2018/19

Bayern account for 59 of the 254 Bundesliga matches in this 10-year sample (Table 1), though as the division's dominant side it's not too easy to snap them at a big price on their own patch. In fact, despite the 6.3% profit to be had across the league, backing the Bavarians alone would have resulted in a 1.4% loss, and without them the 6.3% rises to a healthy 8.6%. Dortmund, it appears, are great value in these situations however, with a 14.1% return of investment from 36 games, while even title tilts haven't hampered their profitability. Indeed, this goes up again to 17.3% when limited to just the six seasons where they ended up finishing first or second in the table.

Although the Eredivisie proved profitable when eschewing the big guns at home, it's interesting to note that the Premier League was the only division amongst the seven where a positive return (4.5%) was to be had backing the away win across the board (Table 1). It wasn't even close, with France and Germany the only others coming in at better than -10%, while the value was monstrously poor on the Iberian Peninsula.

England's top flight is often hailed as the most competitive in the world and with greater money floating about further down in the league relative to other top-flight divisions, it's perhaps unsurprising. Although it had appeared the 'Big Six' in England were pulling away from the rest of the division, the 2019/20 season was throwing that out of the window with the likes of Leicester, Wolves and Sheffield Utd threatening to qualify for various European places. In any case, even over the 10-year period from 2009/10 to 18/19 where that dominance was felt, opposing the 'Big Six' on home turf in these situations has produced some reasonable gains (6.6% compared with -1.63% for the rest of the division).

League/Team	Matches	H Win %	Draw %	A Win %	HW ROI %	D. ROI %	AW ROI %
Premier L.	249	65.06%	17.67%	17.27%	1.71%	-24.96%	4.45%
Big Six	184	71.74%	15.22%	13.04%	2.30%	-28.66%	6.60%
The Rest	65	46.15%	24.62%	29.23%	0.05%	-14.46%	-1.63%

Table 3: Breakdown of Premier League's H2H matches having won the last three from 2009/10 – 2018/19

Another reason the Premier League remains fiercely competitive is the magnetic appeal the likes of Barcelona and Real Madrid hold for many players, especially those hailing from South America where there are fewer language barriers and cultural differences to overcome in settling. It produces a tendency for the very best in English football to drift to one of those behemoths, which in Spain widens the distance between the very elite (who find themselves on winning runs more often) and the rest.

Combined with Atletico Madrid, the El Clasico duo have each won greater than 83% of their games when going for that fourth victory on the bounce, compared to rest of the division who managed to keep their run going in under 70%. The 156 games in total produced a 4.13% profit, though with 146 of those matches at odds below 1.5, even the best odds on football will produce slow returns.

League/Team	Matches	H Win %	Draw %	A Win %	HW ROI %	D. ROI %	AW ROI %
La Liga	307	69.06%	20.20%	10.75%	3.27%	-13.16%	-43.34%
Barcelona	64	85.94%	7.81%	6.25%	-0.73%	-41.78%	2.45%
Real Madrid	62	88.71%	8.06%	3.23%	4.92%	-33.73%	-78.03%
Atl. Madrid	30	83.33%	10.00%	6.67%	12.90%	-51.93%	-83.27%
Big Three	156	86.54%	8.33%	5.13%	4.13%	-40.53%	-46.02%
The Rest	151	50.99%	32.45%	16.56%	2.38%	15.11%	-40.57%

Table 4: Breakdown of La Liga's H2H matches having won the last three from 2009/10 – 2018/19

With some odds offering little to no value, it's worth noting that there was a steady profit of 9.68% to be made backing teams where they were 2.3 or greater to land a fourth consecutive home win over their visitors. All but Ligue 1 made a profit of some sort and a combined 9.7%, though La Liga, the Bundesliga and the Primeira Liga stood head and shoulders above the rest with each offering well north of 20%.

League	Matches	H Win %	Draw %	A Win %	HW ROI %	Draw ROI %	AW ROI %
All	280	38.57%	23.57%	37.86%	9.68%	-21.82%	-7.01%
Premier L.	37	35.14%	21.62%	43.24%	4.59%	-27.11%	2.97%
La Liga	49	42.86%	36.73%	20.41%	24.10%	24.78%	-51.88%
Serie A	51	35.29%	19.61%	45.10%	0.59%	-37.78%	11.02%
Bundesliga	41	46.34%	24.39%	29.27%	21.59%	-16.49%	-27.88%
Ligue 1	45	35.56%	22.22%	42.22%	-3.58%	-31.16%	6.00%
Eredivisie	33	27.27%	18.18%	54.55%	0.18%	-34.45%	34.91%
Primeira L.	24	50.00%	16.67%	33.33%	24.92%	-49.13%	-15.46%

The Eredivisie turned in an interesting result with a 34.9% return when backing the visitors and there are one or two factors that might help explain why. Holland is a fine destination for young players to get game time and attract attention from the top leagues in the process, but that can often make it harder for clubs to lay the foundations of a team on a long-term basis, knowing their prized assets will eventually be sold. Further, the 34.9% profit came over 33 games, but only three of them involved one

of the bigger teams (all Feyenoord), and two of them came when hosting PSV. Thus, the 33 games at odds of 2.3 or better were just the pick of the bunch from the 15.2% made from 140 games at any odds.

Conclusion

It is clear there are multiple ways to bet on consistent winning head to head runs, although specific leagues brought about more advantageous betting propositions.

Back Big 7 League teams (excluding Ligue 1) at ≥ 2.3 to land a fourth consecutive home win over their visitors - *especially profitable in La Liga, Primeira League and Bundesliga*

Back visiting Eredivisie sides to win and end a three-game losing streak when excluding the 'Big 4' (Ajax, PSV, Feyenoord & AZ)