



---

# Does playing in Europe have an effect on domestic form?

---

This strategy was researched by the analysts at [Football Form Labs](#). You can find more strategies and ideas on how to get the best out of Football Form Lab within the 'Strategies' tab.

If you have a question about how to use Form Lab or would like to request a strategy to be researched, please do get in touch via [support@footballformlabs.com](mailto:support@footballformlabs.com)

If you are not yet member, you can get started with a [14 day free trial](#) today.

*Published April 2020*

Every season we hear mutters regarding the impact of playing in the Champions League and Europa League on domestic success, with fans tending to take a positive spin when their side has been knocked out of Europe, lauding that they 'can now focus on the league without the distraction'. This piece looks closer at this assumption and whether or not there is any truth to it.

In order to do so, we've taken league matches from European competing sides in the top four leagues (Premier League, Bundesliga, La Liga, and Serie A) whose next Champions League or Europa League game was no more than five days away dating back to 1999/00 season. That gives a sample of 2,686 matches for Europe's elite tier competition and 1,805 for the Europa League.

It should be noted that ROI is calculated using average odds, and taking best odds for each match would result in around a 5% increase in ROI.

## Champions League

Matches	Venue	Win (%)	Draw (%)	Loss (%)	Win ROI	Draw ROI	Loss ROI
2686	All	58%	21%	20%	-2.24%	-19.39%	-10.68%
1320	Home	68%	19%	13%	-0.77%	-20.49%	-19.41%
1366	Away	49%	24%	27%	-3.66%	-18.33%	-2.23%

*Table 1: A Table of Champions League competing sides' domestic results from Europe's Big Four Leagues in their league matches that were no more than five days away from a European fixture since 1999/00.*

The table above shows that there is no real value to be had in using this strategy as a base rule, and despite the use of best odds likely to see slight profits in backing a side in their domestic games

when they have a continental game on the horizon, the small margins hardly makes it worth our time. However, delving a little further could present some value opportunities.

When restricting the sample to the last 10 years since the start of 2010/11 campaign, we see some changes as the sport has developed and results from over a decade ago have become a lot less relevant.

Backing the European competing sides across all venues sees a near 4% increase in returns based on average odds, with away matches proving the most profitable with a 6% increase in returns to a 2.34% profit. Another way we might seek to find profit is to take each league separately.

League	Matches	Win ROI	Draw ROI	Loss ROI
Premier League	707	2.26%	-28.84%	-13.44%
Bundesliga	590	-3.04%	-15.21%	0.41%
Serie A	596	-1.28%	-16.80%	-27.70%
La Liga	793	-6.39%	-16.03%	-3.66%

Table 2: A Table of Champions League competing sides' domestic results from each of the separate Big Four Leagues in their league matches that were no more than five days away from a European fixture since 1999/00.

While there is some disparity between leagues, there's still little value to be had in adopting this strategy, but for a couple of exceptions.

The Premier League disproves this theory the most with a return of 2.26% since the 1999/00 season, while over the last decade that trend has faltered to a slight 0.17% profit from the 308 such matches, though the real shift has been in backing the opposition. Although a 13.44% loss is seen when backing the opposing side since the turn of the century, a monumental 20% jump is seen when taking just the past 10 seasons, returning a healthy 5.93% profit. However, the biggest return is seen when taking on these teams competing in both Europe and the league on their travels, seeing a whopping 17.6% return if you were to back the home side from the 161 such away games since 2010/11 (Table 3).

The Bundesliga also sees drastic changes when just looking at recent years, with their away returns coming in at a hefty 16.23% since 2010/11, as shown below. Interestingly, the Spaniards go away from the trend and see their giants come through with a 7.02% profit on the road.

League	Away Matches (Since 2010/11)	Win ROI	Draw ROI	Loss ROI
Premier League	161	-0.70%	-27.43%	17.60%
Bundesliga	149	1.01%	-20.27%	16.23%
Serie A	108	1.37%	-22.06%	-21.39%
La Liga	169	7.02%	-3.62%	-14.91%

Table 3: A Table of Champions League competing sides' domestic results from each of the separate Big Four Leagues in their away league matches that were no more than five days away from a European fixture since 2010/11.

Our final way of seeking out value for Champions League sides is to compare group stage matches with the latter stages. Understandably, the knockouts tend to get the most focus both from fans and clubs, with the group stages allowing some margin for error.

Looking at games from the quarter-final onwards, there's still very little to suggest that a team underperforms before a big Champions League game.

Matches	Venue	Win (%)	Draw (%)	Loss (%)	Win ROI	Draw ROI	Loss ROI
393	All	61%	20%	19%	0.94%	-25.51%	-9.51%
190	Home	70%	17%	13%	-2.60%	-29.60%	-8.66%
195	Away	52%	22%	26%	4.53%	-21.37%	-10.37%

Table 4: A Table of Champions League competing sides' domestic results from each of the separate Big Four Leagues in their away league matches that were no more than five days away from a European quarter-final or onwards since 1999/00.

Over the board, a healthy 4.53% profit can be made backing these sides when they're travelling domestically before competing in a quarter-final or better in Europe, while that figure gets boosted to 11.57% when just considering the last decade from a small sample of 88 matches.

## Europa League

With UEFA's top level competition throwing up some interesting results, it's worth having a look at the Europa League too. With this competition not as highly regarded for Europe's top four leagues, in theory there should be little to suggest that a side should be as heavily focussed on this, and therefore it shouldn't impact their domestic form as much, at least not until the latter stages.

Matches	Venue	Win (%)	Draw (%)	Loss (%)	Win ROI	Draw ROI	Loss ROI
1805	All	43%	27%	31%	-9.14%	-5.73%	-12.25%
885	Home	53%	27%	20%	-1.90%	-1.58%	-21.77%
920	Away	33%	27%	41%	-16.11%	-9.72%	-3.09%

Table 5: A Table of Europa League competing sides' domestic results from Europe's Big Four Leagues in their league matches that were no more than five days away from a European fixture since 1999/00.

Again using this strategy blindly and applying it to all matches would see poor returns on your investment, though while the Champions League tended to see greater returns from this strategy over the last decade, there's extremely little change for Europe's second tier competition. This will largely be down to the growing differences in perception between the two. While the Champions League carries such significant weight, causing the markets to, in some cases, overreact and create the opportunity to find value, the Europa League doesn't hold that level of significance and therefore the bookies tend to stick to their guns more.

It's worth considering, however, what effect the Europa League has on the different leagues. While taking matches at all venues saw losses across the board, taking away games alone provided some value opportunities.

League	Away matches	Win ROI	Draw ROI	Loss ROI
Premier League	147	-37.64%	-4.37%	15.15%
Bundesliga	229	-3.21%	-21.12%	-3.61%
Serie A	268	-14.78%	0.78%	-9.25%
La Liga	276	-16.63%	-13.32%	-6.38%

Table 6: A Table of Europa League competing sides' domestic results from Europe's Big Four Leagues in their away league matches that were no more than five days away from a European fixture since 1999/00.

While the returns aren't as great as Champions League football across the board, profits can be made in Serie A, and especially in the Premier League. A 15.15% ROI when backing the hosts to win against such Europa League sides shows there is proof in the pudding yet again, and the home side should seriously be considered under these circumstances. However, apart from this there seems to

be consistent losses across the other three leagues, and unless you've got the confidence in backing the stalemate in Serie A, it's English football that looks the best bet.

## **Conclusions:**

### **Champions League:**

- **Back the home side when the visitors have a Champions League match within five days in the Premier League and Bundesliga**
- **Back the away win under the same circumstances in La Liga**
- **Back the away win if the visitors have a Champions League quarter-final (or later) within five days**

### **Europa League:**

- **Back the home side when the visitors have a Europa League match within five days in the Premier League**