



Is there value to be had in the goals market when a new manager is in the dugout?

While extensive research has been done into the concept of a 'manager bounce', and whether or not there is value in getting behind a team with a new manager under the assumption that the side will be rejuvenated and are more unpredictable than the odds may suggest, there is little concrete evidence to suggest this theory is a viable betting option, though there may be value in looking at the goals markets in these matches.

In order to retain accuracy in the piece, we've eliminated managers who's first matches were at the beginning of the season as they would have had time to work with the players and club during pre-season. Although this remains their first match, they've had enough time to implement a system, and the goals market wouldn't be as affected as it would after a mid-season managerial switch.

Our sample for this study is the biggest seven leagues throughout Europe from England, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Portugal and Netherlands and we're looking at the result and odds of the managers' first game at the helm. Our sample dates back to the 2005/06 season, producing 957 matches that fit this model. The table below highlights where value can be found and where it would be worth avoiding this strategy. It should be noted that returns are based off average odds on the market, while best price tends to produce a return of around 5% greater.

League	Matches	Under 2.5	ROI U2.5	Over 2.5	ROI O2.5	ROI Diff
ENG	127	64	-6.40%	63	-9.28%	2.88%
SPA	159	83	0.30%	76	-9.99%	10.29%
GER	136	68	-2.00%	68	-14.09%	12.09%
ITA	183	105	5.56%	78	-18.01%	23.57%
FRA	101	60	-0.12%	41	-12.84%	12.72%
POR	153	92	0.82%	61	-17.67%	18.59%
NED	98	39	-11.45%	59	-5.64%	5.81%
Total	957	511	-1.07%	446	-13.09%	12.02%

The results show an obvious trend in that new managers prefer to keep it tight in their opening game in charge. This is more prevalent in Serie A, where you'd return a profit of 5.56% when backing a maximum of two goals in every new manager's opener, with La Liga and Portuguese Primeira Liga also returning slight profits. Ligue 1 comes just shy of breaking even, though taking best odds on each match would undoubtedly have returned an overall profit, as is likely the case with the Bundesliga's 2% deficit. The Premier League and Eredivisie are known for their goals, and so their respective 6.4% and 11.45% losses illustrate that some caution should be taken when looking to adopt this strategy in those nations.

A clear instruction from this analysis shows to be incredibly sceptical of plumping for goals in these kinds of games. Aside from the Eredivisie, where no such game produced 'Overs' odds of evens or greater, every league saw hefty losses when backing a minimum of three strikes, with the low scoring Serie A seeing a whopping 18% loss, while an average total deficit of over 13% is enough to discourage us getting behind the high scorer from here on out.

In fact, with the Italian league producing such sharp losses in the Over 2.5 market, a look at the Under 1.5 market reveals an even greater profit. From the 176 games in which odds are available, 57 saw a maximum of just one strike, returning a profit of 9.38%, which would likely rise to up nearer 15% when considering best prices.

While this gives a good overview of the strategy, and has established a foundation for a bet, other factors will come in to play for a new coach. The primary factor is whether or not their managerial debut comes at home or away, and how their approach to the game could vary drastically depending on the venue. The following table highlights the difference in 'Under 2.5' returns when the new manager is playing home and away in each given league.

League	Matches	Home	ROI U2.5	Away	ROI U2.5	ROI Diff
ENG	127	67	-8.07%	60	-4.53%	3.54%
SPA	159	69	11.13%	90	-8.00%	19.13%
GER	136	60	-6.60%	76	1.63%	8.23%
ITA	183	86	-4.29%	97	14.30%	18.59%
FRA	101	47	-21.68%	54	18.65%	40.33%
POR	153	77	-2.30%	76	3.97%	6.27%
NED	98	48	-12.65%	50	-10.30%	2.35%
Total	957	454	-5.16%	503	2.61%	7.77%

This table reveals there is incredible disparity between home and away games in certain leagues, while it doesn't play a huge factor in others. The most notable result here comes out of France. A loss of over 21% when backing 'Unders' for a new manager playing at home, while on the road that flips to a profit of 18.65% with a whopping 40.33% swing. La Liga, however, shifts in the opposite direction. You'd actually make a tidy 11.13% profit from backing the new home manager to play tighter, while a near 20% swing sees you down 8% backing the same outcome away from home. Spain seems to be the anomaly in this department, with all other leagues seeing returns improve when away, with a total profit of 2.61% across all seven leagues, though again, upon best price that profit would be much healthier.

Conclusion

There is definitely value in backing Under 2.5 goals in games which feature a new manager, though as expected, returns vary by league and venue.

The market prices seem to have overcompensated in both England and the Netherlands, with no value to be had with this strategy in those leagues.

However, persisting with this strategy over the years would see you return a best price profit on the other five big leagues, with the most value to be had in Serie A. While even greater revenue can be generated when considering venue. France and Italy prove fruitful in terms of adopting this strategy away from home, with hefty returns of 18.65% and 14.30% respectively.

Applying this method generically, the most valuable bet would be to back 'Under 2.5 Goals with a new manager in the away dugout' and more specifically in both Ligue 1 and Serie A.