

# Free agency for European soccer had little effect, study says

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The overall effects of European soccer's "Bosman ruling" appear to have been fairly minor, a new University of Illinois at Chicago study finds.

The controversial ruling allowed any soccer player whose contract had expired to move freely to another club and ended player-nationality restrictions at the club level.

"This issue is a big one in European and world soccer," says John Binder, associate professor of finance in the UIC College of Business Administration. "The Bosman ruling has been blamed for all kinds of things, such as when a country doesn't do well in the [World Cup](#), the influx of foreign of players after the ruling is the excuse. The bulk of the evidence shows otherwise."

Binder and Murray Findlay, a UIC MBA graduate, examined the major European soccer playing countries before and after the ruling in 1995. Their study, published in the April issue of the Journal of Sports Economics, found that the overall effects on national [soccer](#) teams, contrary to [public opinion](#), were small. In addition, at the club level, there is little evidence that the competitive balance of the domestic leagues in Europe was seriously harmed.

"The Effects of the Bosman Ruling on National and Club Teams in Europe" is available free for a limited time at:

[jse.sagepub.com/content/13/2/107.full.pdf+html](http://jse.sagepub.com/content/13/2/107.full.pdf+html)

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

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