

1125-I5-1685

Howard H Hamilton* (hhamilton@soccermetrics.net), Atlanta, GA 30339. *A Bayesian Analysis of Draft Pick Value in Major League Soccer.*

Major League Soccer (MLS), like other North American professional sports leagues, uses multiple draft schemes to distribute talent among its member clubs. A club's draft selection can be viewed as an asset that can be exercised or traded, so it is useful to understand a draft selection's value and its evolution over time. In this talk I will present valuation models that result from a Bayesian local regression of the expected career value of a draft pick. The models are valid for a specific draft year and are trained by the career values of draftees in previous years. The models are differentiated by the use of a time horizon to filter players in the training set and restricting career values to those earned at the drafting team. Results indicate that valuation models trained with no time horizon exhibited smoothed curves but significantly overvalued draft slots, particularly in the middle of the draft. Further analysis indicates that the expected value of later selections in the draft has collapsed in the last five years, which might explain club behaviors at recent MLS SuperDrafts. (Received September 18, 2016)