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Analysis of the effect of alternating home and away field advantage during the Six Nations Rugby Championship

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyse the effect of alternating home and away field advantage on selected performance indicators during the Six Nations Rugby Championship (2005-2009). The sample consisted of (n=75) games played over five seasons of the championship were analysed. The following factors were taken into account: the final match result, number of points scored, number of tries scored, number of drop goals, number of conversions, number of passes and number of possessions kicked. The results of the study indicated that: (i) in general, there is a tendency that teams that are playing at home achieve better results, except for the 2005 season (ii) performance indicators of the game showed statistically significant differences; (iii) the results further indicated that 50% or more of the total points scored are when they play at home. In conclusion, the study indicated that there is a tendency in the Six Nations Rugby Championship (2005-2009) teams will obtain favourable results when they play at home.

Keywords: Rugby Union, game analysis, home advantage.

1. Introduction

In competitive sports, teams playing at home are usually considered to have an advantage over teams playing away from home (Kerr & van Schaik, 1995). From an extensive literature review with regards to home field advantage, the literature indicate that the topic is well researched in several sports (Varca, 1980; Courneya & Carron 1992; Nevill & Holder, 1999; Morton, 2002; Loughhead, Carron, Bray & Kim, 2003; Carron, Loughhead & Bray 2005; Wallace, Baumeister & Vohs, 2005; Jones, 2007; Pollard, 2008; Marcelino, Mesquita & Sampaio, 2008; Poulter, 2009; Jamieson 2010, Lago & Ballesteros 2011; Gómez, Pollard & Pascual, 2011) and many explanations have been proposed to this competition reality. However the precise cause and the way in which they affect performance are still not clear. In team sports, a team playing at its own stadium or arena is known as the home team, the other team is known as the

visitors. Teams typically play their home games in or near their home region; they will generally have half of their total games at home in a season based on the structure of the competition and fixtures. A study by Courneya and Carron, (1992) indicated that the number of home game wins usually exceeds the number of away game wins over a balanced home and away competition. However, home field advantage can have different effects on teams and players. In most team sports, the home or hosting team is considered to have a significant advantage over the visitors (Carron *et al.*, 2005; Nevill & Holder, 1999; Pollard, 2006). Due to this, many important games such as playoff's or elimination matches in many sports have special regulations to determine when and where the matches will be played.

Team sports in North America (i.e. baseball, basketball and ice hockey) are structured in such a way that all the teams have an equal amount of home and away games for the specific competition or tournament.

However, as it is usually beneficial to have an odd number of matches in a season, the team that finish on top of the league after a regular season, often have the privilege to host the final play of tournament or competition thus having home field advantage. In most sports (i.e. handball, field hockey, soccer, baseball, tennis, cricket, volleyball, rugby union, rugby league, golf...), this tends to be a huge advantage which can be decisive in the outcome of a tournament or championship. Courneya and Carron (1992) stated that in basketball 64% of the league games played are won by the home teams.

In Rugby Union, Terry, Walrond and Carron (1998) found that rugby players had more positive mood profiles, lower state anxiety, and higher self-confidence prior to home games compared to away games. In rugby, some of the likely causes of better scores in psychological components can be due to home field advantage, should be further attributed to a reflection of the continuous, aggressive and intense nature of the sport.

The new format of the Heineken Cup has special regulations to determine where and when play-off matches are played. The tournaments make use of a system to determine the venue in the play-off matches: i) the venue cannot be a team's home ground, ii) the stadium must have a capacity of 20,000 and iii) it must be held in the same country as the team drawn as the home team. However, the exceptions have been allowed, most notably, French club Biarritz Olympique, located less than 20 km from the Spanish border, have been allowed to take semifinals games across the border to Estadio Anoeta in Donostia-San Sebastián, which is far closer to Biarritz than any acceptable ground in France.

Other formats in Rugby Union (the round-robin play system) have been used in historical Six Nation Rugby Championship to determine the fixture structure with home field advantage alternating from one year to the next. Due to this, teams compete for a different number of games at "home" and "away" in same year.

As there are 6 teams participating in the championship, some teams play will 3 home and 2 away matches and teams will have 2 home and 3 away matches.

Many studies have demonstrated the existence of a significant home field advantage, either on average or to most of the competitors (individuals or teams) taking part in sport competitions or tournaments. However, from an extensive literature review in this regard, only three studies could be found that focused specifically on the effect of home advantage in Rugby Union.

Pretorius, Litvine, Nevill and Terblanche (1999) investigated the 1997 domestic Currie Cup season in South Africa and found evidence of better performance when teams have home field advantage. The study made use of the *linear regression model* and *Kolmogorov-Smirnov test* to test and establish the effect of home field advantage. They applied these models on the results of 94 games to determine the relationship between home and away game performances. They also indicated that playing games at home will be beneficial for the home team. Major findings of this study indicated that 53 of the 94 games were won by the home team. From the analysis it also appeared that 10 of the 14 teams performed better at home. Pretorius and colleagues (2000) concluded that this can be attributed the effect of altitude.

Morton in (2002) indicated initial home field advantage evidence derived from an international (Tri Nations) and national (Super 12) rugby tournaments. The study analysed home field advantage both for national and international rugby teams from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand over a five-year period from 2000 to 2004 using a linear modeling. These home field advantages are examined to calculate statistical and practical significance, for variability between teams, stability over time and for inter-correlation. The study concluded that field advantage changed annually for the team and no evidence was found to indicate that the successful teams performed better or that home field advantage leads to a better log finish.

Thomas, Reeves and Bell (2008) studied the home field advantage of the Six Nations Rugby Championship from 2000 to 2007. The study examined whether home field advantage occurred in the Six Nations Rugby Championship, the data were compiled taking in consideration the final log standings of the different teams. Home advantage for each championship season was defined as the number of points scored by teams playing at home, expressed as a percentage of all points scored either at home or away. An analysis of home advantage for each of eight seasons of competition ranged from 53% (2005) to 70% (2006). There was an overall statistically significant home advantage of 61% for 120 matches played in the Six Nations Rugby Championship between 2000 and 2007. Also analysed were the percentages of points scored at home by each team. Again, evidence indicated that a home field advantage existed amongst all teams participating regardless of the team's success.

A good example of home field advantage exists in NBA basketball where the data indicated that 78 of the 97 games were won by the home team up until the second round of the 2004 play-offs (Pollard & Pollard, 2005). According to Sampaio, Godoy and Feu, (2004) it seems possible that home field advantage has an effect on the basketball player's performance according to the key responsibilities of each specific position. Jones (2007) compared the home field advantage between basketball game quarters and from the analysis concluded that of 1189 NBA games the home teams had home field advantage in all quarters, but with more relevance in the first half or quarter.

In soccer, home field advantage has been well studied at all participation levels (Pollard, 1986; Nevill & Holder, 1999; Pollard & Pollard, 2005, Sánchez, García-Calvo & Leo, 2009, Lago & Ballesteros, 2011). In Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League and UEFA Europa League home and away legs, with weaker teams often beat the favorites when playing at home.

In fact, there are many causes to home advantage ranging from crowd involvement to travel considerations to environmental factors. The most-common factors of home advantage are usually ones whose advantageous effects are difficult to measure and thus even their existence is debatable.

A home field advantage meta-analysis study by Jamieson (2010) concluded that although home field advantage exist for each of the 10 sports (i.e. basketball, boxing, soccer, baseball, tennis, cricket, ice hockey, rugby/Australian football, golf, and American football), there were significant variations across the different sport codes.

More recently, Gomez and colleagues (2011) studied the home field advantage in 9 different professional team sports in Spain. Data for six seasons (2005–2010) were obtained from a total of 9,472 games. The results confirmed the existence of home field advantage in all 9 sports. There was a statistically significant difference between the sports and home field advantage was the highest in rugby (67%). The design of the study controlled for some of the likely causes of home advantage, and the results suggested that the high home field advantage in rugby can likely be a reflection of the continuous, aggressive and intense nature of the sport.

Based on the above theoretical background the aim of this study was to analyse the effect of alternating home and away field advantage on selected performance indicators during the Six Nations Rugby Championships (2005-2009).

2. Methods

2.1. Sample population and procedures of testing

Video recordings from all the games (n=75) of the Six Nations Rugby Championship from 2005-2009 seasons were recorded and analysed for the purpose of this study. The following international teams participate in the Championship: England, France, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Italy. Games were analysed using the SAS Software Ltd. Company (<http://www.sas.com>). The data was collected from the official web page of the Six Nations Rugby Championship (www.rbs6nations.com) and IRB statistical reports (2005-2009). The Championship is played annually and the format of the championship is as follows: each team play every other team once, with home field advantage alternating from one year to the next. Two points are awarded for a win, one for a draw and none for a loss. Unlike many other Rugby Union tournaments the bonus point system is not being used. The method of quantifying home field advantage was that followed by Pollard and Pollard (2005). Home field advantage was defined as the number of points scored by teams playing at home, expressed as a percentage of the total points scored either at home or away. To test for the existence of home field

advantage, the mean of the home field advantage values for the five seasons (2005-2009) was compared with a expected value of 50% (no home field advantage) using a one-sided *t* test. This study also analysed the percentages of points scored at home by each team. The 10 performance indicators (PI) used for the study were as follows: i) total points scored, ii) number of tries scored, iii) number of conversions, iv) number of penalty goals, v) number of successful penalty goals, vi) drop goals attempted, vii) number of rucks/mauls won, viii) number of passes completed, ix) possession kicked from hand x) number of successful tackles made.

A random sample of five games was used to test the inter-rater reliability of the data/kappa coefficients (Gwet, K., 2008). The results had agreement coefficients of at least .93. The data from each game, team and season were analysed and distributed to an Excel spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel).

2.2. Statistical analysis

The SPSS Statistical Analysis Software (IBM® SPSS® Statistics Version 20.0) was used to process the data. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. Descriptive analysis of each PI for all the teams was calculated. This was followed by non-parametric test (*Wilcoxon signed-rank test*) to compare the home and away advantage field of the different PI. To test for the existence of home field advantage, the mean of the home field advantage values for the five seasons (2005-2009) was compared with a null value of 50% (no home advantage) using a one-sided *t* test. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures (within subject) was used to evaluate the differences in team's seasons championship and between each team.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the average values, standard deviations, and *p* values for the PI studied between Six Nations Rugby Championship 2005-2009.

Table 1. Variables studied in the Six Nations tournament during the 2005-2009 seasons.

Variables	Total		M ± S.D		<i>p</i>
	home	away	home	away	
Total points scored	1683	1534	22.44 ± 10.55	20.45 ± 11.5	.35
Tries scored	152	159	2.03 ± 1.83	2.12 ± 1.89	.65
Conversions	107	109	1.43 ± 1.43	1.47 ± 1.43	.53
Penalty goals	292	224	3.89 ± 1.88	2.99 ± 1.54	.00*
Successful penalty goals	218	158	2.91 ± 1.73	2.11 ± 1.41	.00*
Drop goals attempted	50	41	0.67 ± 0.83	0.55 ± 0.87	.85
Ruck/Maul won	331	351	4.41 ± 3.38	4.68 ± 3.37	.00*
Passes completed	9939	9241	132.52 ± 36.63	123.21 ± 38.29	.01*
Possessions Kicked	2241	2119	29.88 ± 8.35	28.25 ± 8.14	.16
Tackles made	6187	6434	82.49 ± 24.76	85.8 ± 23.79	.85

* $p < .05$

The results showed that over the five seasons of the Six Nations Rugby Championship and games ($n=75$) in total the teams that the home team benefited from the factor "home field advantage". A total number of 45 wins, 1 draw and 29 defeats are registered in all seasons of championship. The total number of points scored at home for all the teams in all seasons of the championship (2005-2009) were 61% which confirms that the advantage of teams qualifying for the factor "home field" in relation to the variable outcome of the match. It is considered the existence of home field advantage when the results of total points scored are higher than 50%.

The results for average values, standard deviations, and p values of the PI studied for the six seasons are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2. Variables studied in England and French teams.

Variables	ENGLAND					FRANCE				
	Total		M \pm S.D		P	Total		M \pm S.D		P
	home	away	home	away		home	away	home	away	
Total points scored	433	177	30.93 \pm 9.66	16.09 \pm 7.31	.00*	305	382	27.73 \pm 11.00	27.29 \pm 15.25	.96
Tries scored	52	15	3.71 \pm 1.98	1.36 \pm 1.21	.04*	33	44	3.11 \pm 1.95	3.11 \pm 2.41	1
Conversions	31	12	2.21 \pm 1.31	1.09 \pm 1.14	.15	26	24	2.36 \pm 1.50	1.71 \pm 1.86	.56
Penalty goals	51	31	3.64 \pm 1.98	2.82 \pm 1.47	.19	45	46	4.10 \pm 2.26	3.30 \pm 2.02	.62
Successful penalty goals	33	22	2.36 \pm 1.65	2.00 \pm 1.18	.29	28	35	2.55 \pm 1.81	2.70 \pm 1.79	.71
Drop goals attempted	8	8	0.57 \pm 0.65	0.73 \pm 0.79	.55	8	10	0.72 \pm 0.90	0.72 \pm 1.36	1
Ruck/Maul won	68	56	4.86 \pm 3.53	5.09 \pm 2.88	.46	67	92	6.09 \pm 4.30	6.57 \pm 3.57	.35
Passes completed	2245	1334	160.36 \pm 44.93	121.27 \pm 39.84	.07	1498	1928	136.18 \pm 30.35	137.71 \pm 40.15	.07
Possessions Kicked	420	299	30.01 \pm 7.13	27.18 \pm 5.82	.46	298	401	27.09 \pm 8.53	28.64 \pm 7.68	.52
Tackles made	1025	794	73.21 \pm 17.74	72.18 \pm 25.03	.74	957	1210	87.00 \pm 30.85	86.53 \pm 17.57	.80

*p < .05

Table 3. Variables studied in Ireland and Italy teams.

Variables	IRELAND					ITALY				
	Total		M \pm S.D		p	Total		M \pm S.D		p
	home	away	home	away		home	away	home	away	
Total points scored	264	373	24.00 \pm 9.46	26.64 \pm 10.17	.56	188	143	13.43 \pm 6.12	11.91 \pm 8.80	.00*
Tries scored	22	42	2.00 \pm 1.55	3.00 \pm 1.96	.25	12	13	0.86 \pm 0.66	1.18 \pm 1.07	.64
Conversions	17	32	1.55 \pm 1.37	2.29 \pm 1.26	.32	7	9	0.50 \pm 0.65	0.81 \pm 1.16	.66
Penalty goals	50	40	4.55 \pm 1.44	2.86 \pm 1.79	.02*	47	34	3.56 \pm 1.59	3.09 \pm 1.22	.75
Successful penalty goals	37	29	3.33 \pm 1.29	2.07 \pm 1.54	.07	34	18	2.43 \pm 1.55	1.64 \pm 1.12	.28
Drop goals attempted	5	10	0.45 \pm 1.04	0.71 \pm 0.83	.55	14	8	1.00 \pm 0.96	0.73 \pm 0.79	.80
Ruck/Maul won	61	59	5.55 \pm 2.16	4.21 \pm 2.64	.36	59	69	4.21 \pm 3.60	6.28 \pm 4.14	.48
Passes completed	1254	1829	114.00 \pm 28.79	130.64 \pm 38.71	.52	1641	1136	117.21 \pm 29.95	103.28 \pm 34.40	.24
Possessions Kicked	372	403	33.82 \pm 6.81	28.79 \pm 9.83	.11	456	359	32.57 \pm 10.94	32.64 \pm 6.90	.88
Tackles made	872	942	79.27 \pm 23.76	67.29 \pm 15.57	.23	1225	1076	87.50 \pm 24.56	97.82 \pm 21.23	.15

*p < .05

Table 4. Variables studied in Scotland and Wales teams.

Variables	SCOTLAND					WALES				
	Total		M \pm S.D		P	Total		M \pm S.D		P
	home	away	home	away		home	away	home	away	
Total points scored	222	175	17.08 \pm 4.96	14.58 \pm 4.25	.20	271	284	22.58 \pm 10.81	21.85 \pm 11.01	.00*
Tries scored	12	13	0.92 \pm 1.12	1.08 \pm 1.16	.73	21	32	1.75 \pm 1.60	2.46 \pm 1.85	.43
Conversions	9	10	0.69 \pm 0.95	0.83 \pm 0.83	.67	17	22	1.42 \pm 1.73	1.77 \pm 1.53	.46
Penalty goals	49	37	3.77 \pm 2.17	3.08 \pm 1.56	.36	50	36	4.17 \pm 1.85	2.77 \pm 1.09	.02*
Successful penalty goals	46	29	3.54 \pm 2.26	2.42 \pm 1.44	.19	40	25	3.33 \pm 1.56	1.92 \pm 1.26	.01*
Drop goals attempted	7	3	0.54 \pm 0.66	0.25 \pm 0.62	.26	8	2	0.67 \pm 0.77	0.15 \pm 0.38	.00*
Ruck/Maul won	60	46	4.62 \pm 2.90	3.83 \pm 3.56	.45	16	29	1.33 \pm 1.37	2.23 \pm 1.30	.47
Passes completed	1788	1418	137.50 \pm 40.88	118.17 \pm 37.94	.38	1513	1596	126.08 \pm 22.12	122.77 \pm 36.61	.46
Possessions Kicked	352	299	27.08 \pm 8.26	24.91 \pm 9.03	.46	343	358	28.58 \pm 6.49	27.54 \pm 8.17	.87
Tackles made	1189	1156	91.46 \pm 30.95	96.33 \pm 22.91	.60	919	1257	76.58 \pm 16.04	96.69 \pm 27.19	.06

*p < .05

3.1. Home field advantage of each team

The fact that this is a championship where teams compete for a different number of games at "home" and "away" in the same year, makes it more pertinent to study the individual performance of each of these teams and try to investigate whether there are significant differences between them. Table 5 indicates the final standings and results from each of the teams over the five seasons of the championship studied.

Table 5. Final standings and results Six Nations (2005-2009).

Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	PF	PA	PD	% PH	% PW	Total PTS
France	25	18	0	7	664	447	217	56	44	36
Ireland	25	17	0	8	620	496	124	50	50	36
Wales	25	15	1	9	589	472	117	55	45	31
England	25	13	0	12	592	451	141	77	23	23
Scotland	25	7	0	18	408	614	-206	86	14	14
Italy	25	3	1	21	344	752	-408	57	43	7

PF = Points for; PA = Points against; PD = Points difference; % PH = Percentage points at home; % PW = Percentage points away; Total PTS = Total points

In summary, Table 5 indicates that France, Ireland and Wales obtained the lowest percentage of home field advantage but scored more points and performed better, compared to England, Scotland and Italy with a higher percentage of home field advantage, who scored less number of points and achieved poorer results. These findings suggest that the factor "home field advantage" is absolutely critical for team performance in this type of tournament (round-robin play system) but the study also revealed that the teams with more home games obtained poorer results.

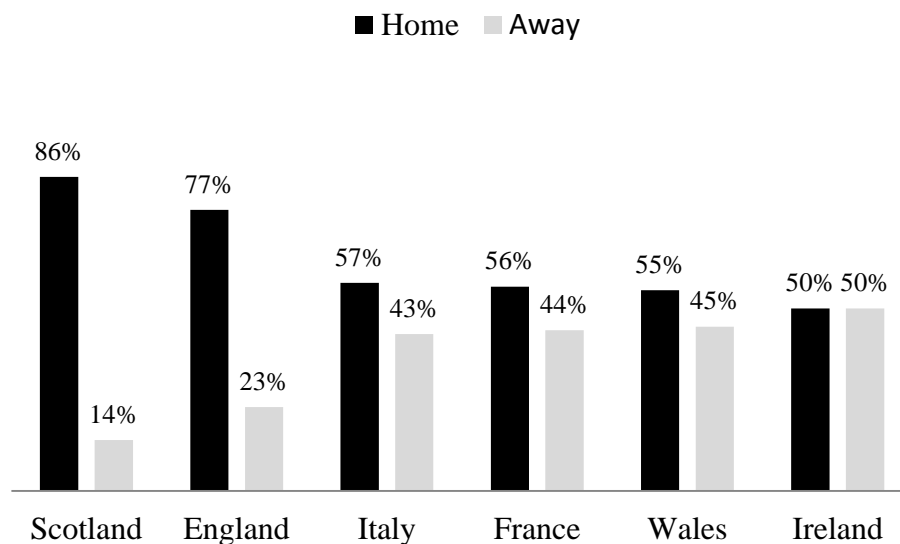


Figure 1: Team percentage points earned at home and away.

3.1.1. England

England had a 77% home field advantage in relation to the variable outcome of the match. The results of this PI indicated a significant difference in home and away advantage values for total points scored: home (30.93 ± 9.66) and away (16.09 ± 7.31) and tries scored: home (3.71 ± 1.98) and away (1.36 ± 1.21). These results showed that England played better attacking rugby at home when compared to away games.

3.1.2. France

The French team played less home games, however they have in total 56% points earned at home and 44% earned away. The French team had a steady performance at home and away in all Six Nations Rugby Championship (2005-2009). The total points earned represent a higher efficacy value in games played at home.

3.1.3. Ireland

Ireland and France were the teams that have earned more points in all five Six Nations Rugby Championship seasons analysed, 36 points. Ireland did not earn less than 50% points at home. The PI studied indicated a significant difference in home and away field advantage for the number of penalty goals: home (4.55 ± 1.44) and away (2.86 ± 1.79). Ireland had the higher value for penalties at home. This result can represent a disadvantage and help to understand some poor results.

3.1.4. Italy

Italy showed the worst value in end points earned in all Six Nations editions. Only 7 points in 25 games played. Italy team play extremely badly away from home, had in total 57% points earned at home and 43% earned away. In variables studied results showed significant difference in home and away values for total points scored: home (13.43 ± 6.12) and away (11.91 ± 8.80).

3.1.5. Scotland

Scotland had the higher value 86% for factor home advantage, however in away games had the lowest points earned, only win one game away in five years. Results did not show significant differences in variables studied between home and away games and confirm the difficult and the variability of many factors associated for it.

3.1.6. Wales

Results for Wales indicated the second lowest percentage of winning points at home (55%) and express the most significant differences in variables analysed between home and away matches. With the exception of the number of ruck/mauls won: home (1.33 ± 1.37) and away (2.23 ± 1.30) in general the PIs (total points scored, penalty goals, number of successful penalty goals, number of drop goals attempted) had significantly higher values when Wales played at home. Behaviors associated with Wales' big social fan support can have correlated to a lower preoccupation for the competition and may be help to avoid a negative environment effect on the players and team.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyse the effect of alternating home and away field advantage on selected performance indicators during the Six Nations Rugby Championships (2005-2009). Home field advantage appears to be a highly complex issue with a number of explanations for the different findings, and it is likely to occur due to the interaction of multiple factors (Pollard & Pollard 2005). The results of the study indicated venue had an effect on selected PIs for teams that participated in the Six Nations Rugby Championship (2005-2009).

The main findings of this study were, that for each of the five seasons of the championship, a significant home advantage was obtained that ranged from 47% (2005), 69% (2006), 60% (2007), 67% (2008) and 60% (2009), (see Fig.1).

The results showed that home advantage average of 61% for 75 matches played in the Six Nations Rugby Championship between 2005 and 2009.

An interesting finding and similar result was obtained in a study published by Thomas *et al.* (2008); they found a percentage home advantage of 61% for 120 matches played in Six Nations Rugby Championship between 2000 and 2007.

Notably, all PIs studied in Six Nations Rugby Championship during the 2005-2009 seasons revealed a significant difference between home and away teams for number of penalty goals and successful penalty goals, number of successful rucks/mauls won and for number of passes completed ($p < .05$).

No home field advantage effect was found for: the total points scored number of tries scored, number of conversions, number of drop goals attempted, number possessions kicked from hand and number of tackles made.

Based on these findings, the data of the study indicated that teams playing more rugby matches at home in a season of the Six Nations Rugby Championship will have an increased chance of doing well in the competition.

Due to 6 teams participating championship, teams will play 3 home games and 2 away games for the one year and 2 home games and 3 away games the next season. Therefore, all other factors being equal, the teams with 3 home matches should have had an advantage in this season. An analysis of the data in this study should be interpreted in the context that the games in Six Nations Rugby Championship vary from year to year. Further research is required to explain the perceived problem of Italy generally underperforming in this championship compared with that of the English and French teams.

Understanding of these findings could be useful to coaches and trainers with regards to ranking of the team, travel fatigue, psychological states of the players, crowd effects, referee interpretations and team quality (Bray, 1999). One such factor, however, which cannot be controlled, is the lack of balance in the competition structure, for it could be that a team can play the weaker team at home one year and away the next.

In the history of Six Nations Rugby Championship, the stronger teams (England and France) with higher ability ratings do not necessarily have better home field advantages. The study indicated that a poor home performance will tend to affect both home field advantage and ability rating estimates; home field advantage tends to decrease and ability ratings to increase. The reverse is also true. Possessing a better home field advantage, while perceived by the media and general public, can be an important determinant of success in the Six Nation Championship. In fact, research indicates no real evidence of a correlation with finishing position. On the other hand, teams with high ability ratings do tend to finish in higher positions.

5. Conclusions

Literature indicates that only a few studies have to date have focused specifically on the effect of home and away field advantage on performance of Rugby Union teams. Research stated that there different explanations for the factors that need to be considered to really determine the impact of home and away field advantage, thus leaving the opportunity for future research on the topic. Pollard (1986) indicated that the degree of familiarity with the facilities can impact the performance of teams and participants.

The current study also has further implications for theoretical models. To date, the most comprehensive model to determine the effect of home field advantage in athletics is by Courneya and Carron's (1992)

This model focussed on factors associated with the location of the game feeding into the psychological states of the competitors and referees/officials, which then effect the behavior of these individuals, resulting in a home field advantage.

In addition to the factors identified by Courneya and Carron, at the time of the current study suggests that game-context factors should be added to the feed-forward model to provide a more comprehensive picture of what causes the home field advantage.

The findings demonstrate that there is no evidence that the stronger teams have the better home field advantage, or that a better home field advantage leads to a successful finishing position in the competition. The quality of the team seems to be more decisive for the final classification of the championship than the factor "home field advantage."

In summary, the results indicated that there is a tendency that teams that play at home will obtain favorable results for teams participating the in Six Nation Rugby Championship (2005-2009).

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