# The soccerbars Package for LATEX\*

— version 0.7 —

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#### Abstract

The soccerbars package provides macros to generate word-sized tallies for series of association football (soccer) match results. These are intended for the augmentation of league tables and the discussion of streaks with the actual sequence of results.

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<sup>\*</sup>Soccerbars are based on previous work with Bobo Nick (while at the University of Konstanz), discussions with David Schoch (The University of Manchester), and prototyping with Lukas Knoflach (TU Graz). Eren Akbiyik (ETH Zürich) provides implementations of soccerbars for use with python and R at https://github.com/snlab-eakbiyik/soccerbars.

#### 1 Introduction

Since the very first season of the Football League in 1888/1889, and the introduction of the 2-point system a few matchdays in, news reports feature league tables recording the number of matches played, wins, losses, draws, accumulated goals for and against, and points. These data have later been augmented with goal differences, and are sometimes broken down into results home and away.

Another, more detailed, representation that compactly records all results of an entire season, albeit not in the order in which they came about, are cross-tables. The following combination of detailed and summarized information was printed as part of a season wrap-up in *The Cricket and Football Field*, a weekly sports paper out of Bolton [3].<sup>1</sup>

	Accrington.	Aston Villa.	Blackburn Rovers.	Bolton anderers.	Burnley.	Derby County.	Sverton.	Notts County.	Preston North End.	Stoke.	West Brom- wich Albion.	Wivirhipton Wanderers.	For. D.	MARY.	Points.
	¥	<u> </u>	<b>A</b>	*	ă	- 0	Ñ				N N	**	PAP	¥   3   5	l a
Preston North End		D ₩ 1-1 2-0	1-0 2-2	3-15-2	5-2 2-2	3-2 5-0	3020	7-0 4-1		7-0 3-0	3-0 5-0		74 15 22	18 0 4	4 40
Aston Villa	4-31-1			3-26-2	4-20-4	4-2 2-5	2-1 0-2	9-1 4-2		6-1 1-1	2033	1-1 2-1	61 43 22	12 5 5	5 29
Whampton Wandrs	4-4 4-0	1-1 1-2			4140	4103		0-3 2-1	04 25	1-0 4-1			51 37 22	12 6 4	4 28
Blackburn Rovers	5-5 2-0	1-65-1		4423	7-1 4-2	2030	3013	3-3 5-2	0-1 2-2			2-2 2-2		10 6 6	5 25
Bolton Wanderers	4-1 3-2		44 3-2					4-0 7-3					63 59 22	1010 2	223
West Brown. Albion			2-6 2-1	1-5 2-1	4302	2-1 5-0	4-11-0	4-2 1-2	0305	2-0 2-0			40 46 22	1010 2	222
Accrington		3-4 1-1	5-5 0-2	14 2-3									48 48 22	6 8 8	320
Everton	ж ь 2-1 1-3	1-2 2-0				4-26-2		2-11-3		0-0 2-1		0-5 1-2	35 47 22	911 2	2 20
Burnley	1.5 2.2	2440	1.724	43 4-I		1-00-1	2223	1-6 1-0				1404	42 62 22	7 12 3	17
Derby County	D L	I. W	6 E	W 15	B 7		2-4 2-6	3-25-3	2305	2-1 1-1	1-20-5	1-4 3-0	41 61 22	7 13 2	2 16
Notts County	D W	LL	DE	LL	6-1 0-1	2335	1-23-1		0-7 1-4	03 03	24 2-1	3-0 1-2	40 73 22	11	1
	LL	L D	2-5 2-1	L D 1-2 2-2	W 1.	LD	D F	WW	0-7 0-3		0-2 0-2	0-1 1-4	26 51 22	4 14 4	12

A perspective that is supported by neither representation, but the subject of many a conversation, are series: going unbeaten in 34 matches, conceding only two goals in the first eleven matches with a new manager, losing six in row at home, and so on. Despite frequently referring to a team's form, or recent performance, the closest news reports come to non-verbal representations of such series are charts depicting a team's wins, draws, and losses over the last maybe five, seven, or ten matches.

This is what soccerbars are made for: compact representations designed to integrate a sequence of results into text, tables, and graphics. Below is the first season of the Football League showing for each team all of its results in the order in which the matches were played:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The one result not printed is a loss of Everton at West Bromwich Albion's which is, however, provided in their row.

#	Team	Season	W	D	L	G	Р
1	Preston North End	<i>                                      </i>	18	4	0	74–15	40
2	Aston Villa	<del>/////////////////////////////////////</del>	12	5	5	61–43	29
3	Wolverhampton Wanderers	+ <del>/  / / /</del>	12	4	6	51–37	28
4	Blackburn Rovers	<del>                                      </del>	10	6	6	66–45	26
5	Bolton Wanderers	#\ <del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	10	2	10	63–59	22
6	West Bromwich Albion	<del>₩₩</del> ₩₩	10	2	10	40–46	22
7	Accrington	<del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	6	8	8	48–48	20
8	Everton	<del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	9	2	11	35–47	20
9	Burnley	<del>\{\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	7	3	12	42-62	17
10	Derby County	<del>/////////////////////////////////////</del>	7	2	13	41–61	16
11	Notts County	## <del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	5	2	15	40-73	12
_12	Stoke	74/// <del>/////////////////////////////////</del>	4	4	14	26-51	12

Each tally represents one match result, and it is gray for away matches. Wins are depicted as forward leaning, draws vertical, and losses backward leaning. The length above and below the horizontal baseline represent goals for and against. It is readily observed that only two out of 132 matches ended in a goalless draw (represented by the four dots), and that winners Preston North End had by far the most clean sheets (13, emphasized with small dots where a single goal line would end). Other than the loss-less season of the first winners, the improvement of Bolton and Derby during the second round is notable, whereas the opposite can be said of Everton. Like Everton, teams in the bottom half of the table each tallied only a single away win all season; except Derby County who actually had two, and rather wild ones.

Fast forward 131 years, Liverpool had a stunning season white the study of the stud

With a waiting time of 29 matches inbetween from the work two wins across the second half of the 2019/2020 season and first half of 2020/2021, Schalke just barely avoided to match the longest non-winning streak from the longest non-winning streak

### 2 Design

Soccerbars are micro-visualizations that integrate with text to support and illustrate statements with detailed data.

They instantiate Edward Tufte's marvelous idea of sparklines [8], i.e., to use intense, word-sized, high-resolution graphics to present extensive sequence data within eyespan. Sparklines are popular for univariate time-series data such as stock prices, and available in the sparklines package [5].

Since soccer results are multivariate (goals for and against, points awarded, home or away), there are different ways of encoding them in sparklines and, indeed, a number of alternatives have been proposed. Some of them straightforward, others rather involved.

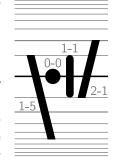
Soccerbars have been derived from a design principle systematically extending the concept of sparklines. Instead of combining sparklines for multiple attributes, gestaltlines [2, 1] align glyphs designed to exploit Gestalt theory and thus facilitate the perception of trends, shifts, and outliers in multivariate sequences.

#### 2.1 Basic Design

The primary metaphor is that of a tally. Instead of keeping separate tallies for wins, losses, and draws the result categories are distinguished by slant. A winning team can be thought of as charging forward and a losing team as skidding.

The slant is fixed rather than, say, dependent on the goal difference, to visually group stretches of results in the same category.

To represent goals for and against, the length of tallies is varied. Horizontal clipping at a goal-dependent height is preferred over goal-dependent lengths, though, because it yields an alignment of the number of goals a team scored no matter the outcome (and thus slant).



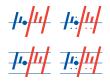
This idea is reinforced visually by clipping tallies for wins and losses horizontally. Caps of vertical tallies for draws are rounded to emphasize the difference from the other two outcomes, and place them more clearly in the same category as the dots for goalless matches.

In the majority of matches, no side scores more than two goals, but on occasion a team may well rack up eight or even more. The height at which a tally is clipped is therefore increased roughly according to the frequency with which the next goal occurs, and capped at nine. This limits the height required and favors the more frequent cases at the expense of differences in the regime where they matter less.

#### 2.2 Extensions

The basic design can be augmented with two kinds of annotations that reference features of common interest explicitly.

France's road to victory at the World Cup Finals 2018 is shown on the right. The group phase of three matches is followed by four elimination rounds. Extra dots at the level of a single goal facilitate counting the number of matches in which a team or its opponents did not score, and their alignment simultaneously creates the visual effect of another horizontal line because of the frequency of such events.



To distinguish better between higher scores, inspite of the non-linear scaling of heights, an extra line can be added at the statistically important threshold of two goals. This can be seen, for instance, for the 4-3 against Argentina in the round of the last sixteen and the 4-2 against Croatia in the final.

Both extensions can be added independently via package options and switched on and off in the document as described in Section 3.1.

#### 2.3 Alignment with Text

When displayed within text, soccerbars are vertically centered such that the levels of one goal for and against correspond to the height of the character 'x' and the baseline, i.e., they are 1ex apart. High scores are allowed to stick out and overlap other content, as the LATEX bounding box deliberately extends only to the levels of two goals for and against to avoid affecting the distance between baselines in a paragraph.

Over the last five and a half seasons, El Clásico, restricted to matches in La Liga, looked as follows

# FC Barcelona W// vs / Real Madrid

from either perspective.

While line thickness, slant, and horizontal spacing can be altered as described in Section 3.4, vertical spacing is tied to the size of the current font via length unit ex.

### 3 Using the Package

The soccerbars package provides three different ways to include word-size tallies of soccer results into LaTeX documents: a macro, an environment, and a file reader. They all produce the same kind of visualization but differ in the intended usage scenario.

### 3.1 Loading and Options

To make use of soccerbars, the file soccerbars.sty should be obtained from https://github.com/ubrandes-ethz/socerbars and placed in a directory searched by the LATEX installation. It is loaded by placing

 $\usepackage[\langle options \rangle] \{\langle soccerbars \rangle\}$ 

in the preamble of a LaTeX document. Several other packages will be loaded automatically, because soccerbars depends explicitly on TikZ [7], csvsimple [6], and etoolbox [4], each with their own dependencies.

The following three package options allow to toggle design variants introduced in Section 2 and the distinction of away matches.

twogoalline Adds an extra horizontal lines to mark the two-goal level with half the width of the zero-goal baseline. Thus, higher scores are more easily distinguished. Liverpool lost the two away matches out of those three in which they conceded more than two goals the word with the word of th

Three options can be combined arbitrarily. Declaring, for instance,

```
\usepackage[zerodots,twogoalline]{soccerbars}
```

```
\sbZeroDots \sbTwoGoalLine \sbOutlined \sbNoZeroDots \sbNoTwoGoalLine \sbNotOutlined .
```

These commands apply locally within the current group, i.e., switching on no-goal dots temporarily by {\sbZeroDots ...} does not require switching off.

The change of colors and more basic stylistic adjustments are described in Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

#### 3.2 Generating Soccerbars

Macro, environment, file reader

\soccerbar{ $\langle results \rangle$ } This macro is the most straightforward way to generate a soccerbar. Its argument is a comma-separated list of match results in the form ( $\langle goals for \rangle - \langle goals against \rangle$ ) for matches in which the current team is playing at home and ( $\langle goals against \rangle - \langle goals for \rangle$ )\* in which it is playing away. As an example, consider this rocky start to a season

```
\soccerbar\{(2-2), (0-3)*, (6-1), (1-1)*, (4-0), (2-3)*, (1-2), (2-2)*, (2-1), (5-1)*\}
```

culminating in a loss at home + and a thrashing away. While some clubs might content themselves with it, a more club one may well sack its manager at this point.

\begin{soccerbarenv} ...\end{soccerbarenv} With the soccerbarenv environment, the identical soccerbar as above is obtained in more verbose form as

```
\begin{soccerbarenv}
  \home{2}{2} \away{0}{3} \home{6}{1}
  \away{1}{1} \home{4}{0} \away{2}{3}
  \home{1}{2} \away{2}{2} \home{2}{1}
  \away{5}{1}
\end{soccerbarenv}
```

The motivation for this alternative specification is that both the environment and the \home and \away commands have optional parameters by which colors can be changed per result, rather than for the entire soccerbar. This is described in more detail in the next section.

Note that, as in real life, \home{1}{2} and \away{2}{1} generally do not look the same, because away matches may be rendered differently.

\csvsoccerbar{\lambda team}}{\lambda first match}}{\lambda last match}} \ For many, long, or partial sequences, it may be more convenient to gather match results from a file. It is assumed that they are stored in CSV (comma separated values) format with one match per row and four separate columns for home and away team names and the numbers of goals they scored. The filename and headers are declared once using the command \sbCSVnames{\lambda file}}{\lambda noneteam}}{\lambda nonetea

From a file bl2019-20.csv tabulating results as

```
Spieltag, Heim, HT, GT, Gast
1, Bayern, 2, 2, Hertha BSC
1, Dortmund, 5, 1, Augsburg
```

the above start of the season and its continuation are obtained via

```
\sbCSVnames{bl2019-20.csv}{Heim}{Gast}{HT}{GT}
...
\csvsoccerbar{Bayern}{1}{10}
\csvsoccerbar{Bayern}{11}{34}
```

This yields + I for the season, or one stepping stone to another treble.

It is important to ensure that the encoding of the CSV file is the same as that of the LATEX document, especially if team names contain accents or umlauts.

Scheduled matches that have not been played, yet, can be specified as (-), (-)\*, \home{}{}, \away{}{}, or missing entries in the CSV file and result in prolonged soccerbars have with zerodot-sized marks for upcoming matches. This is useful in the display of current standings, when hopes may still run high.

#### 3.3 Changing Colors

Soccerbars are set in the current foreground color, by default with somewhat lighter shading of away matches. The base color can be set explicitly with an optional parameter available for both the \soccerbar macro and the soccerbarenv environment. Whether away matches are lighter, darker, or unaltered is determined by commands \sbAwayBrighter (default), \sbAwayDarker, and \sbAwayKeepColor.

```
\definecolor{skyblues}{RGB}{108,171,221}
\definecolor{nerazzuri}{HTML}{0267AB}
\definecolor{schwarzgelb}{HTML}{FDE100}
...
\soccerbar[skyblues]{(0-5)*,(2-2),...}
\sbAwayDarker
\soccerbar[nerazzurri]{(4-0),(1-2)*,...}
\definecolor{schwarzgelb}{(5-1),(1-3)*,...}
```

Colors are specified according to the xcolor package which is automatically loaded by TikZ. Effects \sbAwayBrighter and \sbAwayDarker are realized by rendering away matches in colors .!66!white and .!66!black, respectively.

More detailed color choices are possible with the soccerbarenv environment. To be able to highlight, say, the above mentioned loss at home that and thrashing away, an optional color parameter is accepted for each tally.

```
\begin{soccerbarenv}
\home{2}{2} \away{0}{3} \home{6}{1} \away{1}{1} \home{4}{0} \away{2}{3} \home[blue]{1}{2} \away{2}{2} \home{2}{1} \away[red]{5}{1} \end{soccerbarenv}
```

Changing colors according betting odds shows that not only the club had higher expectations. In the following, the predicted probability of winning is used to determine a tally's color on a gradient from white to red (for a win) or the reverse (for a draw or loss).

```
{\sbAwayKeepColor\begin{soccerbarenv}[gray]
  \home[red!85!white]{2}{2} \away[white!74!red]{0}{3}
  \home[white!92!red]{6}{1} \away[red!54!white]{1}{1}
  \home[white!88!red]{4}{0} \away[white!87!red]{2}{3}
  \home[red!89!white]{1}{2} \away[red!85!white]{2}{2}
  \home[white!90!red]{2}{1} \away[red!70!white]{5}{1}
  \end{soccerbarenv}}
```

Half of these ++++ ten matches, and three of the last four, ended rather unexpectedly.

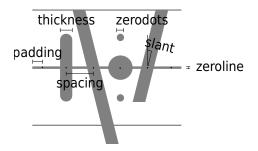
#### 3.4 Other Settings

Most design choices other than the package options can be altered with a the command  $\sbSettings{\langle thickness\rangle}{\langle zerodots\rangle}{\langle zeroline\rangle}{\langle slant\rangle}{\langle spacing\rangle}{\langle padding\rangle}$ . The six mandatory arguments are described below. Their default values can be re-established with  $\sbDefaults$ , which invokes

 $\sbSettings{0.18}{0.6}{0.2}{14}{0.8}{0.2}$ 

and also \sbAwayBrighter to set the lighter shading for away matches.

- (thickness) The thickness of a tally, specified as a multiple of ex, the height of an 'x' in the current font. This makes the thickness of tallies scale with their height and spacing. Other line widths are relative to this one. The default value of 0.18ex is based on the stroke width of common fonts. Dots for a goalless draw have a matching radius, and are thus twice as wide as a tally.
- (zerodots) The diameter of the disk indicating that a team did not score, specified as a multiple of the first parameter. For these to be visible, option zerodots must have been included when loading the package or activated with \sbZeroDots.
- (*zeroline*) The thickness of the horizontal line at zero goals, specified as a multiple of the first parameter. Lines at the level of two goals are drawn at half the thickness, if any.
- $\langle slant \rangle$  The slant of a tally signifying a win or loss, i.e., the angle by which it is rotated out of the vertical position, specified in degrees. The default value of 14 is based on the slant of common fonts.



- (spacing) Space between the centers of consecutive tallies on the zero line, specified in multiples of the one-goal level (which, in turn, is fixed at 0.5ex). The default of 0.8 thus corresponds to equidistant placement of tallies every 0.4ex. With the default thickness of 0.18ex, the 0.22ex gaps between equally slanted tallies are slightly larger than the line width, avoiding irritating patterns, and dots for consecutive goalless scores just barely avoid touching.
- \(\lambda padding\rangle\) The length by which the horizontal line at zero goals is extended to the left and right, specified in multiples of the one-goal level (which, in turn, is fixed at 0.5ex).
  The default value of 0.2 is sufficient to avoid slanted tallies sticking out.

## $4\quad \text{The } 2019/2020 \text{ Season}$

Across Europe, the 2019/2020 season was suspended in March 2020 and in many cases resumed in May. The following tables therefore show soccerbars divided into three segments corresponding to the first round, the second round until the break due to the pandemic, and the rest of the season. In the Swiss Super League, teams play each other four times.

#### 4.1 Premier League

#	Club	Season	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Р
1	Liverpool	₩₩₩₩₩₩	32	3	3	85	33	52	99
2	Manchester City	4 <del>/\/\/\/\/\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	26	3	9	102	35	67	81
3	Manchester United	14444 1444 1444 1444	18	12	8	66	36	30	66
4	Chelsea	<del>₩₩₩₩</del>	20	6	12	59	54	15	66
5	Leicester City	**************************************	18	8	12	67	41	26	62
6	Tottenham Hotspur	######################################	16	11	11	61	47	14	59
7	Wolverhampton Wanderers	***************************************	15	14	9	51	40	11	59
8	Arsenal	<b>₩₩₩₩₩</b>	14	14	10	56	48	8	56
9	Sheffield United		14	12	12	39	39	0	54
10	Burnley		15	9	14	43	50	-7	54
11	Southampton	<i>₩₩₩₩</i> ₩₩	15	7	16	51	60	-9	52
12	Everton	** <del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	13	10	15	44	56	-12	49
13	Newcastle United	44444444444444444444444444444444444444	11	11	16	38	58	-20	44
14	Crystal Palace	*\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	11	10	17	31	50	-19	43
15	Brighton and Hove Albion	<u> </u>	9	14	15	39	54	-15	41
16	West Ham United	1/4/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1/1	10	9	19	49	62	-13	39
17	Aston Villa	#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\	9	8	21	41	67	-26	35
18	Bournemouth	1 <del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	9	7	22	40	65	-25	34
19	Watford	11 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	8	10	20	26	64	-28	34
20	Norwich City	$\frac{1}{10000}$	5	6	27	26	75	-49	21

## 4.2 La Liga

## 4.3 Bundesliga

#	Verein	Verlauf	S	U	N	Tore	TD	Pkt
1	FC Bayern München	14444444 H-Hr 4444	26	4	4	100:32	68	82
2	Borussia Dortmund		21	6	7	84:41	43	69
3	RB Leipzig	<i>₩₩₩</i> ₩₩₩	18	12	4	81:37	44	66
4	Bor. Mönchengladbach	• <del>\\!\\\\\\</del> • <del>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</del>	20	5	9	66:40	26	65
5	Bayer 04 Leverkusen	#\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	19	6	9	61:44	17	63
6	TSG 1899 Hoffenheim	++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	15	7	12	53:53	0	52
7	VfL Wolfsburg	//////////////////////////////////////	13	10	11	48:46	2	49
8	SC Freiburg		13	9	12	48:47	1	48
9	Eintracht Frankfurt	<i>₩₩₩₩₩₩</i>	13	6	15	59:60	-1	45
10	Hertha BSC	######################################	11	8	15	45:59	-11	41
11	1. FC Union Berlin	1444 AVA AVA	12	5	17	41:58	-17	41
12	FC Schalke 04	######################################	9	12	13	38:58	-20	39
13	1. FSV Mainz 05	**************************************	11	4	19	44:65	-21	37
14	1. FC Köln	<i>₩₩₩</i> ₩₩₩	10	6	18	51:69	-18	36
15	FC Augsburg	<i>₩₩₩₩₩₩₩</i>	9	9	16	45:63	-18	36
16	Werder Bremen	₩₩₩₩###₩₩	8	7	19	42:69	-27	31
17	Fortuna Düsseldorf	7444+ 4 <del>747-4774</del>	6	12	16	36:67	-31	30
18	SC Paderborn 07	<i>\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\</i>	4	8	22	37:74	-37	20

## 4.4 Serie A

## 4.5 Ligue 1

## 4.6 Super League

#	Mannschaft	Verlauf	S	U	N	Tore	Diff	Pkt
1	BSC Young Boys	+44H 44K+ +4 +4 1Vlud	23	7	6	80:41	39	76
2	FC St. Gallen	<b>₩₩ ₩₩ ₩ ₩</b>	21	5	10	79:56	23	68
3	FC Basel	<i>₩₩₩</i> <b>₩₩₩</b>	18	8	10	74:38	36	62
4	Servette Genève	##\###################################	12	13	11	57:48	9	49
5	FC Lugano		11	14	11	46:46	0	47
6	FC Luzern	4114 4114 414 414	13	7	16	42:50	-8	46
7	FC Zürich	444 444 44 44 AMA	12	7	17	45:72	-27	43
8	FC Sion	<i>₩₩ ₩₩ ₩₩ ₩₩</i>	10	9	17	40:55	-15	39
9	FC Thun	+\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	10	8	18	45:67	-22	38
10	Neuchâtel Xamax FCS	+4++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	5	12	19	33:68	-35	27

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