

MERIT REPORT

ON MEDIA VALUE IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

Season 2018/19

MERIT

www.meritsocialvalue.com



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Presentation

The MERIT (*Methodology for the Evaluation and Rating of Intangible Talent*) approach is part of an academic endeavor that has vast applications in the field of sports business management. This methodology has been proven to help in measuring the economic value of talent in professional sports and other entertainment industries. The estimations and elaboration of rankings is made taking into account two elements: the popularity (degree of interest aroused from the fans and the general public) and the media visibility (level of attention paid by the media). The measurements could be made at specific points in time over the season, or accounting for the news articles published in a certain period: weeks, months, years, etc. The homogeneity of the measurements permits comparing the media visibility status of individuals, teams, leagues, institutions, etc.

Along with appraisals and rankings, our data sets are useful for analysing a wide variety of economic and managerial problems: estimates of the market value (or “fair value”) of players’ transfer fees; calculation of the brand value of individuals, teams and leagues; valuation of the economic return from sponsorship alliances; etc. The usefulness of these rankings is clear, given the growing number of companies whose business relies on media exposure and popularity as sources of potential income.

The approach adopted by MERIT allows us to reach where others cannot, since often the crucial issue is not to access to greater information but to be able to rely on the appropriate methodology and capabilities for analysis.

More information can be found at our web page:

www.meritsocialvalue.com

**Our estimations
and rankings
are based on
appraisals of
media visibility
and popularity**

Main Results – Season 2018/19



Lionel Messi

1st post in the
MERIT ranking of
football **Players**



FC Barcelona

1st post in the
MERIT ranking of
football **Teams**



Premier League

Football league
with the highest
media visibility



Mohamed Salah

Player of Top-25
with the biggest
growth in media
exposure



Kylian Mbappé

Player Under-21
with the highest
media visibility



“Dream Team”

5 players of the
Premier League in
the “Dream Team”
of media visibility



Juventus FC

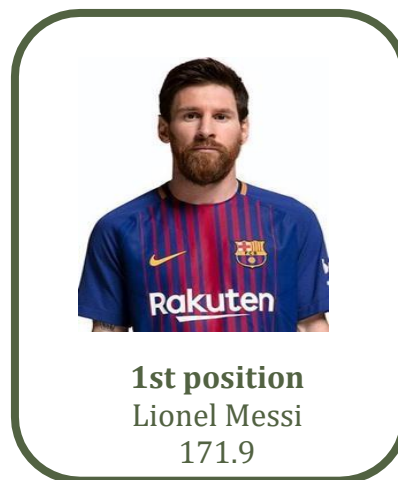
Team of Top-25
with the biggest
growth in media
exposure

1. MERIT Media Visibility Ranking – Football Players

The following table reports the MERIT media visibility index for the Top-10 most popular football players in season 2018/19. The values in the MERIT index are expressed with respect to a reference value, which is calculated as the average of the 2,500 players with the highest media visibility out of a database of more than 5,000 players. The index is thus the factor by which the number of news articles of a player multiplies the figure of the normal representative (average) player in our database.

Rank		Player Season 2018/19	Team	MERIT Index
1		Lionel Messi	FC Barcelona	171.9
2		Cristiano Ronaldo	Juventus FC	125.0
3		Neymar Jr.	Paris SG	75.3
4		Paul Pogba	Manchester Utd	68.3
5		Luis Suárez	FC Barcelona	63.7
6		Mohamed Salah	Liverpool FC	59.9
7		Kylian Mbappé	Paris SG	46.6
8		Raheem Sterling	Manchester City	46.5
9		Sergio Ramos	Real Madrid	43.1
10		Marcelo	Real Madrid	41.0

According to our results, in season 2018/19 Lionel Messi attracted 171.9 times greater attention from the media than the average (normal) player. Cristiano Ronaldo, another worldwide media superstar, reached an index of 125.0 points in the MERIT ranking. Neymar Jr. is found in the third position, while the fourth and fifth place are occupied by Luis Suárez and Paul Pogba, respectively. The latter player is ahead of Mbappé due presumably to the fact that he plays for Manchester United in the popular English Premier League.



As it happened in the precedent season, La Liga concentrates the largest number of players in the Top-10: two of them playing for Real Madrid and another two for FC Barcelona.

The Top-10 media visibility leaders belong to seven different clubs: Real Madrid, FC Barcelona, Paris SG, Manchester United, Tottenham and Chelsea FC. Additional information can be found in Annex 1, where we show the Top-50 professional football players with the greatest media visibility appraisals.



2. MERIT Media Visibility Ranking – Players Under-21

The following table shows the results of applying the same analysis to just players younger than 21 years old.

The calculations follow the same procedures used to derive the regular MERIT media visibility ranking, with the difference that we only report here a selection of young players. The analysis is very informative in order to identify prospective global superstars in professional football. The table identifies the top-10 young football players. Among this group we should expect to find the main protagonists, both in terms of media value and sport performance, in the years to come.

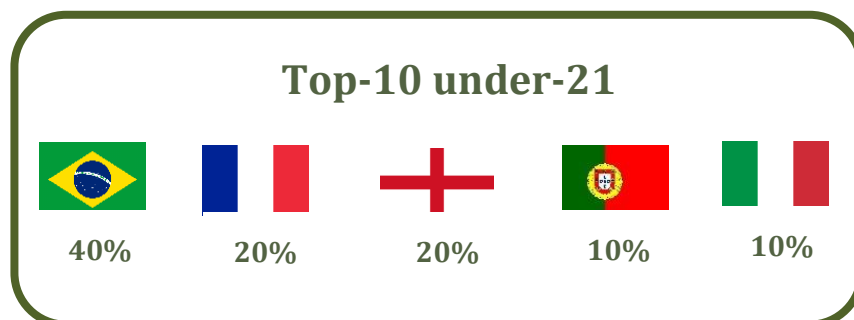
Rank	Player Season 2018/19	Team	MERIT Index
1	 Kylian Mbappé	Paris SG	46.6
2	 O. Dembélé	FC Barcelona	21.2
3	 Marcus Rashford	Manchester Utd	14.0
4	 Vinícius Júnior	Real Madrid	11.5
5	 Gabriel Jesús	Manchester City	4.4
6	 João Félix	SL Benfica	2.5
7	 Malcom	FC Barcelona	1.8
8	 Moise Kean	Juventus FC	1.5
9	 Alexander-Arnold	Liverpool FC	1.2
10	 Richarlison	Everton FC	0.9

At the top of the ranking we find the forward player Kylian Mbappé, currently playing at Paris SG, who completed an astonishing season and reached a degree of visibility in the media 46.6 times higher than the reference player in our database. Ousmane Dembélé held the second post with a MERIT Index of 21.2 points. The third post is for the Manchester United player, Marcus Rashford, whose media value reached 14.0 points.



The results of our analysis reveal the predominance of the Premier League to concentrate potential future football superstars. The 40% of the players in the Top-10 ranking under-21 are currently playing for English teams: Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool FC and Everton FC. Then, very closely behind the Premier League it comes the Spanish La Liga, which accumulated 30% of the under-21 players in the Top-10 ranking. Other leagues where the future football superstars played are the French, Italian and Portuguese leagues, with one player each in the Top-10.

Concerning the nationalities of the players under-21, there is a clear supremacy of Brazilians, accounting for 40% of the players in the Top-10. There are two other countries that also stand out in terms of young talents: France and England have two player each in the Top-10 ranking under-21.



3. MERIT Media Visibility Rankings – Players of the media leader team in European domestic leagues

This section displays the MERIT media visibility indexes for players in the roster of the winning team in each of domestic competition. The Spanish La Liga was won by FC Barcelona, team of two worldwide media leaders: Messi and Suárez.

In England, the winner of the Premier League was Manchester City, with some top players including: Sterling, Agüero and Sané.

Bayern Munich won its 7th consecutive Bundesliga; a title that was achieved thanks to Lewandowski outstanding performance. It seems however that the MERIT approach may fail to capture the right media visibility of players and teams in Germany, due perhaps to the winner-take-all effect.

England Premier League



1.	R. Sterling	46.5
2.	Sergio Agüero	17.1
3.	Leroy Sané	16.0
4.	David Silva	13.7
5.	K. De Bruyne	11.0
6.	Kyle Walker	8.5
7.	Bernardo Silva	6.2
8.	Gabriel Jesús	4.4
9.	Fernandinho	2.7
10.	V. Kompany	2.6

Spain La Liga




1.	Lionel Messi	171.9
2.	Luis Suárez	63.7
3.	Philippe Coutinho	29.9
4.	O. Dembélé	21.2
5.	Gerard Piqué	18.6
6.	Iván Rakitic	6.9
7.	Sergio Busquets	4.7
8.	Arturo Vidal	4.4
9.	Ter Stegen	4.2
10.	Jordi Alba	3.7

Germany Bundesliga



1.	Manuel Neuer	11.6
2.	R. Lewandowski	4.2
3.	Thomas Müller	4.1
4.	Thiago	3.2
5.	Franck Ribéry	3.1
6.	Arjen Robben	2.7
7.	James Rodríguez	2.4
8.	J. Boateng	2.1
9.	Mats Hummels	1.6
10.	J. Kimmich	1.1

Italy Serie A		
1.	C. Ronaldo	125.0
2.	Paulo Dybala	24.8
3.	L. Bonucci	8.9
4.	G. Chiellini	7.3
5.	M. Mándzukic	5.3
6.	M. Pjanic	5.3
7.	Alex Sandro	2.6
8.	Sami Khedira	1.8
9.	Douglas Costa	1.6
10.	Moise Kean	1.5

France Ligue 1		
1.	Neymar	75.3
2.	K. Mbappé	46.6
3.	E. Cavani	18.7
4.	Adrien Rabiot	10.3
5.	G. Buffon	8.0
6.	A. Di María	8.0
7.	M. Verratti	5.7
8.	Thiago Silva	5.2
9.	Dani Alves	2.0
10.	Thomas Meunier	1.3

Regarding the Italian calcio, Juventus of Turin conquered again the Scudetto, thus consolidating its predominance. Among the main stars of the Serie A, we find the recently incorporated superstar Cristiano Ronaldo, as well as Paulo Dybala; and also, the iconic defensive Italian duo: Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini.

Finally, the main protagonist in the French league was again Paris Saint Germain. Thanks to the incredible quality of some of its players, mainly Neymar and Mbappé, the French capital's team won the domestic championship. The top players, in terms of media visibility, are precisely three forward players: Neymar Jr., Kylian Mbappé, and Edinson Cavani.

4. MERIT Media Visibility Ranking – Teams

This section shows the results of the media visibility analysis by teams. The MERIT records for the clubs are obtained by aggregation of individual ratings of media visibility of the 15 most popular players in each team roster. The following table displays the MERIT ranking of the principal football clubs in Season 2018/19.

Rank		Team Season 2018/19	League	MERIT Index
1		FC Barcelona	La Liga	336.9
2		Real Madrid	La Liga	255.8
3		Manchester United	Premier League	206.6
4		Juventus FC	Serie A	190.0
5		Paris Saint Germain	Ligue 1	185.6
6		Liverpool FC	Premier League	151.2
7		Manchester City	Premier League	138.6
8		Arsenal FC	Premier League	67.4
9		Chelsea FC	Premier League	49.0
10		Bayern Munich	Bundesliga	40.2

FC Barcelona, with an index of 336.9 points, leads the MERIT media visibility ranking of teams in season 2018/19. Behind this Spanish team, we find respectively: Real Madrid, Manchester United, Juventus FC, Paris Saint Germain, Liverpool FC and Manchester City.

While there is a strong concentration of Spanish players in the MERIT ranking for individuals, the teams' ranking is led instead by English football clubs. Actually, the Premier League comprises up to five teams among the world's Top-10: Manchester United, Liverpool FC, Manchester City, Arsenal FC and Chelsea FC.

Regarding Italian football, we observe that only one team is found within the Top-10. However, if we take a look to the top 20, we find up to five Italian teams. Then, as expected, PSG and Bayern München are the leading teams in terms of media visibility of their corresponding leagues.

Half of the teams in the Top-10 media visibility ranking belong to the Premier League

Media Value Ranking - "Big-5" Domestic leagues



1. Man. United
2. Liverpool
3. Man. City
4. Arsenal
5. Chelsea



1. FC Barcelona
2. Real Madrid
3. Atlético Madrid
4. Valencia CF
5. Sevilla FC



1. Juventus
2. Inter Milan
3. AS Roma
4. Napoli
5. Lazio



1. Bayern Munich
2. Borussia Dortmund
3. Eintracht Frankfurt
4. Mönchengladbach
5. RB Leipzig



1. Paris SG
2. AS Monaco
3. FC Nantes
4. Olympique Lyon
5. Olymp. Marseille

5. Media “Dream Team” (2018/19)

This section shows the "Dream Team" of European football, where two leagues stand out: the Spanish La Liga and the English Premier League. Nine of the field positions are occupied by individuals playing in these two leagues, which hints their current global hegemony. The figure illustrates the composition of a team's squad with the most popular players in each position: Goalkeeper, Defenses, Midfielders and Forwards.



The following players are part of the “Dream Team” of season 2018/19:

Goalkeeper: David de Gea

Defenders: Marcelo – Sergio Ramos – Van Dijk – K. Walker

Midfielders: Luca Modric – Paul Pogba – Philippe Coutinho

Forwards: Cristiano Ronaldo – Lionel Messi – Neymar Jr.

The aforementioned selection of players gathers individuals who had the greater exposure in the media by field positions. In goal we find the Spanish keeper David de Gea. In defense the Real Madrid’s center-back Sergio Ramos, with a MERIT index of 43.1; followed respectively by Marcelo, Virgil Van Dijk and Kyle Walker.

In the midfield, the French Paul Pogba, with a MERIT index of 68.3 points, takes the lead, ahead of Philippe Coutinho and Luca Modric.

Then, in attack, the first place is for Lionel Messi, whose extraordinary performance during the 2018/19 season explains he achieved the highest score in the ranking, beating his historical rival: Cristiano Ronaldo.

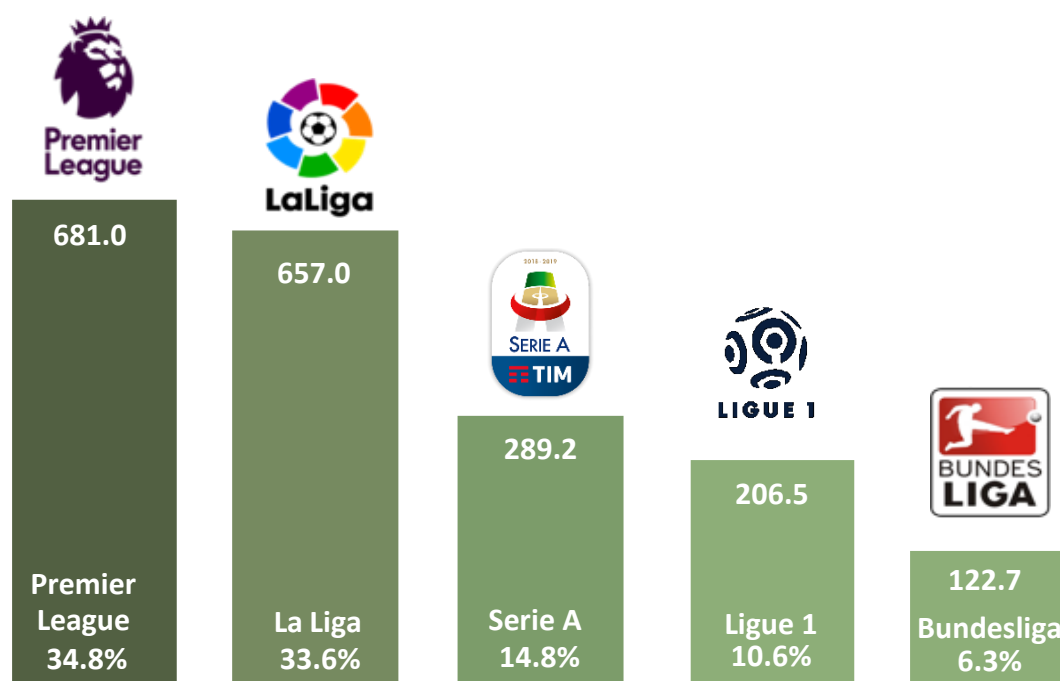
Up to 9 players of the (media visibility) “Dream Team” play either in the Spanish or English leagues



6. Media Value Ranking of the “Big- 5” domestic leagues

In this section we apply the MERIT approach to compute the hierarchy of domestic leagues, by aggregating the individual MERIT indexes of the 400 most popular players (those with the greatest visibility figures). Notice that similar results would have been obtained if the calculations for each league had been performed on groups of 300 or 500 players.

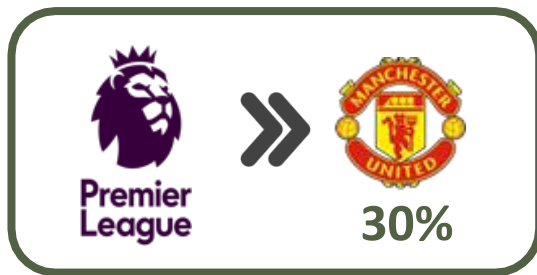
The figures summarize our results, informing of the MERIT aggregate indexes along with the relative share (in %) with respect to the total accumulated by the "Big-5" European leagues.



In the 2018/19 season, the Premier League, with a MERIT index of 692.5, is found at the top of the ranking of domestic football leagues. This result indicates that the English competition generates a global media attention nearly 17 times higher than that of the Bundesliga. The second place is for the Spanish La Liga that, boosted by the media figures of the 2 giants: Real Madrid and Barcelona, also reached very high levels of interest. Then, it appears the Serie A, Ligue 1 and the Bundesliga, respectively.

The hierarchy of domestic football leagues seems to be largely influenced by the fact that few stars concentrate the fans' attention, a feature that is typically called "Winner-take-all effect".

The Hierarchy of Domestic Leagues seems to be largely influenced by the so called “Winner-take-all” effect



This section also shows the share of media attention that the main team of the league represents with respect to the aggregate figure of the corresponding domestic league.

The Premier League and the Bundesliga show a more balanced distribution than the other European leagues. Manchester United attracted 30% of media attention in the Premier League; and a similar figure of 33% result for the case of Bayern Munich.

In the Spanish competition, La Liga, FC Barcelona accumulated that season 51% of the total national competition. The Spanish giant, along with its eternal rival (Real Madrid), account for almost 90% of the total. This result brings to light the strong dependence that the Spanish league has on these two clubs as far as media attention is concerned.

The Italian and French leagues present similar situations: the main team in each of these leagues is responsible for an huge share of 65% and even 89% of the total. The situation in these two leagues points to the existence of the “Winner-take-all” effect, a phenomenon implying that the predominant team attracts most of the spotlights in the media, drawing a more than proportionate share of the media attention compared to the other leagues. Juventus FC attracts 66% of the total in the Serie A; while Paris SG concentrates a huge share or almost 90% of the total media attraction in League 1.

Annex 1

Rank 2018/19	Player	Team	MERIT Media Value Index
1	Lionel Messi	FC Barcelona	171.86
2	Cristiano Ronaldo	Juventus FC	124.97
3	Neymar	Paris Saint Germain	75.32
4	Paul Pogba	Manchester United	68.27
5	Luis Suárez	FC Barcelona	63.69
6	Mohamed Salah	Liverpool FC	59.94
7	Kylian Mbappé	Paris Saint Germain	46.57
8	Raheem Sterling	Manchester City	46.48
9	Sergio Ramos	Real Madrid	43.08
10	Marcelo	Real Madrid	41.04
11	Gareth Bale	Real Madrid	36.62
12	Anthony Martial	Manchester United	32.04
13	Eden Hazard	Chelsea FC	31.78
14	Philippe Coutinho	FC Barcelona	29.85
15	Mauro Icardi	Inter Milan	29.38
16	Karim Benzema	Real Madrid	28.77
17	Romelu Lukaku	Manchester United	25.65
18	Paulo Dybala	Juventus FC	24.77
19	Luka Modric	Real Madrid	23.74
20	Mesut Özil	Arsenal FC	23.20
21	David de Gea	Manchester United	22.99
22	Sadio Mané	Liverpool FC	22.72
23	Virgil van Dijk	Liverpool FC	22.39
24	Isco	Real Madrid	21.38
25	Ousmane Dembélé	FC Barcelona	21.25
26	Edinson Cavani	Paris Saint Germain	18.73
27	Gerard Piqué	FC Barcelona	18.61
28	Sergio Agüero	Manchester City	17.09
29	Antoine Griezmann	Atlético Madrid	16.95
30	Harry Kane	Tottenham Hotspur	16.52
31	Leroy Sané	Manchester City	16.05
32	Alexandre Lacazette	Arsenal FC	14.19
33	Marcus Rashford	Manchester United	14.03
34	Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang	Arsenal FC	13.78
35	David Silva	Manchester City	13.72
36	Lorenzo Insigne	SSC Napoli	13.34
37	Roberto Firmino	Liverpool FC	12.18
38	Thibaut Courtois	Real Madrid	12.02
39	Manuel Neuer	Bayern Munich	11.65
40	Vinícius Júnior	Real Madrid	11.53
41	Kevin De Bruyne	Manchester City	11.04
42	Alexis Sánchez	Manchester United	10.58
43	Adrien Rabiot	Paris Saint Germain	10.25
44	Raphaël Varane	Real Madrid	9.03
45	Leonardo Bonucci	Juventus FC	8.89
46	Kyle Walker	Manchester City	8.48
47	Gianluigi Buffon	Paris Saint Germain	8.01
48	Ángel Di María	Paris Saint Germain	7.98
49	Edin Dzeko	AS Roma	7.95
50	Alisson	Liverpool FC	7.86

Annex 2

Rank 2018/19	Team	League	MERIT Media Value Index
1	FC Barcelona	La Liga	336.9
2	Real Madrid	La Liga	255.8
3	Manchester United	Premier League	206.6
4	Juventus FC	Serie A	190.0
5	Paris Saint Germain	Ligue 1	185.6
6	Liverpool FC	Premier League	151.2
7	Manchester City	Premier League	138.6
8	Arsenal FC	Premier League	67.4
9	Chelsea FC	Premier League	49.0
10	Bayern Munich	Bundesliga	40.2
11	Inter Milan	Serie A	39.1
12	Atlético Madrid	La Liga	31.4
13	Tottenham Hotspur	Premier League	29.4
14	AS Roma	Serie A	17.1
15	SSC Napoli	Serie A	15.2
16	FC Porto	Liga Nos	11.4
17	SS Lazio	Serie A	10.4
18	Borussia Dortmund	Bundesliga	8.3
19	AS Monaco	Ligue 1	7.3
20	Valencia	La Liga	7.1
21	Crystal Palace	Premier League	6.5
22	Everton FC	Premier League	6.0
23	SL Benfica	Liga Nos	5.9
24	Sport Club Corinthians	Série A	5.6
25	Leicester City	Premier League	5.3

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