USING THE PAIRED COMPARISON METHOD IN IMPROVING SOCCER RANKINGS: THE CASE OF THE ROMANIAN FIRST DIVISION

Călin Vegheş, Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, Romania,

ABSTRACT: The most common way to establish the final ranking in the football leagues across the world is to have all participating teams playing each other, home and away, in a double round-robin system. The team which obtains the highest number of points is declared champion while a number of teams that have obtained the lowest number of points are relegated. Various criteria are considered to differentiate the equal teams, such as superior overall goal difference, higher number of goals scored during the competition, results in the direct games, and so on. Complementary ways are considered to improve the final ranking, such as a double number of home-away games, play-offs and play-outs, supplementary games played home or away. The paper advances a new way to determine the final ranking of a football leagues based on the paired comparison approach and presents the results of testing this approach at the level of the Romanian First Division.