

## The COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Away and Home Victories in Soccer and Rugby Union

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**Edited by:** Julien Sarrault<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Quentin de Lencquesaing<sup>1</sup>, Jérémy Brignone<sup>1,2</sup> and Jean-Pierre Rieusset<sup>1,2</sup>

**Keywords:** COVID-19, soccer, rugby union, away and home victories, pandemic impact

**Introduction:** The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on away and home victories in soccer and rugby union.

**Methods:** Data from 10 European soccer leagues and 10 European rugby union leagues were analyzed for the 2019–20 and 2020–21 seasons.

**Results:** The proportion of away victories was higher in the 2019–20 and 2020–21 seasons compared to the 2018–19 season in soccer and rugby union.

**Conclusion:** The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on away and home victories in soccer and rugby union.

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## ÉPIDÉMIOLOGIE DE LA PERFORMANCE

# L'impact de la pandémie de COVID-19 en football et rugby à XV

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Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

**Adrien Sedeaud, Quentin de Larochelambert, Julien Schipman, Jean-François Toussaint**

**Objective :** To measure the impact of restrictions due to COVID on the proportion of matches won at home, away and draw in professional soccer and rugby union.

**Materials and Methods :** Two samples of professional soccer and rugby union matches were collected from 2012–13 to 2020–21 seasons. For soccer, data involved first and second division matches of the England, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, Scotland, Greece, Portugal, and Turkey championships. For rugby union, championships concerned are Premiership Rugby, Celtic League, Top 14, and Pro D2. The proportions of home, away wins and draw were calculated and compared. A chi-square test of independence between years and types of result was realized to identify an overall inhomogeneity.

**Results :** The proportion of away matches won between the 2012–13 and 2020–21 seasons increased significantly from  $28.5 \pm 1.2\%$  to  $32.5 \pm 1.5\%$  in soccer and from  $38.0 \pm 3.6\%$  to  $42.8 \pm 5.0\%$  in rugby union. In Premiership Rugby championship, the victory percentage at home dropped from  $55.8 \pm 3.1\%$  when tifosi were present to  $45.8 \pm 12.8\%$  when they were not.

**Conclusion :** The home advantage was drastically reduced in empty stadiums for several European soccer and rugby union professional championships. It vanished in the Premiership Rugby and Celtic League during the 2020–21 season.

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