

First I shall apologise for using soccer & football throughout this document together. But as this is the internet it will be read around the world and despite the fact the English invented Football it is now referred to as soccer so I will use both for the benefits of readers around the world.

After many years looking at football matches and coming to understand the mathematics behind them I can now predict the probabilities on almost any match. Not only that but I can continue to predict the match while it is in play. During my huge amount of research on soccer / football matches I have discovered many prejudices against or for certain situations that occur in football matches. I would like to explode a few of those for you and go on to talk about things in a very general sense.

I have analysed soccer matches since I was knee high to a grasshopper and have accumulated unbelievable amounts of data to do with matches. I think I probably started to seriously collect data in the early 1980's but my interest pre dates that to when I used to play table football and even then keep accurate records of those matches! A very long time ago I started analysing what happens inside a match as this obviously had a large bearing on the final result. I didn't know why I did that but I was glad I did as many years later I was able to use this data in the modern betting exchange markets. I can't think of many things I haven't looked at over the years. If there is something you wanted to know about a football match I have probably studied it at some point.

If you want a common saying or myth tested then [email me](#) with the query and I will see if I can confirm or deny your suspicions.

### Common soccer myths, conundrums and the answers to them

1. **"Play better sent off"**; - Teams always seem to play better when somebody is sent off. **False** - The chance of a team winning a match definitely declines after a person is sent off.

2. **"Man U get more penalty decisions"**; - Manchester united get more penalties than their opponents. **True** - I looked at a season recently when Man Utd won the Premier league and sure enough they were awarded more penalties than their opponents. However so were the Scottish champions Rangers and the winners of the other leagues. This seems to indicate that teams that are

playing well and near the top of the league are going to be awarded more penalties on the basis of their attacking force and / or the opponents defensive weakness not because of any bias.

3. It's always **good to score just before half time**. Curiously recent data seems to suggest that if this is the first goal that it is the case if you are the away team but not particularly the case if you are the home team. This could be a statistical anomaly as the chance of a win should rise the later the first goal is scored and longer term data confirms this. Early goals give opponents the time to respond so this is not a particularly good time to score unless you get a second then your chance of winning the match shoots up! If the first two goals go to the home or away team you are looking at a 89%+ chance of going on to win the match.

4. **Boring, boring** - Are 1-0 wins boring? **No**, just to be expected. This is the most common result of a match behind a 1-1 draw.

5. **"Conceding a goal just after scoring"** - Teams are quite likely to concede a goal after just scoring one - No, There is less than a 1% chance of a team conceding a goal just after scoring one.

6. **England are rubbish at penalties** - I'm not even going to comment on that one it is such an obvious answer. Personally I think players should practice penalties at half time then they can get used to the hostile atmosphere before a penalty shoot out.

## Anatomy of a soccer / football match

There are various pointers you can use to determine the flow of a match. I have used rounded and general data here so don't take these statistics as red. There are endless combinations and permutations of odds and their use and combination.

**Home advantage** - Does exist and you can see it clearly by analysing any quantity of football data. The home team wins generally 45% of the time, draws 30% of the time and the away team wins 25% of the time. On average there are around **2.60 goals** scored per game favouring the home team. Home advantage is generally reckoned to be worth around 0.40 of a goal in terms of supremacy against the opposition.

**Likely scores** - If the home team wins; it will win 1-0, 2-0 or 2-1 over 60% of the time. If the away team wins it will win 1-0, 2-0 or 2-1 nearly 70% of the time. If it's a draw it is highly likely to be 0-0, 1-1 or 2-2.

If you wish to work out on average **who is going to score first** in the match take a coin out of your pocket and decide on heads or tails while you flip it in the air.

If the **away team scores first** the chances of the match ending in a draw goes up. If the away team equalises after going a goal down then there is still a high probability that they will not go on to win the match. So **don't panic** if your team playing at home squanders an early advantage.

### **Don't bother turning up for the first half!!**

Nearly 1/3rd of matches are 0-0 at half time. All the action is in the second half!! If the match is 0-0 at half time the odds on a draw have risen quite a bit usually at the expense of the home teams chances of winning. So 0-0, if you are playing at home, is bad and away is not bad but not particularly good either.

If the **score is 0-0 at half time** it is critical that your team scores first in the second half. If you do there is only a small chance of your team going on to lose the match.

If your team is playing at **home** and is **losing at half time** then they must score first in the second half or else they have little chance of winning.

Even if your **team is dominant** and has more shots towards goal there is still a one in four chance that they will not win a match. It is true that teams can play well and still lose thanks to being unlucky. So don't be too hard on your team when they fail to win.

And finally..... **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, (Have I made that clear), NEVER**, leave the ground early under any circumstances!! The probability of a goal in the last minute or in extra time is actually quite high. Much higher than most people suspect. OK so it could go against you but there is a slightly better chance it will be for the home team. So stick around and enjoy that pleasure of a late goal. After all you could savour it while stuck in traffic on the way home because you didn't leave early.

I hope that gives you something to chew over. All the above probabilities are general and

spread across the entire spectrum of matches. Individual matches vary significantly based upon the ability of the teams.