Inside The Minds of Football System Punters

by Stanley Ong & Chris Kwek

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Introduction

Since the marvelous human brains can analyse all the betting options, why are there still many betting system advocates who devote so much efforts and time to formulate betting systems?

The authors have the privilege of knowing several magnificent betting system 'die-hards'. We are extremely grateful to be given the opportunities to 'take a peek' (to speak literally) inside the minds of these football system punters.

We wish you success in your betting endeavours.

Stanley Ong & Chris Kwek

1) What Is A Betting System

1. A betting system is an organised and coordindated method used to gain an edge or advantage over the bookmakers. It is usually mathematically based.

2. Generally, a betting system has the following characteristics :

a) The elements of betting are managed in a systematic way.

b) The selection of bets bypasses the need for any personal assessment of the chances of any particular outcome.

c) Any punter using the same system will come up with the same bets.

d) A system can be managed completely by computer.

3. A system can be 'very strict' and also 'not so strict' in accordance with the parameters set by the system punters :

- A 'very strict' system uses a variety of formulas, statistics and ratings.

- A 'not so strict' system could use only a single parameter, like bet the top 3 teams of the league, or bet against the bottom 3 teams. Such a system is actually close to random selections. It is, of course, debatable how effective such a system is.

A rigid definition is, as long as a system produces bets using the same parameters, it is considered a system. If the parameters are changed, then it will be a different system.

2) The Goal Of A System

1. The main objective of a system is to :

   - Learn the bet selection mistakes from the past in order to predict future selections more accurately.

   - Reduce the element of luck in a selection to a minimum.

2. If a particular system has proven that it's past selections has been successful, it means the method is workable.

   If the result has been less then satisfactory, then it is necessary to find out the kinks and implement the necessary tweaking and refining measures.

3) Advantages Of A System Compared To Human Selection Methods

1. Consistency

   a) A system is 100% consistent. It will apply the same method to select every bet on every betting day. A system will not be affected by emotion and fatigue.

   b) It is difficult for human beings to remain consistent in their selection criteria. There are pitfalls of chasing losses in a losing run, getting carried away with a winning streak, lack of discipline and inefficient money management, etc.

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2. Learning From Past Bet Selection Errors

a) A system churns out selections based on strictly preset perspectives. If one day the system stops being profitable, it will mean tweaking needs to be done, for instance,:

- Some newly found elements need to be included to make the system more effective.

- Some existing elements have proven to be more influential than expected and need to be given heavier weightage in the system.

- Some existing factors are found to have negative impact and skew the efficiency of the system and needed to be discarded in the system.

b) The first step to learn from errors is to determine what are the errors and where they are.

A system will call a spade a spade, no two ways about it. Even if it is a series of 1000 games, the system can clearly list out that 590 are winners and 410 are losers, and the characteristics of the bets, for example, the odds placed, rating form of the team staked, etc.

c) For the human brain, can the punter be very sure that :

- He has placed 1000 bets
- All the bets are based on the same criteria
- Out of the 1000 bets, 410 are losing bets
- At what odds those bets are placed

A system can answer all the above questions without a shadow of doubt.

So, to improve the future bets, it is necessary to speedily learn from the mistakes in the past bets, and then make suitable adjustments.

4) Is A Betting System Essential

1. Just like anything with two sides, there are always punters who believe a betting system is essential, and there are those who are 'anti-system'.

2. The 'anti-system' punters are of the view that knowledge, discipline, efficient money management and objective analysis applied to football betting is already a 'system'. They argue that various subjective elements like injuries, suspensions, motivation, etc. are very difficult to quantify 'mathematically'.

3. Some system punters are increasingly aware that not all parameters can be measured in numbers. But they are adamant that mathematical analysis of data and statistics is a **FIRST STEP** to successful punting.

These system punters first :

- Use their system to shortlist matches meeting their 'mathematical' criteria.

- They then analyse the 'subjective' elements like team news, h-2-h, etc. which may affect the chances of the matches.

- Study whether the odds offered for the final selections are of value.

- Determine the suitable staking size which will make a difference between profit and loss.

5) The Recipe For A Profitable Betting System

The recipe for a successful and profitable betting system must cover at least the following parameters :

1. The Bet Selection Process

   a) It will be according to a fixed set of rules when mathematical formulas and statistics are applied.

b) Some system punters are increasingly incorporating subjective criteria into their systems, such as team form, injuries, venue, motivation, etc

c) What subjective criteria to include and what weightage to be allocated to the subjective elements may vary from punter to punter as different punter will draw different conclusion. For example :

- Punter A may consider a Home win against the league leader is worth two times more than an Away win against the bottom club.

- Punter B may weigh both wins in such circumstances as equal and allocate same weightage.

d) The system punters may also introduce 'filters' into the system if they consider certain factors are important, for instance :

- Disregard first 6 games of the season
- Discard the last 6 games of the season
- Ignore derbies and cup games, etc.

2. Staking

a) No staking plan can turn a losing selection into a winning one **but** a good selection can be ruined by a poor staking plan and staking size.

b) When a punter uses a betting system, it means he is going to place a long series of bets over a period of time. He will need to set up a suitable betting fund, a staking plan and a staking size that allows him to place the long series of bets.

c) All punters must not forget the No. 1 golden rule of "***Never bet with money they cannot afford to lose".***

d) The type of staking plan will depend on the punter's attitude to profit-making and risk-taking. Generally, the higher the risk, the bigger the stake.

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Basically, there are four main groups of staking plans :

- Level Staking   : Same stake size is placed on every bet.

- Fixed Profit   : The stake size is set to ensure that each bet makes the same amount of profit. Formula to use is :

  (targeted fixed profit) / (odds -1)

- % Of Betting Fund: The stake size is the chosen % of the betting fund

- The Kelly System : The Kelly formula determines the stake size which maximises the potential profit. The formula is :

  (odds x estimation -1) / (odds-1)

The system punter has to study the various plans and use one which balances his level of risk and the potential profit expected for a particular system.

He may use different plan for different betting systems.

3 . The Number Of Bets

The more bets that a system has tested, the more reliable the result will reveal.

No conclusions on a system's reliability can be drawn from only a handful of bets.

Generally, a few hundred bets are needed before a system's reliability can be established :

- Is the result due to the parameters used?

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- Is the weightage allocated to the different parameters effective?

- If there is a winning or losing sequence, how long does it last?

- Is the result due to luck?

4. The Average Odds

A system punter could have placed :

- A large number of bets with low odds (the favourites) that win

- A few bets with big odds (the underdogs) that lose

This could create a bias in the winning and losing odds in the system.

It is important to know the average odds of the bets in a system. Average odds on its own appear to be of not much significance, but when considered with the strike rate of the system, will have a great impact on the system's profitability.

5. The Strike Rate

This is the number of winning bets divided by the total number of bets. It is expressed as a percentage.

This is an important parameter when combined with the average odds in determining the profitability of a system.

6. The Average Odds + The Strike Rate

Every punter knows he will make a profit if his winnings on the winning bets exceed his losses on the losing bets.

Let's examine the following two systems :

a) A 'favourites' system with low odds where :

- 4 out of 5 bets won
- Strike rate is therefore 80%
- To be profitable, the average odds must be 1.20 or above. Any lower odds, the punter will not make a profit.

This 'favourites' system is workable as long as the profits from the winning bets can cover the losses on the losing bets.

b) A 'underdogs' system with big odds where :

- There will be a low strike rate indicating a lot of losers and a few winners.
- If the average odds is 4.00, the strike rate has to be above 20% to be profitable.

The 'underdogs' system is workable if the average odds of the winning bets are large enough to cover the losses of the losing bets

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The average odds and the strike rate are very important parameters. Combining them together will give an indication of what to expect in terms of profit or loss.

7. The Total Staked Or Turnover

This is the total amount of money staked in the system.

If a punter has staked his entire betting fund once, it means the betting fund has turned over.

This is an important factor when using a betting system as an investment. The faster the turnover, the more profit made in the same length of time.

8. Yield

Yield is the total amount staked divided by the amount of profit or loss made. It indicates how high is the return on the investment, also known as ROI.

When a system produces a 5% yield, then the punter can expect on average 5% profit on each stake.

If the system punter turns over his betting fund 10 times, it means his profit will increase 10 times but the yield remains the same at 5%.

9. Risk Profile

How much risk can the system punter manage?

His risk profile is a factor in the choice of the betting system used. Generally, the higher the risk, the bigger the potential return.

Some punters are risk averse. They are unwilling to take too much risk and will bypass systems they consider risky.

There are punters who are less risk-sensitive and take on more risky systems.

The system punter has to find a balance between possible return and the risk level that he is comfortable with.

6) *What Is A Rating System*

A betting system is generally based on mathematical technique and/or rating technique.

A mathematical based betting system is very straight forward. As the name implies, the system is based on applying the mathematical formulas.

What then is a rating system?

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1. <u>What Are Ratings</u>

Ratings are points which are used to represent performances of the teams, etc. These points compare the strengths of the teams.

A rating system can be very basic or extremely complex. For example :

- A basic way – using league positions, league points, goals scored and goals conceded.

- A complex way – besides the above criteria, this way includes shots on targets, shots off targets, number of corners, % of ball possession, deflections, penalties, own goals, etc.

2. <u>Various Methods Of Rating Systems</u>

   A) A Basic Method

This method awards one point per goal scored. It does not take into account who it is scored against.

Is the value of these goals the same :

- A goal scored Away against Chelsea, and
- A goal scored at Home against WBA?

Of course, the answer is obvious. The flaw of this method is no weightage is accorded to the quality of the opponent.

   B) Power Rating Method

This method allocates 'value' to each goal scored according to the strength of the opponent :

- A goal scored against a stronger opponent will be worth more.
- A goal conceded against a stronger opponent will count for less.

Some critics of this system feel that too much emphasis is placed on 'goals' alone. It does not reflect the true form and quality of a team, such as in the following scenario:

- Team A beat Team B in the last round. Now Team B won against the league leader. Does this mean Team A's rating should be enhanced as it has won Team B who beat the league leader?

- Team X has a record of 1 win, 4 losses and 1 draw. It scored 4 goals and conceded 8 goals. If we look at the Power Ratings, it will reveal a rather unimpressive record. However, if we consider the 4 losses were against Liverpool, Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal, does it mean Team X will also perform badly against bottom club WBA in the next match?

C) Rateform Method

I) This method serves to apportion points according to the strength of the teams, for example, as under:

a) Each team is given 1000 points at the start of the season.

b) Before a match, the Home and Away teams contribute a certain % of points to a 'pool'. Generally, it is 7% for the Home team and 5% for the Away team.

For example, let's take a match between Chelsea and Bolton. Chelsea has 2284 rateform points and Bolton has 753 points. In this case :

- Chelsea will contribute 7% x 2284 = 160 points
- Bolton will contribute 5% x 753 = 38 points
  Total of the 'pool' for this match = 198 points

c) The winning team takes the complete 'pool' of 198 points.

d) If there is a draw, both teams will share the 'pool' of 198 points, that is, each will get 99 points.

e) If Chelsea wins, it will get 198 points, BUT its rateform points will increase by only 38 points (198 – 160).

f) If Bolton wins, it will get 198 points, and its rateform points will increase by 160 points (198 – 38).

g) If Chelsea draws, it will get 99 points, BUT its rateform points will actually decrease by 61 points (160 – 99).

h) If Bolton draws, it will get 99 points, and its rateform points will increase by 61 points (99-38).

From the above example, we can conclude the characteristics of the rateform method are :

i) When a weaker team beats a stronger opponent, it will receive a proportionally greater number of rateform points, especially if the win is achieved in an Away match. (In this example, Bolton Away win would achieve 160 points compared to 38 points if Chelsea wins at Home).

ii) On the other hand, this can also be interpreted that a strong team at Home defeating a weaker opponent will receive relatively fewer points.

iii) An Away draw is proportionally better than a Home draw, especially if the Home team is rated stronger. (In this case, for a draw, Bolton receives 61 points whereas Chelsea will have 61 points deducted).

iv) This system provides a reflection not only on the number of games a team has won, drawn or lost, but also on the strength of its opponent.

II) The % of points to be contributed to the 'pool' can vary from punter to punter. Some punters may allocate points as under :

● Before a match, the Home team puts in 20% of its rateform points and the Away team contributes 5% into the 'pool'.

- In the event of a Home win, the Home team gets 95% of the 'pool', and the Away team gets 5%.

- In the event of an Away win, the Away team gets 95% of the 'pool' and the Home team gets 5%.

- In the event of a draw, the Away team gets 80% and the Home team gets 20%.

III) Some punters may include the following additional parameters to the system :

+ (x) points for each corner won
+ (x) points for maintaining a clean sheet (not conceding a goal)
+ (x) points for each shot on target
+ (x) points for each shot off target
- (x) points for each yellow card received
- (x) points for each red card received

Some even allocate points for % of ball possession, % of tackles won, etc.

These additional parameters are used to judge whether a team has won the match deservedly.

D) <u>Player Impact Rating (PIR)</u>

This is to determine, numerically, the impact a particular player has in a game, or the impact on a team if this player is not available in a match.

For a player to have such an impact, he is normally the playmaker or other influential player in obvious role, such as key striker, key defender or goalkeeper.

PIR will reveal the % of wins for a team with/without the player. The formula will include criteria of :

G - goals scored (some punters exclude penalty)
GF - goals for
A - assists

GD - goal differential

R - red card

OG – own goal

GA – goals against

PIR could concentrate only on one player or a combination of players. For example, in the 2007/2008 season, Cristiano Ronaldo was very influential for Manchester United. Whenever he is in the game, MU has extra % of goal supremacy compared to when he was not playing. The system punter can then convert this extra % of goal supremacy to an extra likelihood of MU winning a game.

3. Filters

Most punters apply the following filters :

- First 6 matches and last 6 games of the season are ignored.

- Derbies are discarded as they are unpredictable.

- Cup games are also discarded as they are considered too volatile.

7) What Factors To Consider

The consensus among a majority of the system punters is the following factors are to be seriously considered :

1. A system may work well for one country, but may not be effective in another. Also, what works for the premier teams may not be workable for the teams in the lower divisions.

The characteristics of each league are different and the method of selecting bets may need to be adjusted for each league. For example :

a) The Scottish league is considered 'special' as it is dominated year in and year out by the same two teams, Celtic and Rangers. These two teams are so much stronger than the other teams in the league that the result will be much distorted if the standard parameters are used.

b) The style of play and other features in the English Premier League and the Spanish La Liga may be closely matched, and therefore the parameters applied could be similar. But the same method may not be suitable when compared to the English Division 1.

Most system punters concur that different methods need to be employed for different countries, and different categories of leagues.

2. The system punters know that it is not advisable to rely 100% on statistics to select their bets. There are still many factors that can affect the outcome of a match. These are called subjective indicators.

The range of these subjective indicators to be considered varies from punter to punter. The range can include :

a) Team news like injuries, suspensions, conflict between manager and players, etc.

b) Change in manager.

c) Travelling distance which may result in fatigue for the Away team.

d) Trends in form (is the team improving or declining in form).

e) Weather (bad weather like fog and rain can even out the strength between good and average teams. Generally, a bad pitch can be a great disadvantage for the technically better team, especially playing Away).

f) Bias in fixtures (some teams may have a few easy or hard games in a row, or play a couple of games consecutively at Home or Away).

Of course, all such subjective indicators are very different to quantify and measure. If they can be factored in accurately into a system, then such system is truly perfect and excellent. This is certainly a daunting objective and not easily achievable. Most system punters will have to evaluate such indicators manually.

3. Some system punters may disregard the following :

a) First six games of the season - to cater for changes in the team (new players coming in, existing players leaving, etc.)

b) The last six games of the season – this is the period where motivation plays a great part, whether a team has anything to fight for, etc.

c) Cup games as they are considered volatile.

d) Derbies as they are unpredictable in most cases.

4. Home ground advantage is a recognised advantage. If a strong Home team is playing against a bottom team, the Home team is expected to win.

To realistically reflect the strength of the two teams, the rateform rating will adjust this 'home advantage' by awarding relatively fewer points to the strong Home team for defeating the weaker opponent.

5. What is the time-frame of data to be used? It is interesting that there are two extreme views :

a) Some punters use data from as long as half a season or one season ago. They believe this will account for periods where the teams are on form/off form, impact of key injuries/suspensions, etc. and present a more accurate assessment.

b) The opposing camp of punters feel that 4 to 6 games will reflect more accurately the form of a team, on the basis that 'one is only as good as the last game.' They believe what a team did a year ago is not relevant compared to what it has done in the past 4 to 6 weeks.

c) To ascertain what time-frame optimises the efficiency of a system, some punters even use different lengths of time to conclude which one works best for future use

6. Some punters even take into account how 'attacking' a team is in the awarding of rating points. For example, a team had drawn 0-0 in the last three matches, but match reports revealed that it had been on the attack most of the time, but failed to convert the chances.

   These punters would equate such teams as still playing well and 'in form' and therefore deserve more rating points.

7. Even though there may be differing views among the system punters on some factors, all of them will agree that :

   a) A 1-0 Away win against a team rated 15 points higher would be considered a better performance compared to a 3-0 Away win against a team 30 points lower, and thus has to be reflected in the system accordingly.

   b) A win of 1-0 against an average team should not be rewarded with the same rating points as a battering of 5-1 against another average team.

8) *Does A System Have A Peak Period*

What is a peak period?
How to know when is it?
What to do?
Is there a way to predetermine a peak period in a system?

Let's analyse :

1. <u>What Is A Peak Period</u>

   A peak period is a point of time where two things can happen :

   - The betting performance 'plateaus' out, that is, there is no further improvement.

   - The betting performance starts to spiral downwards, that is, there are more losers than winners.

2. How To Predetermine A Peak Period In A System

This can be done mathematically on a system already tested or used :

a) Record at least 400 bets the system has produced.

b) Find out the number of winning bets, let's say 260 bets have won.

c) Divide 260 bets by 4 to get the number of winning bets per 100 bets (that is, 260 / 4 = 65 winning bets per 100 bets placed).

d) Deduct a % (around 15% to 20%) from the 65 winning bets as a correction cushion to cater for streaks of good form and bad form periods. Let's say the % is 18%, so 65 – 18% = 53 bets.

e) So, if during a period of time where, let's say 80 bets have been staked, and 53 bets have been won, for the remaining 20 bets which the system has churned out, to forgo placing the bets.

3) Contrarian View

However, there are punters who disagree that a system has a peak period :

a) In the above example, if a system has produced 53 winning bets out of 80 bets placed, this represents a strike rate of 66%. Why then skip the remaining 20 bets?

b) If a system is not profitable at all, should have stopped using it altogether.

9) *Back-testing The Viability Of A System*

1. Most system punters agree that a system must be back-tested thoroughly over at least a season, that is, covering a few hundred bets.

This is to ensure that the system does not hit upon a profitable run of results due to nothing more than short-term luck.

2. Some systems tend to perform promisingly at the beginning of the season, and then start to drift downwards towards the end of the season. If this is the case, analyse whether :

   - The system needs tweaking as the season progresses, or

   - Is there a cut-off point of the season at which to stop using the system

3. Find out any anomaly, for example, is the system more effective for league matches compared to tournament like Euro, World Cup, etc.

   Analyse the anomaly and search out the reasons.

4. Try taking out the following categories of teams to determine whether the results are better :

   - Promoted teams to the league.
   - Demoted teams in the league.

5. For most reflective results, back-test the system individually for :

   - Each country, for example, test separately for English Premier League, Italian Seria A, etc.

   - Each league in the country, for example, test separately for EPL, English Championship, English Division 1, etc.

   - Each type of betting, for example, over/under, draw, Home favourites, etc.

6. Identify the teams which adversely affect the system and discard them, for example, at certain point of the season, some punters discard the top 3 or bottom 3 teams, etc.

7. When back-testing a new system, be prepared for plenty of setbacks and knock-backs along the way. Once a system is tested to be workable, apply a suitable staking plan and stick to it with discipline and patience.

8. Always keep an open mind in your analysis. Do not be biased. It is worth remembering the famous quote :*"Like a parachute, the mind works best when open".*

10) Problems Frequently Encountered

1. All system punters must be prepared it may take a considerable length of time to be certain if a particular system is showing consistent profit :

- Some systems start promisingly, but after a series of 100 or even 300 bets, begin to drift downwards.

- Some problems could surface even after only a handful of bets.

Such 'trails and errors' are part and parcel of a system punter's learning process. The point is, if you don't try it out, you won't gain. It is by failure that the punter learns.

2. Perseverance to doggedly persist in adjusting and refining a system is the key to success.

But how many could do so :

- How many times have we heard people proclaiming they have this great idea.

- And how many of them actually follow through their endeavours?

- And if they do, how many persevere and try their utmost to overcome all obstacles along the way!

And it is these same people who will acclaim : "I thought of that long time ago" when someone else actually achieved great results on that 'great idea'.

3. Some punters feel that any system based solely on historical data and patterns may not remain profitable for too long. This is because the bookmakers have the latest technology to access the huge databases and identify all types of trends and patterns. As the bookmakers hold the edge in the odds adjustment, their pricing will soon defeat any system that has proven to be profitable.

11) *Picking The Minds Of The System 'Die-Hards'*

How simple or complicated a system can be is largely attributed to the system punter's criteria and/or how influential he ranks his system's parameters.

The following is a collection of complex and simple systems tapped from the minds of these system 'die-hards'.

A) Over/Under

1. Over/Under betting is considered attractive by punters because there are two advantages :

   a) It is easier to bet as there are two outcomes compared to 1x2 betting of win, draw and loss. So, there is 50% chance in every bet placed.

   b) Odds are in the region of 1.60 to 2.00 which are considered good. So, a strike rate of 2 out of 3 is already profitable.

   Most punters generally favour Over as there is always hope for the bet to materialise until the final whistle of the match.

2. The following are 5 methods.

   Method 1

   This method is very straight-forward. For example :

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Team	Matches Played	Goals Scored	Goals Conceded
A	13	16	12
B	13	19	21

Team A's average score = (16 + 12) / 13 = 2.15
Team B's average score = (19 + 21) / 13 = 3.08

Average score of the match = (2.15 + 3.08) / 2 = 2.62

Selection : To bet Over 2.5 if odds is of value, say $2.00.

Criticism : Most system punters feel that this method is overly simplistic. Home and Away goals need to be looked at separately.

Method 2

To make the system more reflective and reliable, instead of adding up and dividing <u>all</u> the goals, sum up and divide only the Home team and Away team scoring pattern.

For example, in Method 1, out of 13 matches played, Team A played 6 matches at Home and scored 11 goals. Team B played 7 matches Away and scored 9 goals. Their scoring pattern is thus as under :

Team	Matches Played	Goals Scored
A (Home)	6	11
B (Away)	7	9

Team A's average score = (11 / 6) = 1.83
Team B's average score = (9 / 7) = 1.28

Average score of the match = (1.83 + 1.28) / 2 = 1.55

Selection : To bet Under 2.5 at acceptable odds.

Criticism : This method only considers the scoring pattern and does not take into account the goals conceded.

Method 3

Some punters feel that on top of the goals scored, it is also important to consider the goals conceded by both the Home and Away teams.

For example, a match between Bolton (Home) and Arsenal (Away) for which the average scores are as under :

Bolton's average of goals scored at Home   = 1.17
Bolton's average of goals conceded at Home = 1.60
Bolton's average goals at Home   = 2.77

Arsenal's average of goals scored Away   = 1.40
Arsenal's average of goals conceded Away = 1.50
Arsenal's average goals Away   = 2.90

Home scored + Away conceded = (1.17 + 1.50) = 2.67
Home conceded + Away scored = (1.60 + 1.40) = 3.00
Total   =   5.67

Average = 5.67 / 2 = 2.83

Most system punters would consider this scenario shows a strong possibility of Over 2.5. This is further strengthened by Bolton's average goals at Home of 2.77 and Arsenal's average goals Away of 2.90.

Selection : To bet Over 2.5 at acceptable odds.

Method 4 (To Predict Over)

Some punters feel the recent form of a team is most important, and only the last 5 matches are to be considered.

This method is to find out the efficiency of producing an Over by a team in the last 5 games as under :

- The number of times the team produces an Over.
- The number of times the team scored at least once.
- The number of times the team conceded at least once.

The following is an illustration :

a) Team A at Home

- Produced 2 Over in 5 games (2/5 = 0.4)

- Scored 4 out of 5 games (total 7/10)
- Conceded 3 out of 5 games (= 0.7)

So, the efficiency of Team A at Home to produce Over
= 0.4 / 0.7 = 57%

b) Team B Away

- Produced 2 Over in 5 games (2/5 = 0.4)

- Scored 1 out of 5 games (total 5/10)
- Conceded 4 out of 5 games (= 0.5)

So, the efficiency of Team B Away to produce Over
= 0.4 / 0.5 = 80%

Selection : To bet Over 2.5 at acceptable odds.

Method 5 (To Predict Under)

The applicable indicators are :

a) Concentrate on the leagues where the average number of goals in a match is < 2.5.

b) The total unders in the league is minimum 55%.

c) Home team has at least 2 unders in the last 3 Home games. Away team has lat least 2 unders in the last 3 Away games.

d) Average number of goals scored by the combined Home and Away teams should be <u>2 or less</u> in their last 10 Home/Away games, for example :

Home team scored total 14 goals in their 10 Home games
Away team scored total 12 goals in their 10 Away games

Total	26	20

Therefore, average number of goals = 26/20 = 1.3 goals which meet the criterion of 2 or less.

3. As shown in the above methods, the types of parameters used can vary. Basically, they can be :

- Home's attack   + Away's attack
- Home's defence + Away's defence
- Home's attack   + Away's defence
- Home's defence + Away's attack, etc.

4. To make the system selections more stringent, the punters can set up various filters such as :

a) Overall average score must be less than 2.25, then bet Under

b) Overall average score must be more than 2.75, then bet Over.

c) If both teams' average scores are around 2.50, to skip match.

d) Some punters like to use a buffer between the overall average score and the bet, for example, the difference must be 0.5 or more. Say, if the bet is under 2.5, the overall average score must be 2.0 or less. If one feels 0.5 buffer may be too huge, can then use 0.2, etc.

e) If odds is above 1.80, then bet as single.

If below 1.80, and there are two matches meeting the criteria, then bet as a double.

B) Draw

1. There are two diverse schools of thought on the main criteria on a draw system :

    - Pick teams which draw a lot recently
    - Pick teams which have not drawn for a period of time, say last 6 games

2. Are draws independent of form, that is, are they random? Again, there are two views :

    a) Supporters of the view that draws are independent of previous results feel that each match is different, that the match outcome depends on circumstances and conditions of that particular game, for example :

        - Attacking and defending capabilities of both teams.
        - Weather on that day
        - Pitch condition

        These punters do not accept the theory that a draw is due just because it has not happened for a long time.

    b) Opponents of this view feel strongly that the probability of draws depends largely on the previous games, that it boils down to the psychology and mentality of the players of the 'drawish' teams.

3. Some system punters fee l that draw bets are more worthwhile compared to betting Home or Away as the average odds of 3.25 is attractive. The rationale is, if two teams have drawn the last four times, then 3.25 for a draw is value.

4. To ascertain whether certain teams with high number of draws is not a fluke, some punters formulate a system of teams with five draws or more and monitor the results. If the indication is the high draw rate is not a fluke, then it is worthwhile to look further to refine the system.

5. **Various Methods**

Method 1

Pick teams not drawn in last 8 games.

Criticism : This method is widely used in roulette. If black appears x number of times, then the probability for red to be next must be good. But football with 22 human beings is not a card game of roulette. There is no certainty that a team must draw at a certain point of the season. Several years ago, there have been instances of :

- English Lower Division team Blackpool went 20 games without a draw. (So, those who betted for a draw beginning from the 9th game would have suffered financially).

- Spanish lower league team Alaves once went a whole season without a draw!

Method 2

Pick Away teams who have :

- Won at least 3 of their last 4 Away games.
- Must have won their last Away game.

Criticism : This method does not consider the strength of the Home team.

Method 3

This method is mainly based on the h-2-h of draws between the two teams. These two teams must have 60% draws in their last five fixtures.

6. Some leagues appear to have either a higher or lower % of draws compared to others. This could be due to the characteristics of the leagues in terms of competitiveness, or even prevalence of match fixing. This is why some bookmakers do not offer odds on certain minor European league matches at the end of the season.

7. Most system punters agree that for draws, it is essential to choose the teams instead of choosing the matches. They feel that draw is largely due to the style of play, such as :

   - Defensive style and struggling to attack will tend to draw more.
   - Attacking formation and tactics which will not draw too often.

8. If a certain team draws a few matches, analyse why :

   - Does the team have problems scoring? If yes, why. (Key striker injured?)

   - Is the team renowned for tight defence?

   - Is it psychological? Maybe a team on a long losing run may try harder just to get a least a point, that is, a draw.

9. The following trends in matches ending with a draw can be observed :

   - Matches where both teams are happy with a point, for example, a draw is sufficient for both to avoid relegation or to qualify for a cup competition.

   - Matches played in poor weather conditions like heavy rain which usually lead to less goals and higher chance for a draw.

   - Derby matches.

   - Teams improving in form which may be more likely to draw playing Away.

- Teams which draw a lot with each other repeatedly could mean:

  * they are equal in strength.

  * there is some kind of psychological impact that it is tough for one of them to break the other down.

  10. The filters applied are normally :

  ■ If a team has been drawing a lot, and if it has appointed a new manager, wait a few matches to determine if this team is still drawing frequently.

  ■ Discard newly promoted and newly relegated teams where performance can be erratic.

C) Low Odds Home Favourites

1. This is picking a few selected teams among Europe's best Home teams, for example, Celtic, Rangers, Chelsea and Manchester United (MU).

2. Factors to consider are:

   a) To avoid betting these Home teams on the following specific occasions :
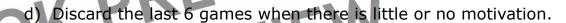
      Celtic   - when playing Rangers.
      Rangers – when playing Celtic.
      Chelsea - when playing MU and Liverpool.
      MU   - when playing Chelsea and Liverpool.

   b) Average odds must be between 1.20 to 1.60.

   c) Discard first 6 games of the season so as to monitor the performance especially when there are changes in the players.

d) Discard the last 6 games when there is little or no motivation.

e) Study team news especially injuries and suspensions of key players.

f) To be cautious if :

- Home team is involved in a derby match.
- Away team has remained unbeaten for the last few matches.
- If there is managerial change in either the Home or Away teams.

g) If a team in the selection has lost the last two Home games, to remove the team from the list.

h) When 3 of the stipulated Home teams are playing, some punters may bet a treble. If 2 are playing, then bet a double. If only one is playing, then stake as a single, but usually the odds will be very low.

3. The pitfalls of this system generally agreed are :

a) For average odds of 1.20, it will need a winning ratio of 80% to break-even.

b) Since the odds are so low, it is difficult to win sizeable amount unless the staking size is colossal, which then can be very risky. For example, Celtic is 90% assured of a win, but there can also be an upset of a draw.

4. Some punters feel the return of this system is not worthwhile. They may combine a system selection with another bet to make a double instead.

5. Such low odds Home favourites system may not work for all football seasons as a team's strength and form, even playing at Home, can differ from one year to another

D) Game Form

1. Check the statistics of the last 6 games of the Home and Away teams, and award points as under :

Home Win   3 points
Home Draw   1
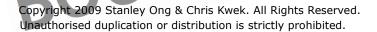Away Win   5 (more points awarded   )
Away Draw   2 (because of Away disadvantage)
Home/Away Loss   0

- Add up the total points.
- Subtract one team's score from the other.
- If scores are level, then it's a draw.
- Only a score of +5 will be considered (for example, if the Home team's score is +7, then it will be taken as Home win).

2. The average odds for the Home win to be in the range of >1.5 and <2.0, etc.

3. The average odds for the Away win must be >2.0, etc.

4. The filters to apply are :

- Ignore teams who have not won 2 out of the last 6 games.
- Discard cup games.

E) Against The Series

1. This is betting on a breaking of a streak, for example :

- MU has not lost for 12 weeks, and have been playing quite poorly in recent matches. Start to play for a loss.

- Fulham has not won for 10 weeks, and have lost the last 6 matches. Their next game is at Home and to play for a win.

- Valencia has not drawn for 13 weeks. Start to play for a draw.

2. The rationale of this system is, for a 'streaking' team, team news can show whether the trend can be broken. This is especially so for a team in a long losing streak, as the odds for a win can be very juicy.

3. Factors to consider are :

a) Be very cautious when considering top team to lose, or bottom team to win.

b) The best opportunity is on average teams which have a long winning/losing streak like 5 to 6 games.

c) It is important to consider the strength of the opposition, for example, we cannot expect WBA to easily break the winning run of MU.

d) It is worthwhile to consider the motivation factor:

- Teams in a good streak may be complacent against weaker opponent.

- Teams in a bad streak may give their all to win.

F) Using Odds

1. As a rule of thumb, odds < 1.85 indicate the favourite, and >2.25 refers to the underdog. The odds in between 1.85 to 2.25 means no side is the favourite.

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2. The punter chooses a range of odds which he feels indicated the teams are evenly matched, that is, there is no favourite. He then backs the Away team on the rationale that the odds are better and that it is not the favourite simply because of the venue.

G) Betting Home Team Against Long Distance Traveller

1. Some system punters believe that long distance travelling, whether by car or by plane, has the same psychological impact of fatigue, etc. This gives the Home team an advantage.

   Sometimes, the Away teams arrive just one to two hours before the match. Also, such Away teams do not have many travelling fans to cheer them. This is why derbies have a lot lower Home ground advantage.

   Www.theaa.com give fairly extensive city and town lists with the travelling distance indicated.

2. The filters to be applied are :

   - The travelling time must be at least 5 hours.
   - Discard teams which travel by plane and have been performing well Away.

H) Betting Against A Team With New Manager

This is betting the first 3 games against a team with a new manager. Some punters feel 3 games are too many. The greatest impact is in the very first game.

The filter to be applied is the previous manager has left because of poor performance and not leaving for greener pastures in a bigger club.

12) Final Thoughts

Every system punter wants to own an elusive system, the goose that lays the golden eggs; the goose that guarantees a winning recipe.

But these punters know that no mathematical modeling alone in a betting system can produce long term profit. But a system is a very good and reliable ally, the front runner which helps to shortlist the bet selections meeting the preset criteria, for the punter's subsequent analysis and evaluation.

So, do not be too quick to dismiss another's idea. An idea, even though it may appear to be flawed, may inspire and trigger better and more refined ideas.

Follow a system consistently and do not be hasty to judge it's efficiency and effectiveness. However, no system can remain profitable forever unless it is constantly updated and upgraded.

13) Links And Resources

The following are useful sites to search for ratings and other relevant football information :

a) www.football-data.co.uk
b) www.mables-tables.com
c) www.365.stats.com
d) www.betexplorer.com
e) www.soccerstats.net
f) www.soccerway.com
g) www.H2Hstats.com
h) www.theaa.com

Should you want to know more about systems the following links are recommended:

a) The Football Maestro System

The Football Maestro are selling a football betting system and e-mail selection tipping services. The system is easy to understand and very well written. Tips by email are sent on regular or daily basis with detailed analysis of all matches recommended. The strike rate is relatively high with money back guarantee for failure to make profit.

Click The Football Maestro for more information.

b) Bookie Buster

Bookie Buster is a step-by-step easy to follow book with a lot of systems and strategies. This book will provide the punters with the additional edge in betting.

Click Bookie Buster for more information.

c) The Football Compiler System

The Compiler System claims to know the secret of a successful football betting system. Similar to a paid tipping service, the Compiler System makes the selections and send them out to all its purchasers. It has a hit rate of 90% of winning bets. The bet selections are well researched and sen t out timely. A 8 weeks free trial period is offered on the system selections.

Click The Football Compiler System for more information.