



## CPS Abstract - WSC 2025

### The Quest for the Best Football Player: An Innovative Statistical Approach

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#### Brief Description

The paper proposes a statistical index to objectively determine the best football player. The index considers the player's game impact, league importance, and trophies won, ensuring fairness among different positions. It can be adapted by FIFA confederations for their annual best player awards.

#### Abstract

Determining who is the best football player in the world is a complex question that often elicits subjective responses. Every football enthusiast has their own "Ballon d'or", making the quest for the best player even more challenging. Being a team sport, football should ideally highlight the best teams or ideal formations rather than individual players. The qualities needed to excel vary according to the player's position on the field, meaning there is no single "best player", but rather "best players" in their respective positions. Nevertheless, the demand to designate a "best player" remains strong. For this prestigious award to be meaningful for football fans, it must be based on objective criteria rather than subjective judgments. Votes from supporters, captains, or selectors do not always faithfully and objectively reflect players' performances over a given year.

In this article, we explore the complexity of the topic and current solutions, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. Based on this, we propose a statistical index that we consider more objective for designating the best player. This index considers the player's impact in the game, weighted by the importance of the league or competition, and takes into account the number of trophies won during the season. This method, besides being more objective, ensures fairness among the different playing positions. It can also be updated and adapted by the various FIFA confederations for choosing their best player of the year.