AN ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL RECRUITING PATTERNS WITHIN THE BIG TEN CONFERENCE, 2002-2008

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to uncover any spatial patterns that emerged during the temporary migration of college football recruits in the Big Ten Conference from 2002-2008. In order to better understand the migration patterns of these recruits, three explanatory variables were chosen for analysis: the extent in which universities captured recruits from within their respective states; the university's winning percentage in comparison to the mean Euclidean distance of migration; and the player's position on the football field. Data were analyzed using a two-tailed t-test, correlation analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Identifying the differences between the total numbers of in-state and out-of-state recruits provided an indication to the extent in which each university relied on in-state recruits to fill their roster. Although there was no statistically significant difference between the means of in-state and out-of-state recruits, it was still clear that each university, with the exception of Ohio State University, captured the largest percentage of their recruits from states outside of their own. It was also determined that a university's winning tradition was not a factor that caused recruits to migrate from a greater distance. However a spatial analysis of the recruit migration revealed that the majority of the recruits had origins within the Midwest, suggesting that the relative location of the Big Ten universities was somewhat of a factor in determining where a recruit would migrate. Finally, comparing the migration distance of each recruit to the total number of recruits at each respective position they were being recruited to fill determined a hierarchy of positions based on their migration distance.