

Putting a price on players

How []BEBR Football models, validates, and operationalises transfer values



Putting a price on players

A whitepaper by []BEBR Football

Audience: clubs, multi-club owners, sporting directors, heads of recruitment, agents, investment committees, and other football enthusiasts.

Executive summary

- []BEBR Football turns the messy world of transfer talk into **clear, defensible price ranges** for players.
 - We blend **large, cleaned datasets** with a **proven ML model** trained on thousands of verified transfers.
 - Our models provide a **general fair value** for any player and, when useful, a **buyer-adjusted value** that reflects who is bidding and the league they buy from.
 - We publish values with **confidence bands** (best estimate + range) and explain in plain language **what moves the valuation up or down**.
 - Intricate calculation of historical value trends and cohort analyses reveal past movements in value as well as the **most likely future value trend**.
 - **Our clients** use []BEBR valuations to plan windows, set walk-away prices, support negotiations, optimise recruitment, and brief boards/owners with facts.
-

Why accurate valuations matter

Players are a club's biggest asset. Each year, billions of euros are spent on player transfer fees alone, and utilising accurate valuations of your own & prospective players is the main driver behind financial health. Accurate valuations support in several key aspects, including:

- **Negotiations:** Start from a fair, independent anchor instead of headlines or rumours.
 - **Efficiency enhancements:** Focus your scouting & recruitment efforts on players that are actually within your price range.
 - **Budgeting:** Know what a realistic fee looks like before you commit wages and amortisation.
 - **Risk:** Separate fair value from the final price; understand the *why* behind the number.
 - **Governance:** Easy-to-share valuation reports help align scouting, analysis, finance, the board and external regulators.
-

What we mean by “transfer value”

- A player's transfer value is the **fair price to be paid to break his contract** at a specific point in time.
 - A player's transfer value is distinct from “**market value**” (a player without a contract can have a market value but has no transfer value), **ask prices** (a club might simply not want to let a player go for his fair transfer value), and from **observed fee** (relatedly, bidding wars, or mismanagement might lead clubs to pay idiosyncratic premiums).
-

The []BEER method (in plain football terms)

The data we use

We have compiled a **dataset of more than 15,000 historical (paid) transfers** across more than 100 leagues and 10 years. These transfers, and the fees that were paid, have been manually cross-checked with news articles to filter out transfers in which the reported fees were inaccurate or inconsistent. To subsequently analyse these transfers, we collected **thousands of data points per transfer**, including:

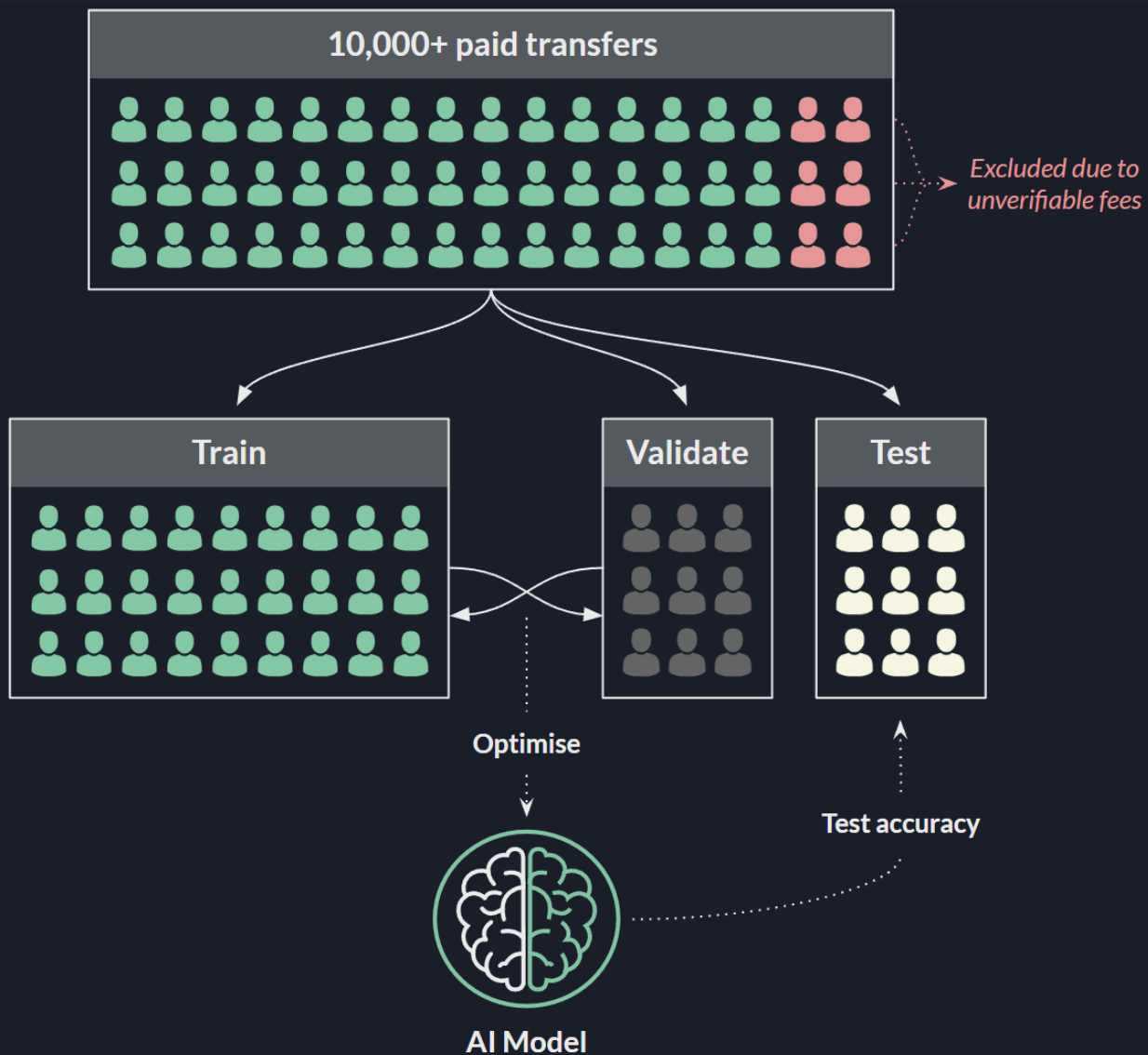
- 1) **Performance** – minutes played, passing accuracy, goals/assists, chance creation, ball progression, dribbling, defensive work and many others; all **league-adjusted** so statistics achieved in the Eredivisie are not treated the same as the Premier League.
- 2) **Player context** – age, injury history, career progression, online popularity, preferred foot, accolades, and other aspects.
- 3) **Club context** – who is buying/selling, typical spend levels, corridor effects between leagues, club ownership.
- 4) **Contract & timing** – months left on the current contract, (extension) clauses where known, reported salary, timing within the transfer window.
- 5) **Market signals** – comparable deals, fee inflation, positional scarcity, exchange rates.

How we turn data into fair valuations

- We train a **modern machine-learning model** on the 15,000+ verified transfers. In simple terms: an AI model learns how all the above factors have influenced transfer fees in the past.
- We output a **best estimate plus a range**. The range widens for riskier cases (e.g., limited minutes, recent major injury).
- When the selling- and (prospective) buying clubs are known, the model also produces a **buyer-adjusted value** (because clubs and leagues pay differently).

- Values are refreshed regularly and after each window; big news (major injuries, extensions) trigger updates.

Our transfer valuation system



What moves a transfer value (examples)

The AI model determines the fair value in each individual case, so **each variable's importance is unique to every transfer**. General positive and negative drivers of transfer value include:

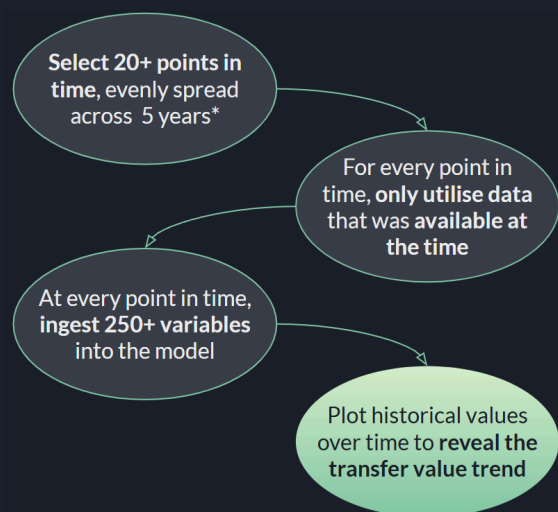
- **Up:** consistent starts at a higher level, longer contract, buying club with strong spend history, scarce profile, transfer window is nearly closing.
- **Down:** limited minutes, recent injury, short contract, seller under pressure.

Value trend & projections

Whereas a player's current value is a solid starting point, decision-making can be further optimised with accurate estimations of a player's historical value trend and the most likely future developments in his value. To determine these, we utilise an extended version of our Transfer value model.

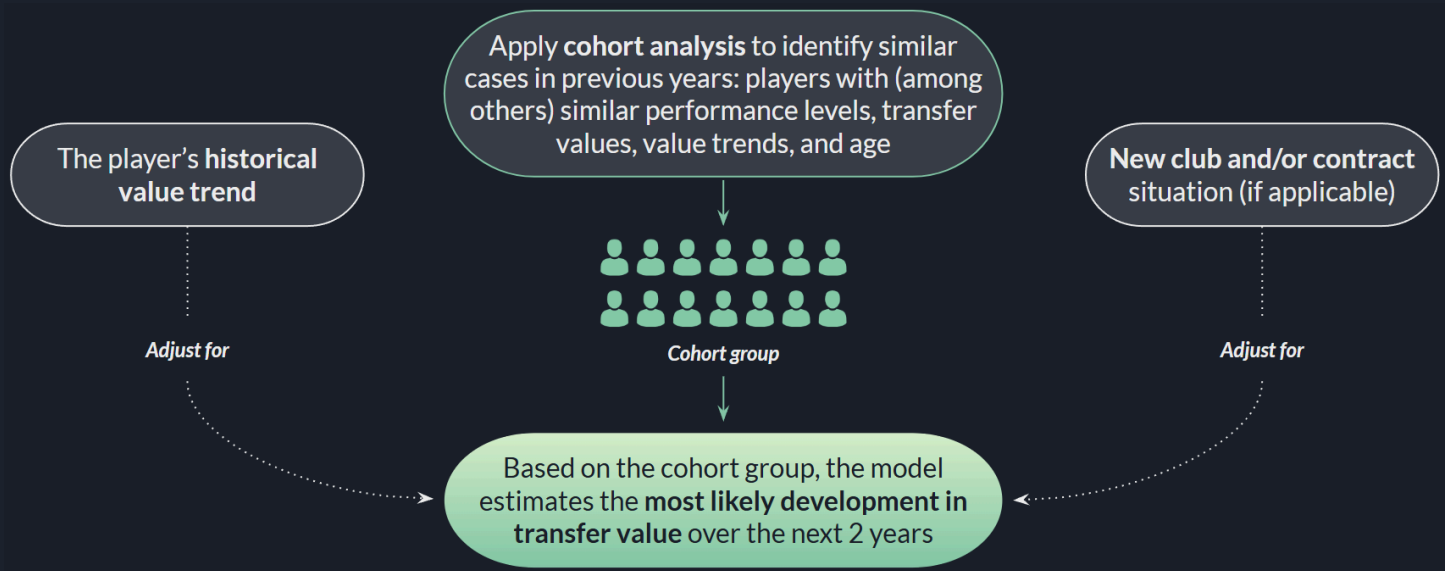
Historical value trend

To determine historical trend in a player's transfer value, we ingest all the relevant historical data and variables into our transfer value model. Our models select the player's active contract, age, performance, and all other variables **at each specific point in time**, in order to calculate what his transfer value was at that moment. This means that, for every single prediction within the historical value trend, we only use data that was available at that specific point in time.



Future value projections

By applying a **sophisticated cohort analysis** to identify players who have (historically) been in similar situations, and subsequently analysing how their transfer value developed over time, the **most likely development in transfer value of a player over the next 2 years** is modelled. Depending on the analysis, adjustments are made regarding the player's club (in case of an envisioned transfer) or contract duration (in case of an envisioned extension).



To eliminate the effect of active contract duration and intermediate contract extensions on the value trend, all players used in this analysis are simulated on a 3-year contract.

Accuracy & benchmarking

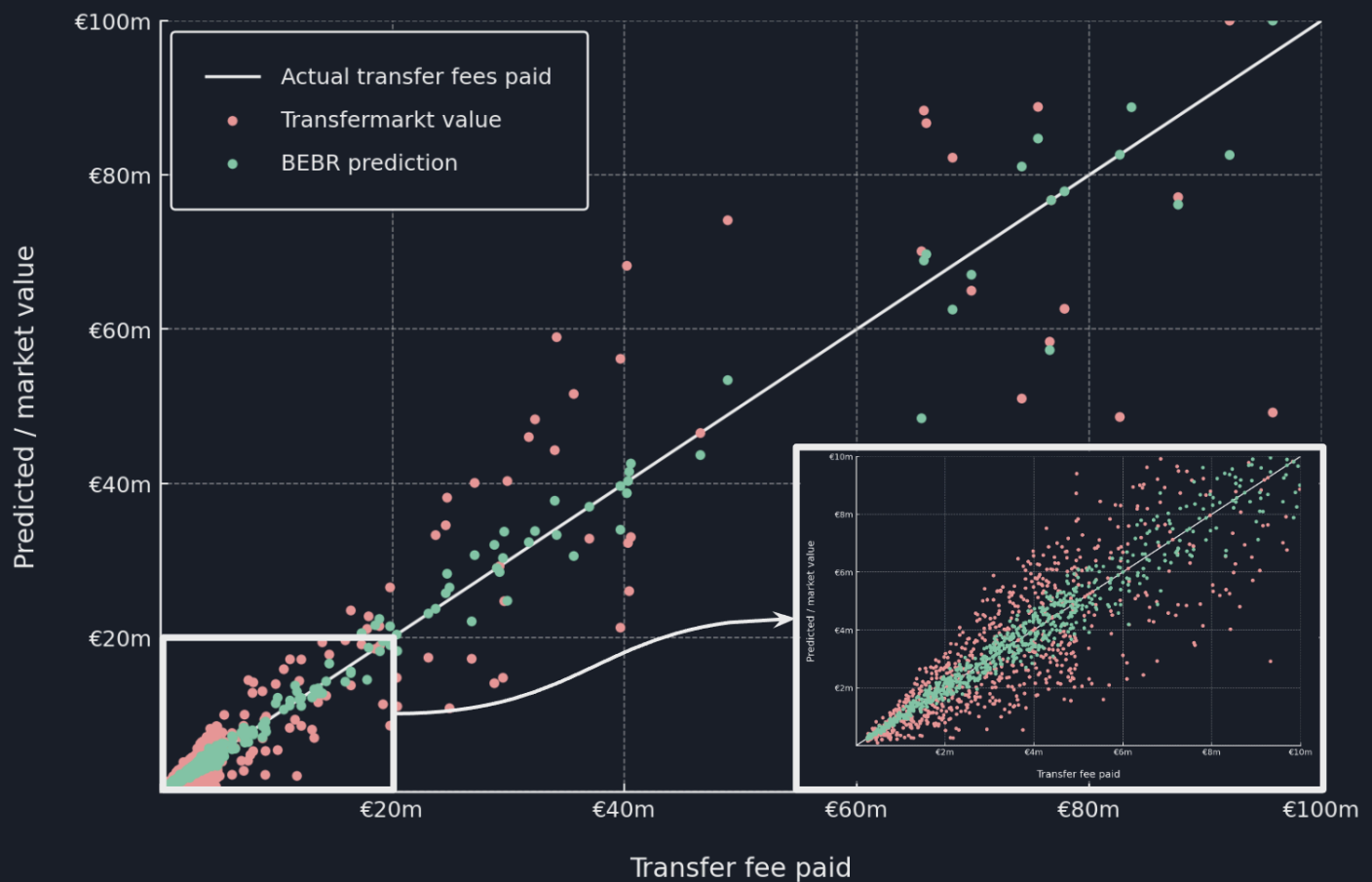
How we check ourselves: We test on transfers the model has never seen before, using verified fees only. We track **percentage error** and whether our prediction ranges **actually cover** the real fee.

Our competitors: Whilst the football industry becomes increasingly data-driven, many still rely on sources such as Transfermarkt to assess player valuations - despite the fact

that Transfermarkt themselves state that their valuations should not be used in transfer decision making.

How we compare: []BEBR's valuations show **meaningfully lower error** on like-for-like samples across major leagues. For instance, when comparing []BEBR valuations to Transfermarkt across a sample of 1,000 historical transfers, our model shows a **70% lower average error**.

Our valuation accuracy



1,000 randomly sampled, paid historical transfers, including the []BEBR and Transfermarkt valuations at that time.

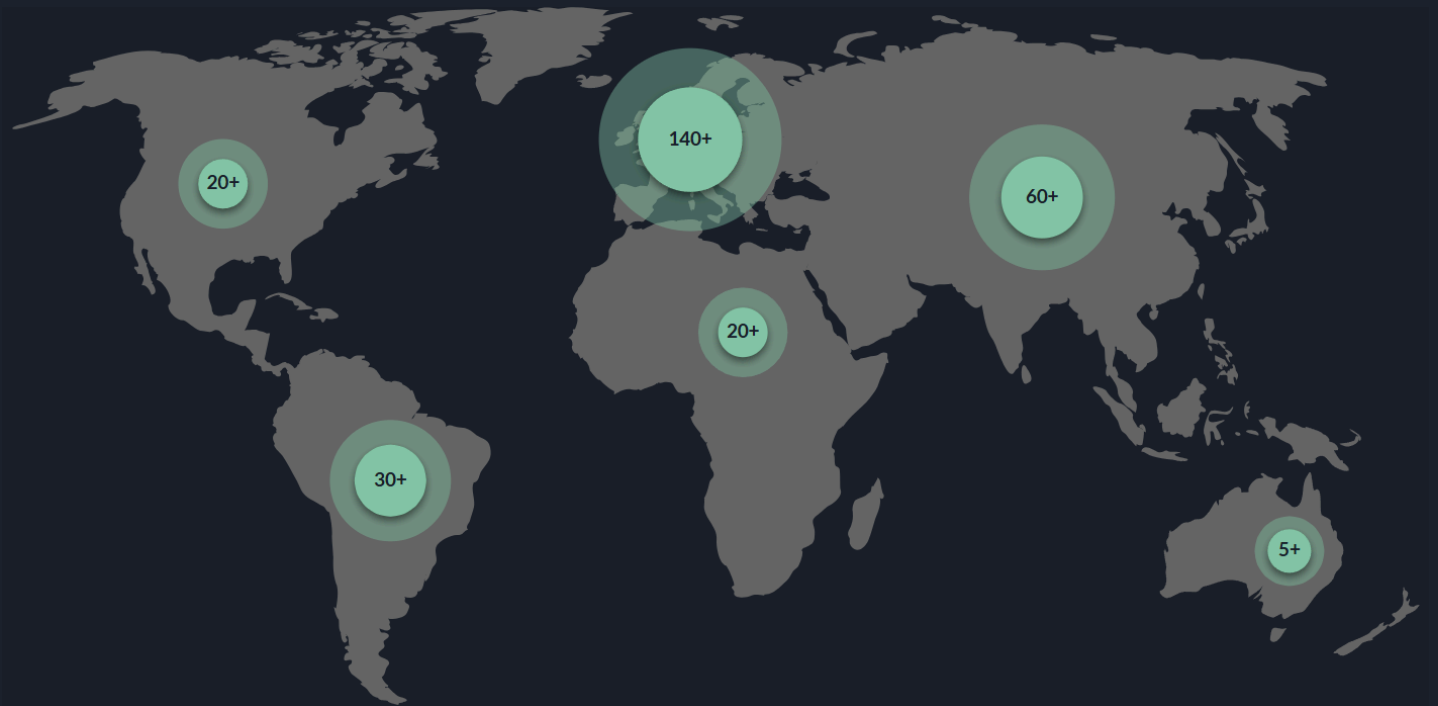
How clients use [iBEBR valuations

- **Window planning:** Shortlists with fair values and walk-away points. *Example:* “Bid up to €22–24m; if price rises above the P75 band, move to Option B.”
 - **Recruitment optimisation:** Using accurate player valuations early in the scouting funnel to ensure you focus your efforts on the right players.
 - **Negotiations:** Buyer-adjusted values and driver notes to support your case at the table.
 - **Sales strategy:** Identify likely buyers and set reserve prices; time the exit.
 - **Club acquisition:** Detailed insights into the value of the assets you are considering to acquire.
 - **PSR/FFP & board briefings:** Forward-looking value paths help plan amortisation and wages and explain decisions simply.
-

Data coverage & governance

- Valuations are highly context-driven. To ensure that we can present an accurate picture, our databases have **global coverage** across the vast majority of (inter)national leagues and cups.
- **Verified fees only** for training; database is curated by AI as well as manually to resolve or exclude transfers with conflicting reports.
- **Privacy & licensing respected;** client data is always kept isolated according to the GDPR and AVG Guidelines.

Global competition coverage



Includes national leagues, national cups, as well as international tournaments.

Limitations & responsible use

Whereas our approach delivers the most accurate transfer valuations available, the outputs of any valuation model should be treated as **decision support**, not as certainties.

- Sudden injuries, disputes or bidding wars can move the final fee outside any model.
- **Unforeseen club circumstances**, such as forced relegations or bankruptcies, can significantly alter the buying and selling price of players.
- Young players with sparse minutes or in lower-coverage leagues will have **wider ranges**.

Contact

For any questions regarding this whitepaper, our approach to modelling transfer values, or interested in a demonstration, feel free to contact us at info@bebr-football.nl.