



GOLDEN BOY INDEX

Developed by Football Benchmark, the Golden Boy Index methodology comprises three core pillars, accompanied by an additional "bonus" metric that rewards players who had exceptional performances in their national teams and/or UEFA club competitions. All three pillars adhere to a standardized scale ranging from 1 to 100. By calculating the weighted average of the individual values of each pillar and subsequently adjusting the outcome with the bonus metric, the Golden Boy Index ensures a comprehensive evaluation of player potential.

Player selection criteria

- **Age:** only players born on or after 1st January 2003 were considered. This means that no one who reaches the age of 21 during 2023 is included.
- **Leagues & clubs:** players from major first division leagues of Europe were considered. The line-up of leagues was determined based on their current UEFA country coefficient and the perceived depth of their talent pool. These leagues are Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine. These are the top 25 leagues based on UEFA coefficient as of May 2023. If a player's club gets relegated during the Golden Boy 2023 period, then the player shall be disqualified from selection.
- **Competition type:** senior, competitive club matches, and all national team matches (both senior and youth) were considered in the analysis.
- **Analytical period:** Football Benchmark considered matches played between the start of the 2022 FIFA World Cup (20th November 2022) and 4th June 2023.

Methodology

The Golden Boy Index methodology proposed by Football Benchmark consists of three main pillars and an additional composite "bonus" metric, that rewards players for their national team and UEFA club competitions performance. The three pillars all use the same, standardized scale (1-100); we take the weighted average of their individual values and then adjust the result with the bonus metric.

Pillar 1: Sporting performance

Measures the on-pitch performance of the player over the course of the analytical period in the competitions that are considered in the methodology. Several performance metrics are included, covering different aspects of the game (passing, tackling, scoring efficiency, creativity, etc.). Players in different positions are judged by a different set of metrics and different weights are applied (e.g., scoring goals is much more important for strikers than for defenders in this framework).

It is important to note that the rating does not differentiate between different competitions; all on-pitch actions are assessed the same way, regardless of what competition they were performed in. As a result, the sporting performance rating must always be explained in conjunction with the club strength index (third pillar), because that one evaluates the quality level of the player's team. When taking the combination of the two pillars, good players in good teams will always be at the top.

Pillar 2: Playing Time

In addition to ability, availability is also very important when measuring the importance of a player to their team. In the second pillar we calculate the percentage of minutes the player was on the pitch for out of all possible minutes when playing for their club during the analytic period. This implies that players who are injured for a long period or are not regularly picked by their club for the starting line-up are unlikely to make it into the top 100.

Pillar 3: Club Strength

The relative strength of the player's team is another crucial factor. If two footballers played a similar percentage of available minutes with roughly the same performance level, then the one who did it for a stronger club will receive a higher Golden Boy rating. To support this calculation, based on a Club Strength Index we measure the quality level of clubs across a wide range of leagues. If someone played for multiple clubs during the analytical period, then they receive the weighted average of the Club Strength Indexes (weighted by minutes played).

Bonus metric:

After taking the weighted average (blend) of the three main pillars, top players are rewarded with a further modification, made up of two aspects. The final applied bonus is a sum of two aspects:

- **First aspect - National team performance:** those who played a lot of senior, or youth national team matches over the course of their career so far receive a minor bonus in the form of a multiplier. The relative strength of the national teams is also considered. Youth national team appearances are "discounted", with different discounts if they have played for Under-15 and/or Under-23.
- **Second aspect - UCC performance:** similarly, those who played a lot of minutes in UEFA club competitions (UCC) in the analysed period are also rewarded due to the prestige of the competitions. As the level of the three main tournaments differs, we "discounted" the minutes played in the UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League compared to UEFA Champions League playing time.