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Has the NFL's Rooney Rule Efforts "Leveled the Field" for African American Head Coach Candidates?

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Abstract

Madden (2004) and Madden and Ruther (2009) provide evidence that African American National Football League (NFL) head coaches significantly out-performed their counterparts between 1990 and 2002. They conclude that this evidence is consistent with the hypothesis that African Americans had to be better coaches than white counterparts in order to be hired as a head coach in the NFL. In 2002, the NFL promulgated the Rooney Rule requiring NFL teams to interview a minority candidate when hiring a new head coach, as well as other affirmative efforts. This paper analyzes the performance advantage of African American head coaches that has been eliminated over the time since the Rooney Rule's affirmative efforts have been in effect. The paper also examines racial differentials in performance in other NFL coaching positions and finds that white coaches were less affected by Rooney Rule affirmative efforts, finding no similar time performance differentials by race.

Keywords

Affirmative action, African American, Coaching, Defensive coordinator, Disciplinary action, Football, Head coaches, Hiring disadvantage, NFL, Offensive coordinator, Performance advantages, Race, Racial differentials, Regression analysis, Rooney Rule, Sports