The impact of Nike Project 40/Generation Adidas players on Major League Soccer

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Created in 1997, the Nike Project40/Generation Adidas program encourages soccer players to leave college early to sign professional contracts with Major League Soccer teams, guaranteeing them a 3-year salary with two one-year options. In theory, if the best players are being chosen to this program each year, they should be outperforming those who are drafted to MLS teams but are not a part of the program. By comparing the top draft picks within and outside the program, researchers hoped to determine whether Nike/Adidas players were having a different impact on the league than their counterparts. Results showed that, of 15 statistical categories analyzed, only three resulted in a statistically significant difference between groups. Though Nike/Adidas players were outperforming players who were not a part of the program, they were not doing so at a rate to justify the claim that they have a greater impact on the league.

Journal: Journal of Sport Administration & Supervision, 4(1)
Year: 2012
Keywords: Major League Soccer, Nike Project 40, Generation Adidas, MLS SuperDraft