

How to get from pitch to plinth: the statistics of stadium statues

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From the beginning of the 1990s, the number of statues of English football heroes has risen dramatically. Over 50 football players, managers or chairmen have been, or are soon to be depicted by statues inside or adjacent to the grounds they once performed at. This includes the unveiling of a statue in honour of Leeds United's Don Revie at Elland Road on 5th May 2012. Yet it is still the case that, even amongst the very finest exponents of their sport, relatively few players are honoured in this way.

What are the defining characteristics of stadium statue subjects? Could these extend beyond mere performance? Do any of career era, loyalty, locality, longevity, celebrity or sympathy play a part?

Chris Stride, from the University of Sheffield, will be illustrating how statistics can help to explain which football players are honoured with a statue, and comparing the trends and influences found with the more established tradition in sculptures of US baseball players.