# A closer look to the defensive ratings in the EuroMillions Basketball League (Belgium) 2017-2018
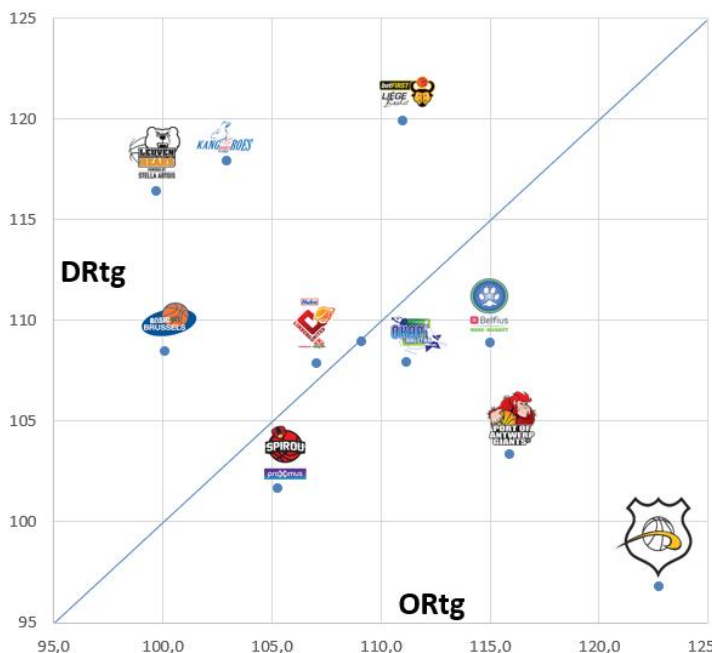
## Pascal Meurs

Except for three delayed game because of the European club competitions, one quarter of the Euromillions Basketball League 2017-2018 is finished. Every team played each opponent one time, with three more meetings to come. Time for a first team analysis of the stats from a coach's point of view. The source for this report of all traditional stats is the Euromillions Basketball League website.

By calculating more advanced and meaningful numbers, I want to make some conclusions about the playing styles, weaknesses and strengths of all teams in the league. Therefore, it is important to look beyond the traditional stats and to look at the numbers that are statistically more relevant.

To give an *example*: in the press one reads often that Limburg United has a weak defense because week after week they allow many points. Before making conclusions like that, one also has to look to the pace a team plays. It is logic that when a team plays run-and-gun basketball with a lot of possessions every game, they score AND allow more points that a team that often walks up the ball. In fact, it appears that Limburg United so far played the fastest basketball of the whole league, they are ranked #1 in pace (=number of possessions per 40 minutes). Therefore people are likely to be too pessimistic about their defense, but also too optimistic about their offense… To analyze the defense and offense of each team, it is far more correct to look at the points allowed and scored per 100 possessions.

|  | Pace |
|-----|------|
| LIM | 76,1 |
| CHA | 75,9 |
| LEU | 75,4 |
| LIE | 75,0 |
| MON | 73,3 |
| WIL | 72,7 |
| ANT | 72,4 |
| BRU | 71,9 |
| AAL | 71,2 |
| OOS | 70,1 |



|  | ORtg | DRtg | NetRtg |
|------|-------|--------|--------|
| OOS | 122,8 | 96,8 | 26,0 |
| ANT | 115,9 | 103,33 | 12,6 |
| MON | 115,0 | 108,88 | 6,1 |
| CHA | 105,3 | 101,65 | 3,6 |
| AAL | 111,2 | 107,92 | 3,3 |
| LIM | 107,1 | 107,88 | -0,8 |
| BRU | 100,1 | 108,48 | -8,3 |
| LIE | 111,0 | 119,92 | -8,9 |
| WIL | 103,0 | 117,91 | -15,0 |
| LEU | 99,7 | 116,38 | -16,6 |

**ORtg** = points scored per 100 possessions
**DRtg** = points allowed per 100 possessions
**NetRtg** = ORtg – DRtg
**Pace** = number of possessions per 40 mins

It is remarkable that Oostende, without any doubt the best team of the league on both ends of the court since several years, has by far the slowest pace. The fastest team (Limburg) has on average 6 possessions more than Oostende. If these diffences seem minimal, one has to realize that so far this season 35% (!!) of all games were decided within two possessions of the game!

Taking a closer look to the defensive ratings of all teams (DRtg = points allowed per 100 possessions), learns that Oostende is by far the only team that can keep its opponent below 100 points (per 100 possessions). All teams are ranked in the graph according to their defensive strenght:

| | DEFENSE | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | DRtg | eFG% | TOV% | DR% | FT/FGA |
| OOS | 96,8 | 0,45 | 13,6 | 77,0 | 0,22 |
| CHA | 101,6 | 0,50 | 16,1 | 70,8 | 0,31 |
| ANT | 103,3 | 0,52 | 16,6 | 75,5 | 0,24 |
| LIM | 107,9 | 0,56 | 17,6 | 74,2 | 0,28 |
| AAL | 107,9 | 0,54 | 12,5 | 80,3 | 0,24 |
| BRU | 108,5 | 0,53 | 13,7 | 73,5 | 0,24 |
| MON | 108,9 | 0,52 | 13,6 | 71,9 | 0,38 |
| LEU | 116,4 | 0,59 | 14,4 | 73,9 | 0,32 |
| WIL | 117,9 | 0,55 | 12,4 | 78,4 | 0,29 |
| LIE | 119,9 | 0,61 | 15,6 | 73,5 | 0,25 |

*DRtg* = points allowed per 100 possessions
*eFG%* = effective field goal percentage (which takes into account extra value of scored 3pt) of the opponent
*TOV%* = number of turnovers per 100 possessions by the opponent
*DR%* = Defensive rebound percentage is an estimate of the percentage of available defensive rebounds a team grabbed
*FT/FGA* = number of free throws per field goal attempt by the opponent

When analyzing deeper what teams are doing well in defense, one could rely – based on the boxscores of the game - on these four factors:

**1. Effective field goal percenage of the opponent eFG%**
A good team defense forces the other team in a bad shot selection and a lot of forced/contested shots and consequently a lower FG%.
> *Best team:* ***Oostende*** *limits its opponents to an eFG% of 45%*
> *Worst team: Liege 61%*

**2. Turnover Rate of the opponent TOV%**
The execution of a good defensive gameplan forces the opponent to turnovers. TOV% is the number of turnovers by the opponent per 100 possessions.
> *Best team:* ***Limburg*** *forces their opponent to 17,6 turnovers every 100 possessions. Challenging their opponents in playing a higher pace then usually is definitely an important factor for Limburg in this surprising result.*
> *Worst team: Opponents of Willebroek commit "only" 12,4 turnovers per 100 possessions*

### 3. Defensive rebound percentage DR%

Controlling the boards on the defensive end is an important factor in limiting the score of the opponent, which takes away any second chance points.  Instead of looking to "defensive rebounds" as an absolute number, it is more precize to compare the percentage of boards which ended up in the hands of the defensive team.

*Best team*:  **Aalstar** *takes in defense 80,3 % of all rebound opportunities*
*Worst team*:  *Charleroi 70,8%*

### 4. Free throws provoked by the opponent FT/FGA

A fourth factor is the number of free throws a team gives to the opponent.  A bad defensive team often ends up in bad situations where a shooting foul is the only way to prevent an easy basket.

*Best team*:  *Opponents of* **Oostende** *provoke per 100 field goal attempts only 22 FT*
*Worst team*:  *Opponents of Mons provoke per 100 field goal attempts 38 FT*

Later on this season, I will focus more detailed on the offensive ratings of all teams of the league, allthough I do want to share one remarkable fact.  Boosted by the successess of the Golden State Warriors in the NBA, the importance of the three point shot has increased enormously over the past couple of years in all leagues over the world. It is however remarkable that the two teams that have the highest scoring percentage behind the arc (#1 Oostende 46,4% and #2 Mons 43,9%) are the two teams that shoot the fewest threepointers.  Respectively 32,2% (Oostende) and 30,5% (Mons) of all field goal attemps are behind the arc, while a team like Liege settles in 43,2% of all attempts for a threepoint shot.  Good offensive teams are often defined by a good shot selection, while team that struggle with the ball often fail to create good shots and settle too often for (contested and rushed) shots behind the arc.

| | 3pt% | 3PA/FA |
|---|---|---|
| OOS | 0,464 | 0,322 |
| MON | 0,439 | 0,305 |
| AAL | 0,402 | 0,391 |
| ANT | 0,392 | 0,340 |
| WIL | 0,371 | 0,352 |
| LEU | 0,358 | 0,330 |
| LIE | 0,355 | 0,432 |
| CHA | 0,338 | 0,404 |
| LIM | 0,330 | 0,345 |
| BRU | 0,266 | 0,343 |

## Author

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He has been coaching at the highest level in The Netherlands (BSW Weert), France (Arras women) and Belgium (DBC Houthalen women). As a FIBA-instructor, he shared his knowledge in Qatar, Tunisia, Albania and spent two months in the coaching staff of NCAA1 St-Joseph's Hawks.

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