



Evaluating the Predictive Accuracy of FIFA/EAFC 25: A Comparative Analysis of Video Game Simulations and Real-World Premier League Match Outcomes

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Abstract

This study evaluates the predictive accuracy of FIFA/EAFC 25 video game simulations by comparing them to actual Premier League match outcomes from the 2024-25 season. Despite FIFA's sophisticated player rating system and extensive real-world data integration through partnerships with Opta and a network of over 6,000 data reviewers, limited research has examined whether the game accurately simulates match results when controlling for team composition and tactics. We analyzed 30 Premier League matches involving Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool, Chelsea, and Manchester City, recreating each match five times in FIFA 25 using identical formations and lineups. Results revealed that FIFA achieved only 35.6% prediction accuracy, marginally better than random chance (33.3%). The simulation systematically underpredicted goal scoring, averaging 1.21 goals per match compared to 3.83 in real matches, representing a 68% discrepancy. FIFA incorrectly predicted the match winner in 21.5% of cases, predicted draws when matches had winners 26.2% of the time, and predicted winners when matches were draws 16.8% of the time. These findings demonstrate that FIFA's gameplay prioritizes competitive balance and user experience over realistic match simulation, making it unsuitable as a predictive or analytical tool for actual football outcomes despite its cultural influence on fan perceptions of player quality.

Keywords: FIFA, video game simulation accuracy, football analytics, Premier League prediction, sports data analysis

I. Introduction

Do you know that players with the best statistics could not build the best team in the world? In the game (FIFA/EAFC), the statistics assigned to players control their attributes, and sometimes they do not accurately reflect how the players play in real life. Because of this, there is a need to find out if the team can accurately benefit from players using tactics given from the game and compare it with the real-life performance of the same team we used.

While football has been around for centuries, statistical analysis and the use of statistics that contribute to football have been used more frequently in the 21st century. More importantly for making player attributes in a game for FIFA/EAFC. We can see that FIFA/EAFC player attributes that lead to an overall rating of the players really matter to them, as some even state that they will do special moves or do things in a real game that will boost their attributes. Not only that but annually most teams post a video of the players reacting to their rating which shows that FIFA/EAFC has good credibility with its statistics and analysis of players. FIFA/EAFC is an online football game that has a lot of different modes where

you can play against your friends online or offline, manage a team, play as a real life or made up player, build your dream team with players you prefer to have and even make a football club with your friends and play against other groups of friends doing the same.

A problem emerges where FIFA is starting to become less realistic because of how the system of the game has been designed. FIFA has a lot of errors and flaws, which affect the realism of the game, such as player ratings not being consistent each week and a lot of bugs in the gameplay. With these problems FIFA will not be the most realistic football game there is to play.

The research aims to show how accurately FIFA currently represents real-life football. The game will be assessed on how well a team from the game will work with the given resources from the game. Not only this but figure out how FIFA is not realistic in other metrics.

For this research paper we will be mainly focussing on the sports industry, specifically football. The focus is on observing the results from European Leagues primarily during the 2024-25 time period. This research will be helpful to those who are trying to understand how statistics affect how we look at football players, teams and more. The research done will introduce methods on how statistics are not reliable during this time of football and address how the unreliability of statistics not following with each game will affect views of football.

II. Methodology

This study employed a comparative analysis approach to evaluate the accuracy of FIFA/E AFC 25 match simulations against real-world football match outcomes from the 2024-25 Premier League season. We analyzed 10 of the latest matches from the 2024-25 season from each team. The teams being Tottenham Hotspurs, Chelsea and Liverpool.

III. Literature Review

Currently, there is some known information regarding FIFA's accuracy to real life statistics. These sources will be able to make the topics more clear as they provide good starting ground to the research of trying to fill in the missing gaps of these already completed experiments. Some of the experiments include showing how FIFA's ratings are made and how FIFA's statistics might be a source to predict the future of football.

In FIFA, the overall rating is calculated through a complex system where each visible 6 attributes on the card stems to smaller, individual, and more detailed attributes. Each has a different amount of importance depending on the player's position. For example, a center-back's overall rating will focus primarily on the defensive metrics like standing tackle, sliding tackle, defensive awareness, heading accuracy, strength, interceptions and aggression. All these smaller ratings will all sum to 1 bigger rating that combines everything into one attribute. Using a real-world example, Virgil Van Dijk, in FIFA 20 his rating shows how these smaller numbers will make an intermediate score(87.66). This number will then be rounded up to the nearest whole number to create his overall rating, however he still got a rating of 90 in the game. The process of making a rating requires a large scouting branch, which is why EA has to employ more than 10 thousand people to scout. Some jobs include producers, data reviewers and scouts, who collect data of players from over 700 football teams across 30 leagues each year.

This system still faces problems, especially when players' ratings are not parallel with their performance in the game and in the real world. For example, Thomas Muller has low pace and low shooting but still has a high rating. The reliance on the ratings is still debated and is still not the highest point of accuracy yet.

The article highlights that FIFA creates their in-game player ratings on a foundation from real-world performance data such as goals, assists, passing accuracy, clearances, interception, dribbling success. In real-world professional football, analysts and scouts identically follow these metrics and other more advanced metrics like expected goals(xG) and expected assists(xA). These real world metrics are the main objective performance metrics used to help scout and analyze.

In the game, FIFA mirrors real-life player performances by interpreting actual match data, like passing accuracy or dribbling success, into correlation with in-game attributes. In-game these attributes are classed as “passing” and “vision”, making sure that in-game players will reflect how they play in real life. However, unlike professional analytics which prioritizes strategic insight and predicting potential, the game adjusts so the attributes can be more balanced and improve user experience. So while the conversion from real stats to in game may seem realistic, FIFA gives a more enjoyable football game simulation.

In conclusion, FIFA includes real-world data into player’s overall ratings. The research currently overlooks how the game adapts to simplify and make a better gaming experience. Most studies focus on professional clubs’ data usage, which creates a gap in understanding how real-life statistics are actually correlated to the one in the game. The study will address the gap by comparing professional football’s analytical methods with FIFA’s rating system.

IV. Methods

4.1 Sample Selection

The simulation used 30 Premier League matches from November 2024 to January 2025 using a focused sampling approach. The sample included matches involving four major teams to track performance patterns while assessing FIFA's predictive validity. This selection provided variety in opponent strengths and competitive matchups. It will help show the predictability of real life matches and if it does along with what FIFA says.

4.2 Data Collection

Real-world match data was collected from official Premier League sources, including final scores, team formations, and match statistics. For each match, this is what was recorded:

- Match date and teams
- Final score
- Team formations
- Man of the Match data

4.3 FIFA Simulation Protocol

Each match was recreated in FIFA/EAFC 25 using standardized settings:

- Game Mode: Kick-Off Exhibition
- Difficulty: World Class
- Match Duration: 6-minute halves
- Weather: Clear (standardized)

Each match was simulated five times to account for the game's inherent randomness. The final score of each simulation was recorded for comparison with real results. To make it as precise as possible, the simulations also copied the same team players and formations as the ones used in real life.

4.4 Data Analysis

After the data had been collected, the calculations for some attributes were made, analyzing:

- Overall accuracy rates
- Team-specific prediction success
- Goal scoring patterns
- Types of prediction errors

V. Results

5.1 Overall Prediction Accuracy

FIFA's overall prediction accuracy was 35.6%, only marginally better than the 33.3% expected from random chance. Individual simulation runs showed minimal variation:

- Simulation 1: 36.7%
- Simulation 2: 37.9% (highest)
- Simulation 3: 36.7%
- Simulation 4: 36.7%
- Simulation 5: 30.0% (lowest)

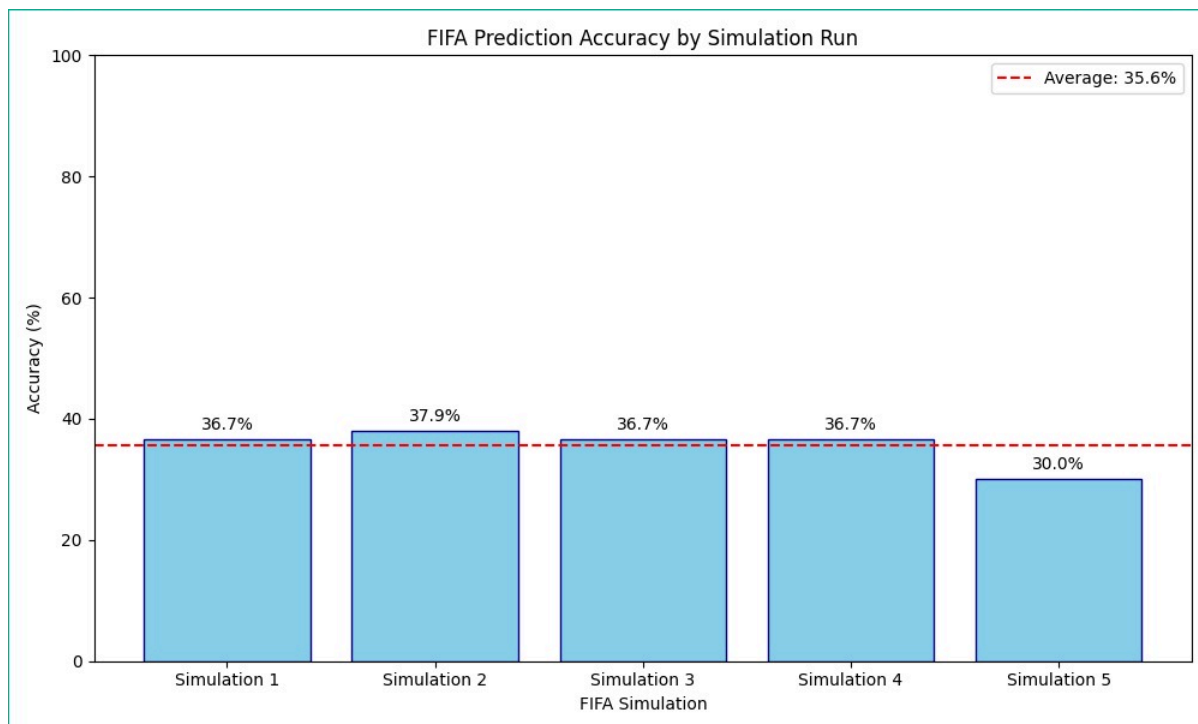


Figure 1: Prediction accuracy by each simulation run.

The bar chart shows that FIFA's accuracy across the five simulation runs is consistently low, ranging between 30% and 38%. The first four simulations are almost identical, all around 36–38%, which indicates that FIFA's match engine produces similar outcomes even when repeated multiple times. Simulation 5 dips to 30%, but the overall average accuracy remains 35.6%, shown by the red line. This consistency suggests that while FIFA is stable in its predictions, it is consistently inaccurate and struggles to match real-life results reliably.

5.2 Goal Scoring Patterns

A significant discrepancy emerged in goal totals:

- Average goals in real matches: 3.83
- Average goals in FIFA simulations: 1.21

FIFA underpredicted goals by 68%, suggesting the game's mechanics favor defensive play over the high-scoring nature of real Premier League matches.

5.3 Prediction Error Analysis

FIFA's predictions showed specific patterns of error:

- Correct predictions: 35.6%
- Wrong winner predicted: 21.5%
- Predicted draw when match had winner: 26.2%
- Predicted winner when match was draw: 16.8%

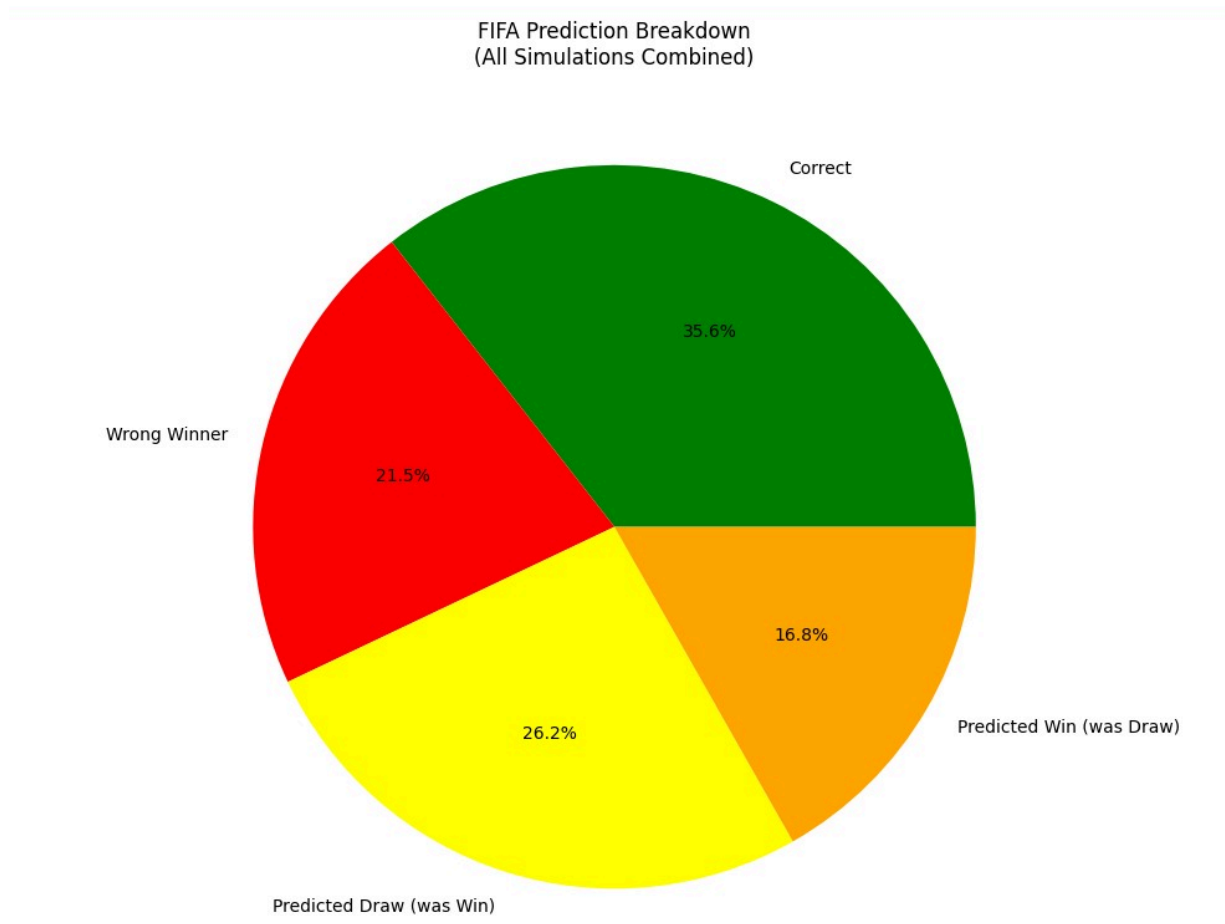


Figure 2: Pie chart representing FIFA prediction of all simulation outcome

The pie chart highlights how FIFA’s predictions were distributed across all matches, revealing that only 35.6% were completely correct. A large portion of the errors came from draws, with 26.2% of results being cases where FIFA

predicted a draw but the real match had a winner, and 16.8% where FIFA predicted a win but the real match was a draw. Another 21.5% of predictions had the wrong winner entirely. This breakdown shows that draws and close games are FIFA's biggest weaknesses, as the game often misjudges match balance and struggles to handle unpredictable real game outcomes.

5.3 Team-Specific Results

Prediction accuracy varied slightly by team:

- Liverpool: 38.2%
- Tottenham: 36.7%
- Chelsea: 35.2%
- Manchester

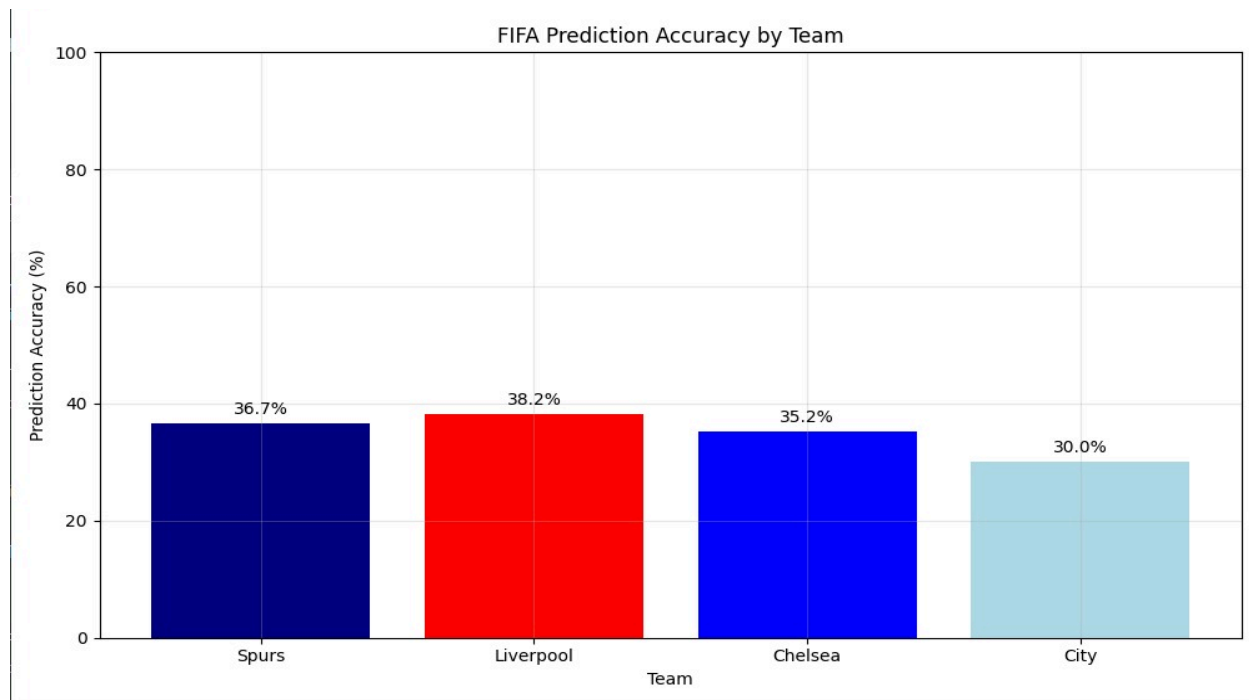


Figure 3: Bar chart showing Team prediction accuracy by FIFA game

The team accuracy chart shows that FIFA's prediction performance varies slightly between clubs, but remains low across the board. Liverpool had the highest accuracy at 38.2%, followed closely by Spurs at 36.7% and Chelsea at 35.2%. Manchester City had the lowest accuracy at just 30%, which is surprising given their strength in real life. This suggests that FIFA tends to overestimate strong teams, predicting wins in matches where they actually drew or lost. Overall, no team reached even 40% accuracy, showing that FIFA struggles evenly across all clubs. Despite Manchester City's high FIFA ratings, the game showed lowest accuracy for their matches.

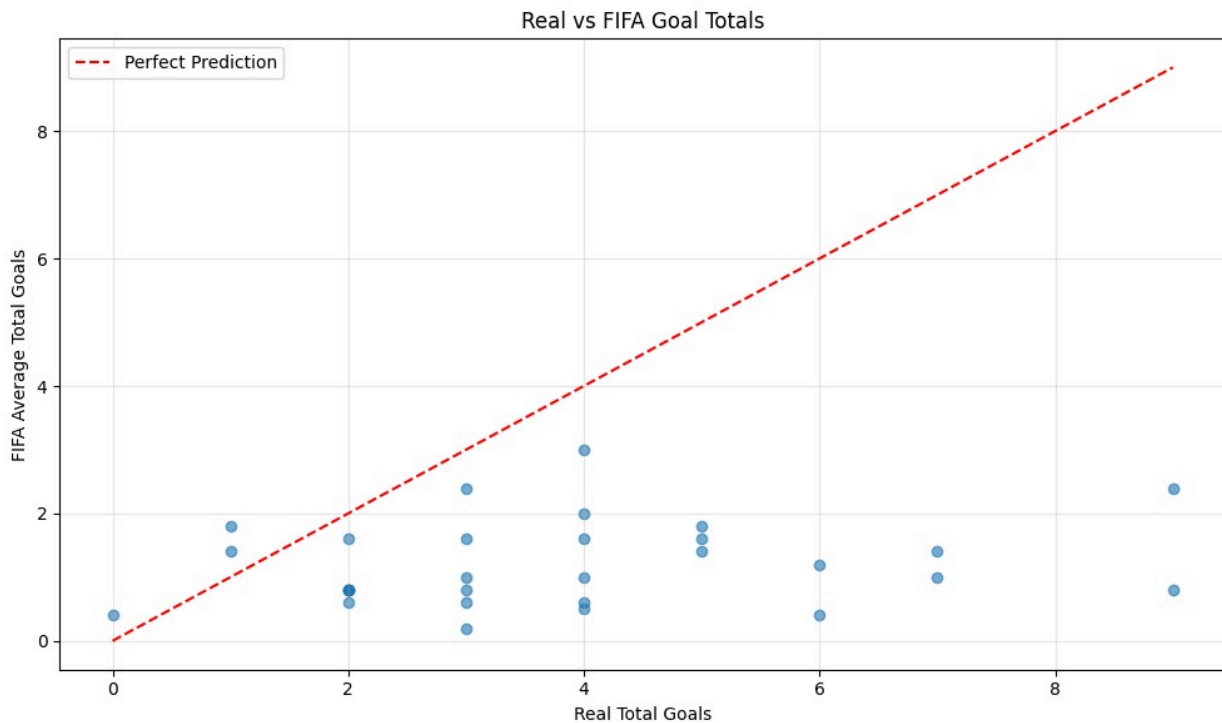


Figure 4: Scatter graph, with perfect fit line showing Real goals vs FIFA goals Tally

The scatter plot comparing real-life total goals to FIFA's average simulated goals reveals that FIFA consistently underestimates how many goals are actually scored. Most points fall below the red perfect-prediction line, especially in high-scoring games where real totals reach 6, 7, or even 9 goals, while FIFA simulations remain much lower. For lower-scoring matches, FIFA predictions cluster around 0–2 goals, showing limited variation. This pattern indicates that FIFA's match engine avoids extreme scorelines and cannot replicate the unpredictability or intensity of real-life high-scoring matches.

VI. Discussion

This study reveals that FIFA/E AFC 25 fails to accurately predict real-world match outcomes, performing only marginally better than random chance. Several key findings warrant discussion:

6.1 Limited Predictive Validity

The 35.6% accuracy rate demonstrates that FIFA's sophisticated rating system and gameplay mechanics do not translate into reliable match predictions. This challenges assumptions about the game's realism and its potential use as an analytical tool.

6.2 Systematic Goal Underprediction

The dramatic difference between real (3.83) and simulated (1.21) goal averages reveals a fundamental mismatch between FIFA's gameplay and actual football. This suggests the game prioritizes defensive balance and low-scoring matches for competitive gameplay rather than realistic score lines.

6.3 Implications for FIFA's Rating System

While FIFA incorporates extensive real-world data through its network of scouts and data reviewers, our results indicate this data does not produce accurate match simulations. The game's need to balance gameplay, ensure competitive matches, and create an enjoyable user experience appears to override realistic outcome generation.

6.4 Comparison with Literature

Our findings align with previous research questioning FIFA's predictive capabilities. The NYC Data Science Academy (2022) found only 17% of players achieved their FIFA-predicted potential, while FIFPlay noted FIFA's poor record in predicting league top scorers. Our study extends these findings to match-level predictions.

VII. Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged:

1. Sample size of 30 matches, while substantial, represents a small portion of the season
2. Focus on four teams may not represent all Premier League dynamics
3. AI-controlled teams cannot replicate human tactical decisions
4. Standardized weather conditions don't reflect real match variety

VIII. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that FIFA/E AFC 25, despite its sophisticated player rating system and extensive real-world data integration, cannot accurately predict football match outcomes. With only 35.6% prediction accuracy and systematic underestimation of goal scoring, FIFA proves unsuitable as a tool for match prediction or tactical analysis.

The findings highlight the fundamental tension between creating an enjoyable, balanced video game and accurately simulating real football. While FIFA successfully engages millions of players worldwide and influences how fans perceive player abilities, it should not be considered a reliable representation of actual match dynamics.

Future research could explore whether other football simulations perform better, or investigate specific gameplay mechanics that contribute to FIFA's low predictive accuracy. Additionally, examining whether human-controlled matches produce more realistic results could provide insights into the role of AI limitations.

For the football analytics community, this study reinforces that sophisticated graphics and detailed player data do not guarantee realistic simulation. Real football's complexity, unpredictability, and high-scoring nature remain beyond the reach of current gaming technology, at least within the constraints of creating an enjoyable gaming experience.

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