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Semi-Targeted All-Pay Auctions: A Partial Exclusion Principle

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Highlights

- This paper studies the effects of a specific affirmative action policy in complete information all-pay auctions when players differ in ability.
- The contest organiser splits the overall prize of the competition into a targeted and an untargeted prize, where the latter is exclusively for disadvantaged (low-ability) agents.
- We consider a setting with one high-ability and two low-ability contestants and fully characterise equilibrium.
- Our main result is that establishing a targeted prize enhances competition, so that even a designer who is not interested in affirmative action per se might decide to establish it.
- We also relate our results to the exclusion principle by Baye, Kovenock and de Vries (1993).

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