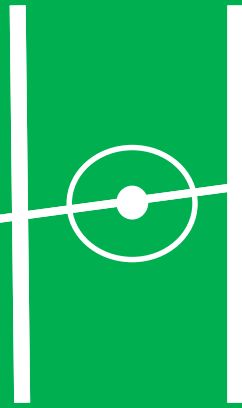


February 2021 Issue 10

The



Halfway Line



# The Invincibles



This issue we feature unbeaten teams across Europe! Plus lots more including:

- Comeback Kings
- Young Footballers
- Unsung Heroes
- And all your usual favourites



# Editors note: Pre-match pep talk



We took a leaf out of the Bundesliga and gave ourselves a nice long Winter break but delighted to be back.

Happy New Year to all our readers. 2020 felt a bit like Derby County's 2007-08 season in the Premier League, frustrating, lots of lows, in fact not very good at all and in the end pretty close to pointless. Here is hoping 2021 is a lot more like the Arsenal season of 2003-04, when the 'Invincibles' went through the entire league campaign undefeated. We feature that achievement in this issue, along with profiling other European clubs who themselves have gone through seasons without having lost a game. Remarkable successes, that deserve such recognition.

A New Year and so new year resolutions no doubt. I will share mine with you;

- Not to fall asleep on the sofa watching Match of the Day on a Saturday night
- Stop spending so much time and money on the Classic Football shirts website
- Start a fantasy football team and actually last longer than 2 weeks before jacking it in

The stark reality is not one of these will be achieved, and so in that case I'll pick focusing more time on The Halfway Line and make that a realistic resolution.

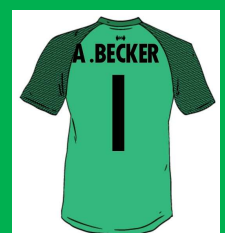
In this issue we look at some teenagers who have broken records by playing first team football for clubs in the big 6 European leagues, and highlight some worldwide records by the youngest footballers. When I was 15 years old the names I would be kicking about with were my mates Lambert, Butler, Diamond and White and that would make up my 5 aside team. Sadly for my football career, these were tobacco and alcohol goods as opposed to defenders and midfielders..

Now everyone loves a good comeback, like Dirty Den in EastEnders, but when it comes to football there are some unforgettable recoveries we've witnessed and we look at some of these in this issue that I think you'll enjoy.

And it may be a New Year, but we've still got all the old favourites for you to flick through as you struggle to get over your failed dry January, so put on the football socks you got for Christmas, put away the orange winter football that you've been playing with in the snow and grab a nice hot Bovril to warm the cockles and of course, most importantly, enjoy.



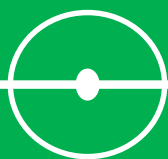
Alisson Becker – The world's 2<sup>nd</sup> most expensive goalkeeper when moving from Roma to Liverpool in 2018 (Behind Kepa Arrizabalaga)



# The Halfway Line Up

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Clint Dempsey – The highest goal scoring American in Premier League history





# How good were they?

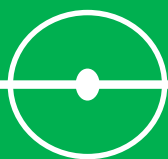
## Unsung Heroes..

We have and we no doubt will continue to wax lyrical about players such as Ronaldo, Messi and Romario for their goal scoring supremacy, the Zidane's, Baggio's and Bergkamp's for their creativity and flair and even the defensive exploits of Maldini, Cannavaro and Vidic that see all these players get back page coverage.

What about the unsung heroes of the game? The players that don't get the headlines, the awards and the image rights from shirt sales with their names on the back. What about giving some praise to the dependable players of the game, who perhaps despite all their successes and consistent 8/10 performances they don't get the recognition or praise they deserve.

Time to put that right at The Halfway Line, and so we've picked a selection of players we feel have somewhat gone through their professional careers and have not had the pats on their back for what they've accomplished.

You'll know the players we've picked, that is not in doubt but it's their career particulars that we want to highlight to you and we can then doff our caps to them and what they brought to the beautiful game.



Lucio – Champions League scorer and loser for Bayer Leverkusen in 2001/02 but a winner for Inter Milan in the same competition in 2009/10





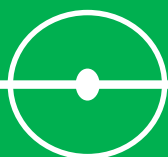
# Fernando Hierro

You may see this as an odd inclusion but ask the common English football fan on the street what do they remember of Fernando Hierro I think you get 2 popular answers.

1, missed a penalty against David Seaman of England for Spain in a penalty shoot-out in Euro '96, and 2, the twilight part of his career was spent with Sam Allardyce's motley crew of veteran superstars at Bolton Wanderers, with Djorkaeff, Campo and Bobic et al.

The reason we bring him to your attention is he was so much more than that.

Hierro began his La Liga career with Real Valladolid and after 2 solid seasons he transferred to Spanish giants Real Madrid and from then on, he never looked back.



Fernando Hierro – 5 La Liga titles, 3 Champions League titles and over 600 club games as a professional



Equally at ease at centre back or defensive midfield, he had a knack of what we love the most at The Halfway Line, scoring goals.

In his third season with Real, in 1991/92, Hierro top scored for Los Blancos with a remarkable 21 league goals (sitting second in the league's top scorer charts) and 26 strikes overall.

Like any goal scoring defender should have, he to has a club hat trick to his name. Steve Watson would be so proud of him, and his goals total for the 1991/92, 1992/93 and 1993/94 seasons combined was a very impressive 55 goals in all competitions.

The demands of a club like Real Madrid are absurdly high, as are the fans expectations, so if you are going to hang around a while, you had better be pretty good. Hierro played, and played consistently for 14 seasons, amassing 610 appearances (with his 127 goals). He never once failed to make at least 20 league appearance in each of his seasons at the Bernabeu.



Of course goals and appearances are of huge significance, but so is winning for Real Madrid. A quick glance at Hierro's trophy cabinet and we can suggest he did OK. 5 La Liga titles to go alongside his 3 Champions League medals, captaining the side in the victorious 2001/02 campaign, that saw Madrid win through Zinedine Zidane's outrageous volley.



Mauricio Pochettino – Fouled Michael Owen for the penalty that David Beckham dispatched for England against Argentina in the 2002 World Cup





# Tony Adams

Surely our readers know Mr. Arsenal was good, but do they know how good? A career that was hampered by personal struggles, the rival fans jibes of 'donkey' and missing international tournaments at the peak of his career, he really was an exceptional defender and footballer and perhaps the unfashionable element of being a defender has held back the plaudits.

He is a true one club man that in the modern world of football just doesn't seem to be a thing anymore. You look at the likes of John Terry, the only Premier League captain to lift the trophy 5 times, still managed a cameo at the end of his career with a different club. Not Big Tone though, he was built for Arsenal, and only Arsenal.

He made his debut for the club just 4 weeks after he turned 17 years old, in 1983. By 1986 he was a first team regular, and won the PFA Young Player of the Year award that season. Then in 1988 he became the captain of Arsenal, at the age of 21 years old. The time he gave that honour away was some 13 years later when he retired, after representing his club 674 times. Only David O'Leary has played more for the Arsenal.

He has the claim to fame of uniquely captaining a title-winning team in three different decades, and it is hard to imagine that is an achievement ever to be matched again.



John Arne Riise – 110 caps sees him as the highest capped Norwegian male footballer of all time





His club career and achievements are a credit to the player, and man he was. His international career however almost seems slightly disappointing, despite some significant facts.

Adams was the first and remains to date the only England player to make tournament appearances in three separate decades. This takes into account the 1988 Euros, the 1996 Euros, the 1998 World Cup and the 2000 Euros.

It seems harsh however that at the peak of his career he was surprisingly omitted from the 1990 World Cup squad, and injury robbed him of a place in the Euro'92 squad.



Unsurprisingly Adams often had the captaincy of the national side, and captained England's Euro'96 campaign, where the side were agonisingly close to reaching the final. He lost the captaincy under Glenn Hoddle to Alan Shearer, but when the striker retired, Adams regained the captaincy. However, within months, England lost a World Cup qualifier to Germany in October 2000, the match being the last to be staged at Wembley Stadium, before the stadium was torn down for rebuilding. That match was Adams's 60<sup>th</sup> Wembley appearance, a record.

Alongside the appearance record at Wembley somewhat surprisingly he was the last England player to score at the old Wembley Stadium when he scored England's second goal in a 2–0 friendly win over Ukraine on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.



Eden Hazard – First non-French player to win the Ligue 1 Young Player of the Year award in 2009



# Giuseppe Signori

Channel 4 broke the mould in 1992 by securing the rights to broadcast Italian Serie A football and gave the chance for the English public to view a new style of football.

The driver for this was the transfer of then English superstar Paul Gascoigne from Tottenham Hotspur to Lazio. The 3 players that perhaps shone the most for England in the World Cup of 1990, hosted by Italy were Gascoigne, Gary Lineker and David Platt. Lineker by this time had decided to move to the Far East, Platt had moved to Serie A the previous summer to Bari but had not really captured the British public's attention, and it was Gazza's move that stole the headlines, but sadly due to a devastating knee injury there was only one Englishman on show for the inaugural Serie A match shown by Channel 4, Sampdoria versus Lazio, and that was Des Walker. However it was another name on everyone's lips by the end of the game, that finished in a 3-3 draw.



Another debutant for Lazio in the match was striker Giuseppe Signori.

Signori moved to Rome in the summer of 1993 from Foggia. Premier League romantics will remember some of the Foggia teammates he left behind, notably Dan Petrescu and Francisco Baiano. 'Beppe' was no slouch at Foggia and had scored 38 goals in 105 games, helping the club

gain promotion to Serie A during his time there. He moved to Lazio, and something just clicked. The striker, who must have been no more than 5 foot 7, hit the back of the net 17 times in the first 16 league games of that season.

He bought a particular and almost unique style of forward play, almost as if he was a left winger who had been asked to play up front and had no fear in taking everyone on, but he did this every game. His penalty taking technique was also different, taking just one step before firing home.

As a striker to be successful you need consistency and Signori can point to a couple of facts that prove he was just that.



Freddie Ljungberg – Scored in successive FA Cup finals for Arsenal in 2001 & 2002, winning the latter against Chelsea



First the Capocannoniere – the Serie A top goalscorer award. The player to have won this the most is Gunnar Nordahl, a Swedish striker who won it 5 times for Milan in the 1950's. Only 8 other players have won it more than twice, and only two of those are post 1990. Signori won the Serie A top scorer award 3 times in 4 seasons whilst playing for Lazio.

In his second season with the club he scored 23 goals in just 24 games, and the season in between where he didn't win it, he still managed 17 league goals.

Despite the goals, domestic success came hard to come by for Signori and Lazio and a change of management and style saw Signori become out of favour and it was time to move on.

An unsuccessful spell at Sampdoria saw a move to Bologna, and gave the chance for Signori to prove himself once more, and again he stepped up. He played for 6 seasons at the club and stuck 78 times in all competition to sit 11<sup>th</sup> on the club's all time top scorers list, and the highest since football actually begun (1992).



We have featured Signori as an unsung hero, and perhaps not receiving the credit he deserves.

This may give support to that. He sits joint 8<sup>th</sup> on the all-time goalscorer list in Serie A history, with 188 goals. He is joint with a certain Alessandro Del Piero, but is above him based on games played, some 134 less than the Juventus superstar. There is no Serie A league title, or a World Cup winners medal, but the player who used to squeeze into Diadora boots one size too small for him won our hearts at least.



Davor Suker – The 1998 World Cup top scorer having scored 6 goals in the competition for Croatia





# Ally McCoist

Next up is a player who is certainly recognised for being a successful captain of a team. Trouble is that was post retirement. Ally McCoist regularly faced up to Phil Tufnell during his stint as a Question of Sport team captain, and did provide great entertainment, however what isn't talked about enough is McCoist's goal scoring record for Glasgow Rangers.

Originally denied a move to St.Mirren as the then manager Alex Ferguson didn't believe the young striker was good enough, he remained undeterred and was snapped up instead by St.Johnstone, making his debut in 1979. It was McCoist's third and break through season that saw him not only score 22 league goals in 38 games, but also grab the attention of English clubs who started sniffing around to secure his signature.

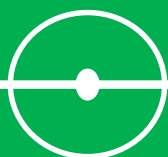
It was Sunderland who won the race to sign the striker, and the £400,000 transfer fee was a club record at the time. His time on Wearside was not a success and goals were hard to come by, failing to get to double figures in either of his two seasons at the club. In the summer of 1983 McCoist joined Rangers for a cut price £185,000 and it started a 15 year long playing relationship with the club.

Ironically, he made his league debut for the club against St. Mirren and in his first season across all competitions he scored 20 goals, including a hat trick in the 1983 Scottish League Cup final against fierce rivals Celtic.

The follow season saw another 18 goals, but it wasn't until the arrival of Graeme Souness when more success came along with the goals. In the 1987 title winning season, McCoist top scored with 34 goals in the league alone, with another 42 the following season.



McCoist's goals and Souness' management saw the beginning of an incredible spell of dominance by Rangers in Scottish football, with an absurd 9 titles won in a row, that was shared with Walter Smith as manager from 1991. The reign of Smith saw McCoist firmly back as the first choice striker and he took the baton with some aplomb, and in the 1991-92 season he not only scored 34 league goals, won the title, and scored the winner in the Scottish Cup Final, he also took home the European Golden Boot, the first ever Scot to do so.



Francesco Totti – The King of Rome, sits 3<sup>rd</sup> on the all time Serie A appearances list and 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Serie A all time goals scored list with 250 (he is the highest for goals scored for one club)



The following season McCoist scored a career high 49 goals in 52 appearances, that saw him retain the European Golden Boot, becoming the first player to be Europe's top goalscorer two years in a row.

This may have "only been Scottish League" football, but no-one seems to turn their nose up at Henrik Larsson's achievements. The second time around winning the Golden Boot, McCoist also missed the final 7 matches of the league due to a broken leg.

By the end of his Ibrox career, in 1998, he had amassed 355 club goals, only once not hitting double figures in a season, and that was in an injury hit season (1994/95) that saw him only play 9 games.



Those 355 goals make McCoist Glasgow Rangers' top goalscorer ever, with 251 in the league and 54 in the League Cup, both the highest number for Rangers, as well as 28 hat tricks. The goals go nicely alongside the 10 League titles, 1 Scottish Cup and 9 League Cups.

He left the club to play out his career at Kilmarnock in 1998, when the Scottish Premier League was formed and played on for 3 seasons, up to the ripe old age of 38.

In a bizarre twist of fate, in his last game as a professional he played in the final game of the season for Kilmarnock at home against Celtic.

He was substituted in the game and replaced by a SPL debutant by the name of Kris Boyd. It was Boyd who went on to move to Rangers and become a prolific goalscorer for the club, and along with his goals for Kilmarnock see him sit at the top of the charts for the highest SPL goalscorer of all time.



Marco Reus – 3 times Bundesliga Player of the Year and twice German Footballer of the Year. Incredibly underrated player outside of Germany



# Nigel Martyn

One for the goalkeepers union this one. If asked to name the top 12 (top ten has 3 level in 7<sup>th</sup> on the list) goalkeepers in terms of clean sheets in the Premier League you'll soon roll off the fashionable names.

The Brits Seaman, James, Hart and the title winning foreigners Cech, Schmeichel, Van Der Sar and De Gea. Chuck in stalwarts Reina, Howard, Friedel and Schwarzer and you have the complete list. Almost. Bang in the middle in 5<sup>th</sup> place, our final unsung hero who perhaps people didn't realise how good he was, Nigel Martyn.

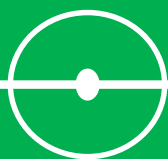
137 clean sheets in 372 Premier League games. Worth comparing 2 x Premier League winner David Seaman who is forth on the list has 141 clean sheets.

It's a credit to how Martyn carried himself that he has seemingly cropped up in the top five somewhat unnoticed, in the shadow of others. This sadly was the case for his international career as well, never being able to budge the others out the way. Seaman above him in the clean sheet list and the selection for number 1 at both 1998 & 2002 World Cups.

When Martyn left Bristol Rovers for Crystal Palace in 1989, he became the first goalkeeper to attract a million-pound transfer fee in English football. In 1996, he signed with Leeds United, setting another record fee for a goalkeeper of £2.25m.



The volume, and consistency of volume, of the games Martyn played is quite remarkable. In his 19 year playing career only three seasons did he fail to make over 30 appearances. Once with Everton, in his last as a professional, and twice with Leeds, once playing 23 games (2000/01) after struggling with injury, and perhaps the saddest season, his last with Leeds. The season before, 2001/02 he played all 38 league games, and the follow up season he didn't feature once. A fall out with then manager Terry Venables and the emergence of Paul Robinson saw Martyn thrown to the subs bench. This was not a fitting ending to his Leeds United career which saw him voted as the club's best ever number 1, and feature 3 years in a row in the PFA Team of the Year (1997/98 – 1999/00).



Carlos Vela – Holds the record for goals and assists combined in a single MLS season (34 goals & 15 assists) in 2019 for Los Angeles FC





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Alex Rodrigo Dias da Costa – Better known as Alex, played for PSV Eindhoven, Chelsea, Paris Saint-Germain and AC Milan as well as 17 caps for Brazil



# Classic Kits

Every issue The Halfway Line features some classic kits. It maybe purely kit based, it could be a classic kit being worn by a classic player, or a classic kit in a classic match.

In this issue we take a look at a style of kit that doesn't always float the fans boat. Some like it, some don't, 50/50 if you like. The is irony is that's the style of the kit, a Half Half style.

Two completely separate patterns or colours coming together in the centre of the shirt.

What surprised us the most with this particular research was the number we selected that are/were the home kit for the clubs in question.

Home kits in the Premier League to have the Half Half weren't to easy to come by however. Though one of them is a Premier League winner. Blackburn Rovers won the title styling a 50% white shirt and a 50% blue shirt. This is Blackburn's tradition style, but that can't be said for Watford, who switched to a 50/50 in the 2019/20 season, that didn't end the way of Blackburn's success. The Hornets were sadly relegated that season.

Other Half Half kits versions in the Premier League feature as well, with Leeds United away (97/99), Tottenham Hotspur anniversary kit of 2007 and the famous Green and Yellow effort for Manchester United (92/94).

Perennial Serie A champions, Juventus, also changed their traditional style of strip for the 2019/20 season and went for the Half Half, and this worked out pretty good as another championship was secured.

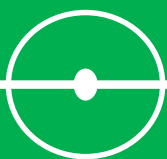
Others to have moved away from their usual styles are Manchester City reserves, oops, I mean Girona in Spain and Spanish giants Barcelona feature twice. Firstly for their centurial celebration kit in 1999 and then in 2008 which you could argue was the best club side in recent history.

Another classic featured here is the orange and dark red effort from Serie A side AS Roma.

A couple more home efforts on the continent; first Galatasaray though we are not sure about the matching shorts and second we've a old classic from Genoa, styled by the powerhouse forward Tomáš Skuhravý.

There is also a one off kit from the Netherlands, as part of a campaign to battle racism in football, and any message fighting that is a winner for us.

Then we leave with an absolute classic, biased as its made by Hummel, a favourite of ours as you'll know. The 1986 World Cup effort for Denmark was so darn good they used the style for the home and the away kits, and it just can't be faulted.



Claudio Pizarro – The oldest goalscorer in Bundesliga history (40 years 227 days) as well as scoring the most goals by a foreigner in the German top division







Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain – Youngest English Champions League goalscorer having done so for Arsenal in the 2011/12 season at 18 years and 43 days old







Gabriel Heinze – Former Manchester United defender also played for Paris Saint-Germain, Marseille, Roma as well as Real Madrid







Jerome Boateng – Surely one that Manchester City regret letting go, having since won the lot after joining Bayern Munich in 2011







Michael Owen – The last English winner of the European Footballer of the Year award, having won this in 2001







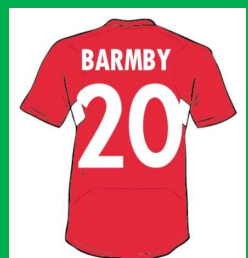
Alfonso Davies – The first Canadian to win the Champions League and sits ninth on the list of youngest starters to win the trophy







Nick Barmby – One of the few to have crossed Stanley Park and transferred directly from Everton to Liverpool having done so in 2000



ALFRED BREITENBURGER

# Paolo Rossi



Tony Yeboah – Perhaps the scorer of the greatest ever goal in Premier League history with his volley for Leeds United against Liverpool in the 1995/96 season





# Greatest Comebacks

## “Your Mum....”

Perhaps the greatest comeback in the history of the world.

It's highly immature, yet ever so funny, whatever the age group that is using it as a cuss back to a mate and it travels so well from playground through to the office, to the pub and beyond.

Back to the football world, and we want to look at some of the classic comebacks of the game, where teams have somehow won, or not lost games despite being in the clutches of defeat.

We know the story and drama of Istanbul in 2005 and the 91st and 93rd minute at the Nou Camp in 1999 that have rightly gone down in history as incredible turnarounds. These two comebacks secured Champions League trophies for two giants of English football that had both waited some time since their previous victories in the competition, making the comebacks feel all the more special.

Now the comebacks we feature here are certainly not as high profile as the above, and didn't result in European Cup winners medals having their ribbons swapped over pretty darn quick! But nevertheless there are some that are equally remarkable and seemed equally unlikely at most stages of the game.



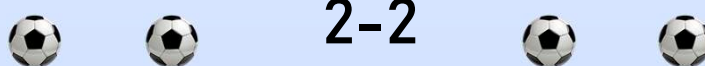
Gyfli Sigurdsson – Perhaps not widely known, the now Everton player started his career in England with Reading with loans out to Crewe Alexandra and Shrewsbury Town



# Everton versus Newcastle United

January 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 – Premier League

We are starting you off gently, with a 2-0 comeback. It only resulted in a draw, but take a look at the graphic and ask yourself how did Everton not win this game.



**Everton**  
Kean 30,  
Calvert-Lewin 54

**Newcastle United**  
Lejeune 94,  
Lejeune 95

# Tottenham Hotspur versus West Ham United

October 18<sup>th</sup> 2020 – Premier League

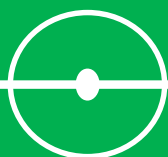
London derby, one team flying, the other struggling in the League. The form team after just 16 minutes find themselves 3-0 up and it's surely three points in the bag, and the bragging rights secured. There are only 8 minutes left....

**3-3**



**Tottenham Hotspur**  
Son 1, Kane 8,  
Kane 16

**West Ham United**  
Balbuena 82, Sanchez  
(og) 85, Lanzini 94



Mesut Ozil – He is the only player to have recorded the most assists for the season in the Premier League, Bundesliga and La Liga. Ozil also finished as joint-highest assist provider at the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012



# Crystal Palace versus Liverpool

May 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 – Premier League

Coming off the back of a disastrous home defeat to Chelsea (Gerrard's slip) Liverpool needed to make a statement and also eat into Manchester City's superior goal difference in order to stay alive in the 2014 title race. Problem solved. 3-0 up against Palace with 11 minutes to go...

**3-3**



## Crystal Palace

Delaney 79, Gayle 81,  
Gayle 88

## Liverpool

Allen 18, Delaney (og) 53,  
Suarez 55



# Tottenham Hotspur versus Manchester United

September 29<sup>th</sup> 2001 – Premier League

We've featured games where the end result was a remarkable draw, but for this game we have a comeback winner. Spurs completely outplayed United in the first half and went in at the break 3-0 up in front of a buoyant crowd. The home fans left at full time feeling really rather different I would imagine...

**3-5**

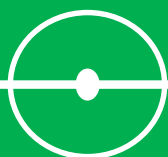


## Tottenham Hotspur

Richards 15, Ferdinand 25,  
Ziege 45

## Manchester United

Cole 46, Blanc 58,  
Van Nistelrooy 72,  
Veron 76, Beckham 87



Brad Friedel – Premier League record holder for the most consecutive games played, standing at 310 games. That is a full eight seasons in a row, plus a few extra!!





# Borussia Dortmund versus Schalke

November 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 – Bundesliga  
The Revierderby

When you host your local rivals, there is an extra element to getting a win, and when you go **4-0** up after 25 minutes, the team and fans can be forgiven that it is going to be a good day.....doesn't always work like that..

**4-4**



## Dortmund

Aubameyang 12, Stambouli (og) 18,  
Gotze 20, Guerreiro 25

## Schalke

Burgstaller 61, Harit 65,  
Caligiuri 86, Haldo 94



# Nigeria & Sierra Leone

November 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 – Africa Cup of Nations Qualifier

Put the game to bed early, and that's what the Super Eagles set out to do...4-0 is a dangerous lead it seems...

**4-4**

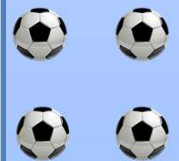


## Nigeria

Iwobi 4, Osimhen 21,  
Iwobi 27, Chukwueze 29

## Sierra Leone

Quee 41, Kamara 72,  
Bundu 80, Kamara 86



Emmanuel Adebayor – The only player in Premier League history to score home and away hat tricks against the same team in the same season (Derby County in 2007/08)



# Newcastle United versus Arsenal

February 5<sup>th</sup> 2011 – Premier League

Another electric first 30 minutes saw Arsenal, away in this example, race to an unassailable 4-0 lead..but not quite. This is the only time in Premier League history a team have been 4-0 down at half time and not lost the game.

**4-4**



## Newcastle United

Barton (p) 68, Best 75,  
Barton (p) 83, Tiote 87

## Arsenal

Walcott 1, Djourou 3,  
Van Persie 10 and 26



# Angola versus Mali

January 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 – Africa Cup of Nations

The hosts of the tournament, Angola, in the opening game not only lead 4-0, but there are only 11 minutes left on the clock...what a start....oh, no, surely not.....

**4-4**



## Angola

Flavio 36, Flavio 42,  
Gilberto (p) 67, Manucjo (p) 74

## Mali

Keita 79, Kanoute 88,  
Keita 93, Yatabare 95



Ledley King – The scorer of now the second fastest goal in Premier League history, after 10 seconds for Tottenham Hotspur against Bradford City in 2000



# Champions League Comebacks

We've referenced the Nou Camp final, and the Istanbul miracle, and there are very well known comebacks of late involving Barcelona in the Champions League. In 2018 Roma came back from a 4-1 first leg defeat to beat Barca 3-0 and win the tie on aggregate. In 2019, Liverpool reversed a 3-0 away leg defeat to the Spanish giants by winning 4-0 in an unforgettable home tie.

Barcelona prior to these defeats had their own miracle, in 2017. They lost 4-0 away to Paris Saint-Germain, and then conceded at home in the second leg, but still somehow managed to progress, winning 6-5 on aggregate, with the obligatory last minute winner!

But it's not our favourite 2 legged comeback in the competition.

## Deportivo La Coruna versus AC Milan

April 7<sup>th</sup> 2004

Milan, worth remembering were the reigning champions when they travelled to La Coruna for the second leg of the 2004 quarter finals. They brought with them a 4-1 lead from the first leg and their starting line up included Cafu, Maldini, Nesta, Seedorf, Pirlo, Kaka and Shevchenko.

Rather formidable you could argue.

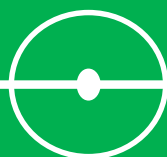
Deportivo failed to read the script.

⚽ ⚽ ⚽ ⚽ 4-0



**Deportivo La Coruna**  
Pandiani 5, Valeron 35,  
Luque 44, Fran 74

**AC Milan**



Richard Dunne – Former Everton, Manchester City, Aston Villa and QPR centre back who holds 2 Premier League records. Most own goals (10) and joint most red cards (8)





We've featured some classic comebacks, with teams 3-0 down and winning, and 4-0 down and drawing the game. In two legged affairs we've see 3-0, 4-1 and 4-0 score lines turned around.

We wanted to find one to end on a high and wondered if we could find a one off game, with a team 4-0 down and still walking away with a win...of course we can..

# Reading versus Arsenal

October 30<sup>th</sup> 2012 – League Cup

Arsenal traditionally used the League Cup under Arsene Wenger to blood the younger players in his squad and would often come unstuck in the later rounds. In this instance they faced fellow Premier League rivals

Reading in the round of 16 and after 37 minutes it looked to be a backfired gamble. Even after 88 minutes it looked like a push too far...

Note to players – never give up!

Note to fans – never leave the game early!

## 5-7



### Reading

Roberts 12, Koscielny (og) 19,  
Leigertwood 20,  
Hunt 37,

Pogrebnyak 116

### Arsenal

Walcott 45,  
Giroud 64,  
Koscielny 89 ,  
Walcott 90,  
Chamakh 103,  
Walcott 120 ,  
Chamakh 120



Vinicius Junior – Transferred to Real Madrid for €46 million after playing just 37 league games for Brazilian side Flamengo



## The Premier League Greatest XI

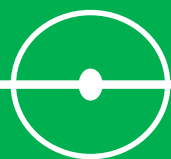
In our last 9 issues we have featured the greatest line ups that only include players from one nation.



We get to issue 10 at some what of a road block. We have run out of nations to give us at least 11 players including a goalkeeper in order to have a full team and so we have had to change tact.

We have instead taken the 6 Football confederations across the globe, cleverly combining AFC and OFC (Asian and Oceanian representatives) and put together an all star line up featuring the best players in Premier League history to have represented these football confederations.

These are not based on statistics, appearances, goals, records, these are merely the view of the author. That said some are self-explanatory and would imagine would not ignite too much debate, but others, perhaps less fashionable positions could irk the reader and encourage a discussion as to why the their favourite right back is not in the starting XI. I have intentionally not included a subs bench, as I fear I'd not have much space left. It should be noted, the feature sticks to a rigid 4-4-2 formation and won't be changed to fit in players of the same position.



Jese Rodriguez – Can't be many double Champions League winners with a £25 million transfer fee, La Liga and Ligue 1 winner medals but without an international cap earned



# CAF – Africa

How do we possibly start to justify our selections, without the need to go through every available player coming out of each region.

We have to be selective, with who we thought came close to making the XI.

African goalkeepers, not the hardest category. Bruce Grobbelaar having the spot to himself, as neither Richard Kingson good enough, or Edouard Mendy having been around long enough yet to challenge.

Habib Beye was the competition for Lauren at right back, but the invincible was not really challenged. At centre back we've partnered Lucas Radebe with fellow invincible Kolo Toure, who beat off competition from Joseph Yobo and new league winner Joel Matip.

At left back, seemingly unchallenged was Celestine Babayaro, who selection is more due to lack of competition as opposed to the imprint he made on the Premier League.

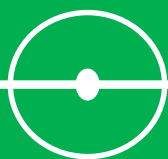
Right midfielder, although he plays higher up now, we selected Sadio Mane. What a player, who seems perfectly made for our league. In central midfield keeping it tight is Michael Essien allowing the powerhouse Yaya Toure to do as he pleases in the middle. On the left we have Riyad Mahrez, who it must not be forgotten how cheap Leicester City signed him for. Maybe the best ever bargain in Premier League history?

Painful to leave him out, due to his ability on the ball and freedom to his game, Jay-Jay Okocha can feel very unlucky to his out.

Upfront could be a separate feature itself. Look at the list to miss out..

Emmanuel Adebayor, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Nwankwo Kanu, Yakubu, Efan Ekoku, Samuel Eto'o, Tony Yeboah, Peter Ndlovu, Wilfred Zaha, Peter Odemwingie or Demba Ba.

The choices that take the spots are however Didier Drogba, and Mohamed Salah. The goalscoring records between them and the ability to be match winners gives them the starting birth in this XI.



Richarlison – One season at Watford was enough for Everton to pay £35 million on the Brazilian forward, that could rise to a lot more







James Vaughan – Still holds the record as the youngest ever goalscorer in the Premier League, aged 16 years and 271 days, scoring for Everton in 2005



# CONMEBOL – South America

Couple of tough choices for this XI, and some interesting findings along the way. The goalkeepers. How do you pick between Ederson and Alisson? Oh what a problem for the Brazilian nation coach to have! We have gone for Ederson as he has more league winners medals, but it was so so close.

Right back, Pablo Zabaleta sneaks in ahead of Antonio Valencia, as the latter redefined himself as a defender as opposed to being a natural one. Left back the tough Gabriel Heinze beats off competition from Julio Arca who won hearts at both Sunderland and Middlesbrough. We felt neither da Silva brother ever made the true step up to Premier League quality.

Centre back seems to suggest what we probably already knew. They ain't great at producing them out of South America! Discussed were Fabio Coloccini, Horacio Carbonari, Martin Demichelis, Alex, and Emerson Thome, but we have gone for 2 players quite often criticised, David Luiz and Nicolas Otamendi.

Right midfield we wanted to put in Nolberto Solano for romantic nostalgia reasons, and same on the left for Faustino Asprilla, but instead we are going for 2 attacking midfielders, who tended to cut in from the wider positions, and it's the Brazilian pairing of Willian and Philippe Coutinho.

Central midfield is a also tough – having to leave out Javier Mascherano and Gilberto Silva suggests the middle pairing is strong, and it is. Fernandinho has been excellent at Manchester City, in fact world class and we partner him with the forever smiling Juninho. Not as successful as other candidates, but bought a freshness to the Premier League that hadn't been seen before.

Up front again has a collection of riches to chose from, but it was more of an argument as to who would partner Sergio Aguero.

The two that caused the biggest debate were Luis Suarez and Carlos Tevez, and although the latter won a league medal, the impact the Uruguayan left sees him selected instead.



Laurent Robert – French left winger, with a rocket of a left foot, played for Newcastle United, Portsmouth and Derby County in the Premier League





- CONMEBOL -



Ben Davies – Swansea City's youngest ever goalscorer in the Premier League





# AFC & OFC – Asia and Oceania

The only XI to merge confederations and it gives the XI a nice balance.

In goal, a no brainer; Mark Schwarzer has seen off many competition from fellow Aussie keepers, and no different in this team.

In defence, again it's the weaker part of the team. Aussie 'hard man' Lucas Neill plays at right back, and covering in at left back is the Japanese Maya Yoshida who gets the spot for his consistency shown at Southampton.

Centre back is a Kiwi partnership of Winston Reid and Ryan Nelsen. Two bargain buys and they see off a number of Australian defenders who at best were mid table performers.

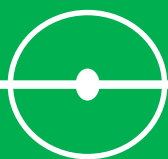
Midfield we have tried for a balance. On the flanks we have 2 South Koreans who seem to define what a team player is. Park Ji-Sung seemed to be Alex Ferguson's go to man for must win battles, and Son Heung-min has hit the floor running at Tottenham Hotspur, so much so he may well be their most valuable asset right now.

In the central midfield positions, we have the goal scoring threat of Tim Cahill and the defensive mindset of Sun Jihai. Exports out of China have been limited, as well as the quality, but Jihai deserves credit for breaking the mould.

Up front is not a position this region has produced significant quality in.

Asian forwards, predominately from Japan and South Korea have tried and failed in the Premier League and Chris Woods is perhaps the only other player of note to have made a mark in the league.

Therefore the two choices up front are somewhat automatic, and they are the Aussie duo of Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell, who performed at such a high level together at Leeds United and it was such a shame neither of them could reproduce that form once they had left the Elland Road club.



Robbie Keane - The only player in the history of world football to have scored at least one international goal in 19 consecutive years





Jermain Defoe – With 22 goals after coming on, he is the highest scoring substitute in Premier League history



# CONCACAF - North American, Central American & Caribbean

This was a fun one to do.

In goal we had contenders, the likes of Shaka Hislop, Craig Forrest and an abundance of shot stoppers from the USA, and it's there we stay as Brad Friedel is the number 1.

Anyone who plays 310 consecutive Premier Leagues is a certified legend.

Right back we are going old school with Canadian Frank Yallop, who played for Ipswich Town in the early Premier League. DeAndre Yedlin was our closest competition.

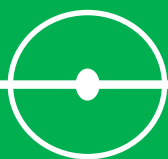
Harder to pick for the left back slot as Maynor Figueroa's half way line free kick goal gave him a chance but we go for Ricardo Gardner. He seemed to play for Bolton Wanderers forever.

At centre back we have title winning captain Wes Morgan along side Emerson Boyce whose 12 caps for Barbados see him qualify. No great quality out of America or Canada at centre back or other countries from this confederation.

In midfield playing wide right we have Monserrat giant Ruel Fox and on the left, new kid on the block Christian Pulisic who is leading the new generation of US 'Soccer' stars. Midfield minder is 'Reggae Boyz' Robbie Earle who sits back and allows Clint Dempsey to break forward and bang in the goals as consistently as he did for Fulham.

Up front is a cracking combo that would certainly entertain. Trinidad & Tobago and Premier League legend Dwight Yorke, who would captain this eleven supports the unconventional Paulo Wanchope.

The Costa Rican announced himself with a wonder solo goal against Manchester United and for the audacity of that gives him the nod over other crowd favourites such as Shaun Goater, Brian McBride, Roy Wegerle and Jason Roberts.



Kyle Walker – Having cost Manchester City £45 million he is one of the most expensive British footballers of all time







Adama Traore – The Wolves wide man began his career at Barcelona before moving to Aston Villa and Middlesbrough before heading to Molineux and finding form



# UEFA - Europe

This XI and the debate behind it actually deserves more than a page and I've a feeling we'll revisit it. We've a huge selection of players that we could discuss but we'll try to stream line this to the chosen player and our closest contender for their starting berth.

In goal it was between Petr Cech and Peter Schmeichel. We've gone for the Great Dane. 7 league titles is unrivalled and the presence he brought to his penalty era gives him the nod over this Czech counterpart.

Right back was a harder task. We put Gary Neville up against Branislav Ivanovic as the two most consistent in the position and for longevity in the role we are picking Neville. Left back probably the easiest pick out of the whole XI. Ashley Cole excelled at both Arsenal and Chelsea and perhaps only Patrice Evra could give him a run for his money.

Centre backs is an argument I don't think we'll win. We are going for Nemanja Vidic over John Terry for the muscle and we're having Vincent Kompany over the closest rival in perhaps Virgil Van Dijk/Rio Ferdinand for the ball playing centre back.

Right midfield was always going to be a number 7 Manchester United face off. Beckham against Ronaldo and it has to be the Portuguese maestro.

Centre midfield is almost impossible to select without controversy. For balance we've gone for Patrick Vieira for the battle and Frank Lampard for the goals. We can't list all the contenders so we'll apologise for Roy Keane and Steven Gerrard/Paul Scholes.

The left midfield was perhaps our hardest pick. The stereotype winger choice would be Ryan Giggs (not to mention his medal haul) but we are going for Manchester City star Kevin....., no changed our mind and playing David Silva!

Up front you think it's easy and then you remember who you have to leave out!!!!

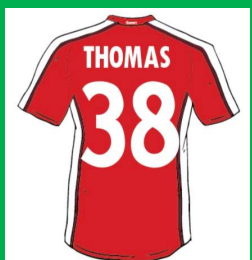
The front two is Alan Shearer (260 goals) and Thierry Henry, perhaps the best player the league has ever seen based on playing on these shores when at their very peak.

The ones to feel hard done by of course are Wayne Rooney and fellow game changer Eric Cantona (plus all the other ones!!!!)

Don't shoot the messenger! We could only pick eleven players!!!



Jay-Emmanuel Thomas – The former Arsenal youngster promised much but only managed to appear on 5 occasions for the club before moving on





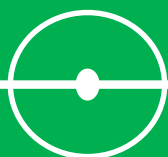
Jonathan Woodgate – Scored the winner for Tottenham Hotspur in the Carling Cup Final against Chelsea in 2008, the club's last silverware





Do you disagree? Why not have a go yourself and fill in your best ever Nation XI to play in the Premier League

\*\*\*



Haruna Babangida – Brother of former Ajax winger, Tijani, he started his career at Barcelona but failed to make the grade but did win an international cap for Nigeria

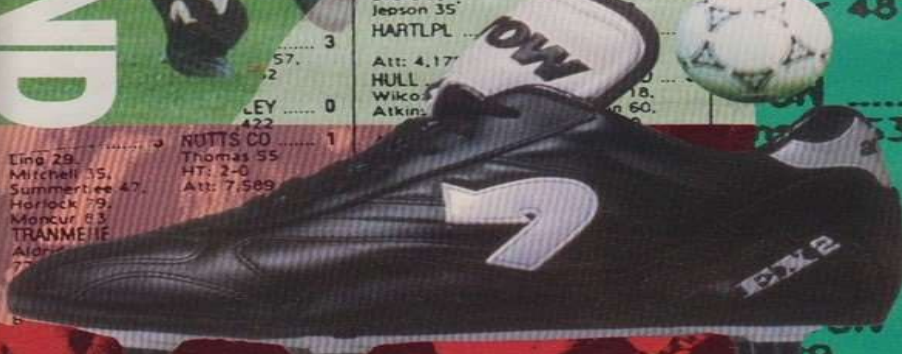


ANDY TOWNSEND



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**EX2**



Jimmy Bullard – Called up to England squads on 3 occasions but unlucky enough never to be selected for the team, therefore never winning a cap



# Youngsters

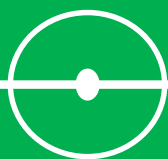


By the time I was 13 years old I had played for Parma and partnered Faustino Asprilla up front, I featured for Napoli playing just behind Careca and I followed Ruud Gullit from AC Milan to Sampdoria.

The sad reality is my youth career in Serie A was actually played out in my back garden and I was sadly let go at 15 to fend for myself and had to take comfort in Shandy Bass, maturing to Babycham and then hitting the hard, watered down weak European lager.

Life decisions and more importantly no real actual talent was the reason at 15 I wasn't a professional footballer. Luckily for this article there are plenty who were good enough at a very young age and so it's our duty to bring you their youthful achievements.

We have listed out the youngest ever players to make an appearance in the top 6 leagues in Europe, and we've thrown in some of the youngest international players to earn a cap and a few extra special achievements.



Danny Rose – Had a dream debut for Tottenham Hotspur, scoring a superb left foot volley from all of 30 yards against their fierce North London rivals Arsenal





## English Premier League

Harvey Elliott @ 16 years and 30 days old for Fulham in May 2019

Where is he now? Moved to Liverpool in 2019.



## German Bundesliga

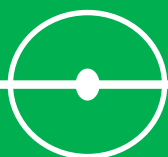
Youssoufa Moukoko @ 16 years and 1 day old for Borussia Dortmund in November 2020

Where is he now? Now a first team member of the Dortmund squad

## France Ligue 1

Laurent Paganelli @ 15 years, 10 months and 3 days old for St. Etienne in 1978

Where is he now? Long time retired and now a football journalist



Stephen Bywater – Wore the number 43 shirt as a tribute to Les Sealey who died aged 43. He was Bywater's mentor and goalkeeping coach



## Spain La Liga

Luka Romero @ 15 years and 219 days old for Real Mallorca in June 2020

Where is he now? The 'Mexican Messi' is still at Mallorca



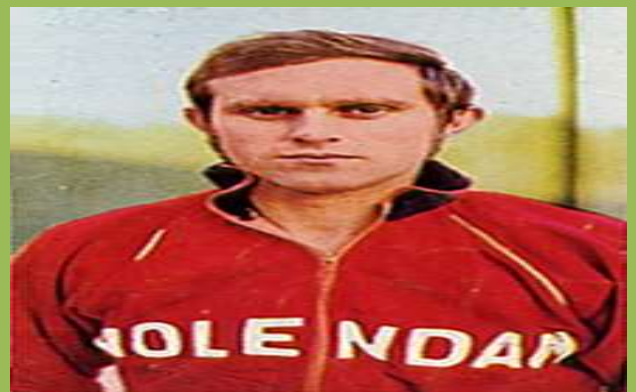
## Italy Serie A

Joint between A. Amadei of Roma in 1937 and Pietro Pellegri of Genoa in December 2016 @ 15 years and 280 days old

Where is Pellegri now? Moved to Monaco in 2018 for €25 million, at 16 years old

## Holland Eredivisie

Wim Kras @ 15 years, 9 months and 17 days old for Volendam in November 1959 and now unsurprisingly retired



Kazuyuki Toda – Former Japanese international who joined Tottenham Hotspur on loan in 2003 but only managed 4 appearances



We did a little bit more research on this on and found the youngest capped international of all time is **Lucas Knecht**, who played for Northern Marianas at the age of 14 years and 2 days!! He played in 9-0 defeat against fellow giants of the international stage, Guam, in April 2007 and since added a further 10 caps to his name.



Other young capped players of note are:

- **Mohamed Kallon** for Sierra Leone at 15 years and 184 days old
- **Stephen Appiah** for Ghana at 16 years old exactly (on his birthday!)
- **Martin Odegaard** for Norway at 15 years and 253 days old
- **Samuel Eto'o** for Cameroon at 15 years and 364 days old

In terms of closer to home, the youngest ever English male international is the ever green **Theo Walcott**, who played for the Three Lions at the ripe old age of 17 years, 75 days on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2006 against Hungary.



Lee Camp – Has the acclaim to say he conceded the first ever goal at the new Wembley stadium (England U21 against their Italian counterparts)





# Freddie Adu

The next best thing. We've all heard that before.

In 2003, the next best thing was a Ghanaian born, US nationalised whizz kid, **Freddie Adu**. DC United made Adu the first pick in the MLS Superdraft in 2003. Incredibly, in the 2004 season Adu debuted for DC United at **14 years old**, even scoring during the season, in doing so quite obviously becoming the youngest player in the MLS history to score a goal.

Now at 31, he has played for more clubs than the number he was at his debut.

16 clubs covering 9 different countries over 16 years. He has played in Portugal, France, Greece, Brazil, Serbia, Finland and now finds himself in the Swedish leagues. Perhaps a case of too much too soon.



Lynden Gooch – Sunderland winger with 4 international caps to his name representing USA



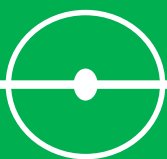
# Mauricio Baldivieso

What about the ultimate record holder?

Baldivieso is a Bolivian footballer who at the age of 12 years old became the youngest ever player to play professional football!

He featured for the Bolivian club side Club Aurora, who at the time of his debut were managed by Julio Baldivieso, known also to Mauricio as 'Dad!'

This father had a successful football career winning 85 caps for the Bolivian national team and was part of the 1994 World Cup squad. Mauricio has had less success since his record breaking appearance. One U20 cap and a few transfer but at the age of 24 he finds himself without a club side..



Antonio Nocerino – Former Italian international who played for the likes of Juventus and AC Milan as well as West Ham United on loan



# YOUNGEST PLAYERS

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

YEARS	DAYS	PLAYER
16	18	YOUSSOUFA MOUKOKO
16	85	CELESTINE BABAYARO
16	100	RAYAN CHERKI
16	126	ALEN HALILOVIC
16	145	YOURI TIELEMANS



Stephen Hughes – Former Rangers youth player, who also played for Motherwell and Leicester City and won one international cap for Scotland

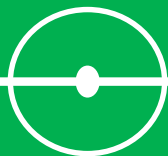




# YOUNGEST EVER CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SCORERS



RANK	PLAYER	AGE
1	<b>ANSU FATI</b> BARCELONA	<b>17</b> YEARS <b>40</b> DAYS
2	<b>PETER OFORI-QUAYE</b> OLYMPIACOS	<b>17</b> YEARS <b>195</b> DAYS
3	<b>MATEO KOVACIC</b> DINAMO ZAGREB	<b>17</b> YEARS <b>216</b> DAYS
4	<b>CESC FABREGAS</b> ARSENAL	<b>17</b> YEARS <b>218</b> DAYS
5	<b>BOJAN KRKIC</b> BARCELONA	<b>17</b> YEARS <b>218</b> DAYS
6	<b>MARTIN KLEIN</b> SPARTA PRAHA	<b>17</b> YEARS <b>241</b> DAYS



Kenwyne Jones – Trinidad & Tobago striker who moved around a fair amount of clubs in Britain, but his best named club was his first in his native country, called Joe Public

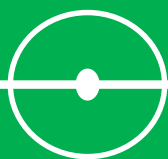


# What about the youngest player ever to play at the World Cup?

## Norman Whiteside



Whiteside broke Pelé's record as the youngest player to appear in a World Cup, when he debuted for Northern Ireland aged 17 years and 41 days at the 1982 World Cup in Spain. When selected for the World Cup squad by manager Billy Bingham, he had played just two competitive games at club level.



Danny N'Guessan – Never managed an appearance for Rangers having moved from France as a youngster & moved on to lower league English football





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Timothy Fosu-Mensah – Former Manchester United youth player and the Dutchman is now on the books of Bayer Leverkusen in Germany





# Who is playing against who?

Back again for a Magic Eye XI versus XI this issue, so lets see if you can spot the theme amongst these line ups.

First up we have a good old fashioned local derby. Players told to leave everything out on the pitch, do this one for the fans, and give them the bragging rights in the offices across the city for the coming week.

Nothing more passionate then heading up to the North East and the Tees-Wear derby between Middlesbrough and Sunderland. Take a look at the team line ups we've put together, to fight for the Boro' and the Black Cats.

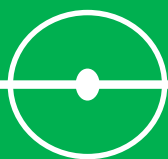
Oh, wait, nope, we've gone too far up the M1 – the lines ups are actually for the West Midlands derby between Aston Villa and West Bromwich Albion, an equally passionate affair.

You get it – of course you do, the first line up shows players to have played for both Boro and Villa, and the second XI has players who turned out for both Sunderland and WBA!

Next up, we thought you'd like a classic between 2 teams associated with their colours & style of their strips.

Claret and Blue – straight away you think West Ham, or do you? Or do you think of Aston Villa? Don't worry, our third XI has players who liked the colour combo so much, they played for both sides!

Then we go to the North East again to celebrate the Red and White strips of Sunderland and have combined the team with players who also played in the Red and White strips of former Premier League rivals Stoke City.



Emyr Huws – Former Manchester City U21 team captain who has 11 Welsh caps to his name and now playing his football for Ipswich Town



# Aston Villa versus Middlesbrough



Julio Pleguezuelo – One league appearance for Arsenal before moving on to FC Twente in Holland having started his career at Barcelona



# Sunderland versus West Bromwich Albion



Aleksey Vasiljev – Russian winger who started out a CSKA Moscow, moving on to a number of clubs including Torpedo, FK Ufa and FK Dolgoprudnyi







# Aston Villa versus West Ham United



Sabri Sarioglu – One club man, represented Galatasaray over 475 times over the course of his 14 year career with them



# Sunderland versus Stoke City



Jones

McClellan

Lawrence

Delap

Whitehead

Wilson

Higginbotham

Bardsley

Collins

Bould

Sorensen



Ilya Gaponov – Former Russian U21 international midfielder who signed for Spartak Moscow having previously been with Strogino Moscow







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Sergei Gorelov – Former Russian defender, now retired having played the majority of his career at CSKA Moscow





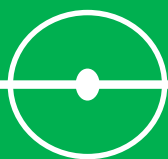
# The Invincible's



There are few things that make a successful title winning campaign. Make your stadium a fortress and win all your home games. Don't lose your games against the big rivals, and as the experts say, win games when you don't play well. Of course having the best players and manager in the league certainly helps!

But some league victorious campaigns are better than others and it's worth highlighting to you the teams that have managed to go through an entire league season without losing a game. Just let that sink in. Think of all those games that ruin your betting coupon at the weekends. Top of the league plays at home against relegation threatened favourites and the away team nick a 1-0 win, and then don't win again and ultimately go down anyway! Chuck in the odd local derby when form goes out the window and you see how improbable it is for a team not to lose a league game in a season.

Time to pay homage to 6 clubs sides that have gone through an entire league season undefeated, and apologies in advance to Preston North End fans, your 1888/89 squad didn't make the cut despite the achievement.



Evaldo Fabiano – Brazilian left back played most of his career in the Portuguese league, with high profile clubs such as Porto, Braga and Sporting



# Arsenal 2003/04

Invincibles League Record	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
<b>Arsenal</b>	38	26	12	0	73	26	+47	90

Manager: Arsene Wenger

Captain: Patrick Vieira

Top League goalscorer: Thierry Henry (30)

Top overall goalscorer: Thierry Henry (39)

FA Cup: Semi Finals

League Cup: Semi Finals

Champions League: Quarter Finals



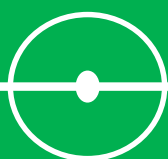
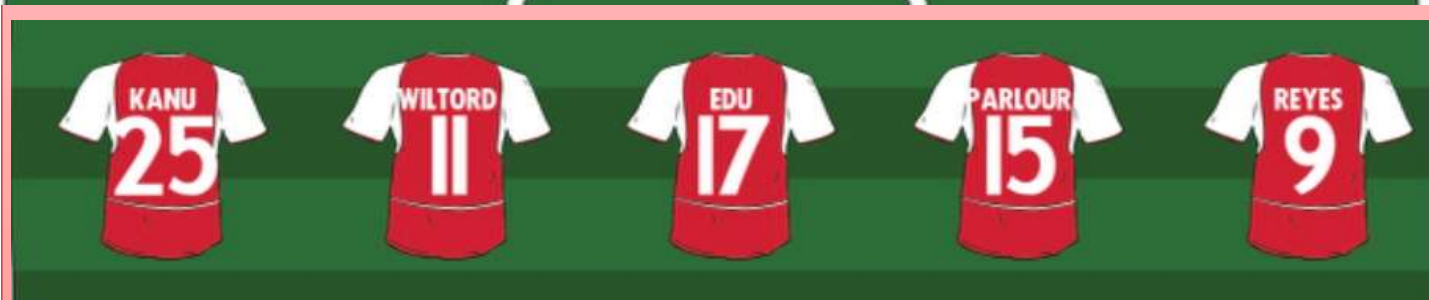
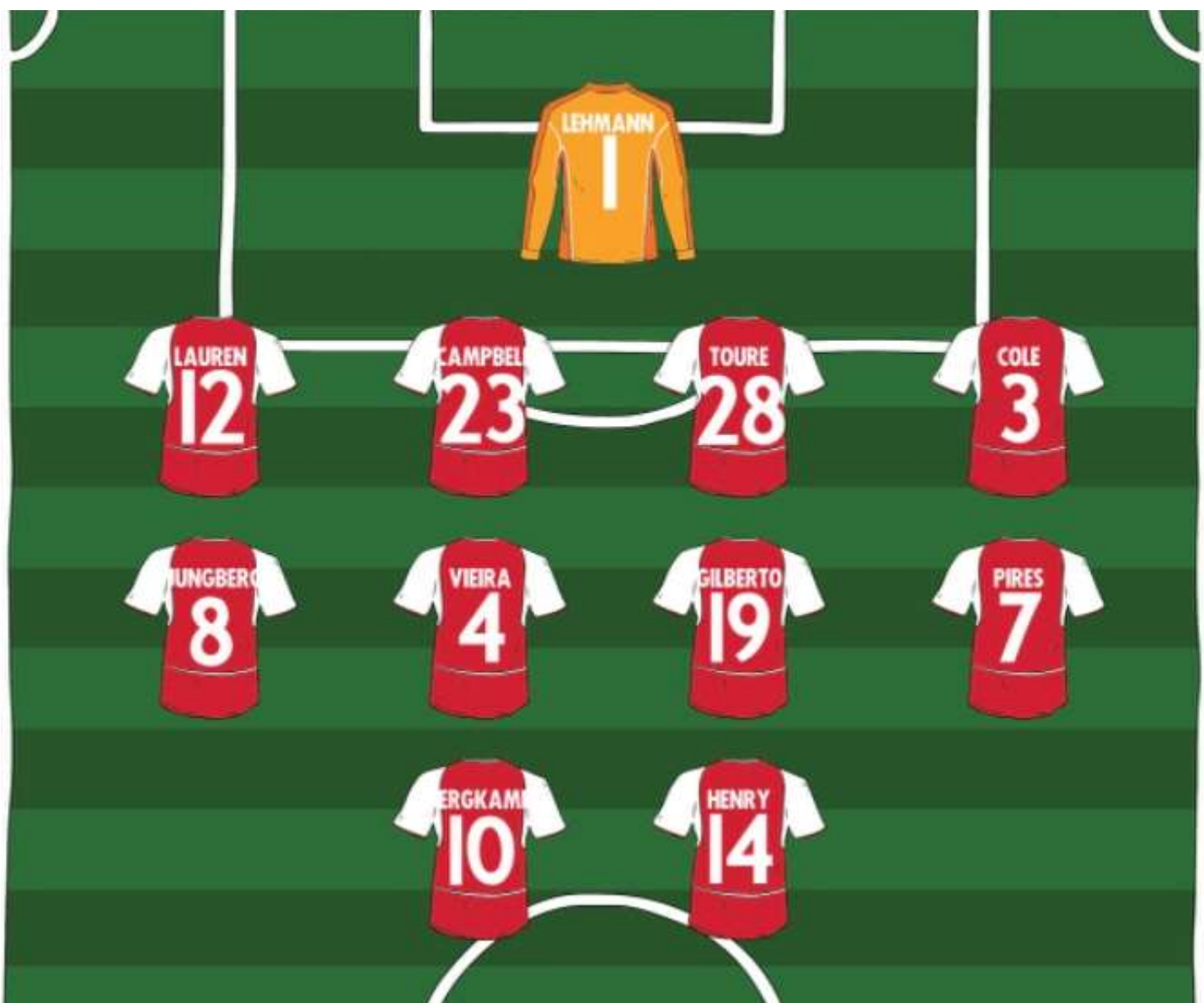
Arsenal came close to losing in the just the sixth game of the season when they travelled to Old Trafford, where Ruud Van Nistelrooy missed a 90<sup>th</sup> minute penalty for the Red Devils.

The first XI, overleaf, commonly associated with the Arsenal Invincibles season actually only lined up this way on 2 occasions during the successful and unbeaten league campaign.



Leonardo Ruiz – Colombian striker on the books of Sporting Lisbon, and has had loan experience at Porto, Boavista and now Logrones





Mike Williamson – Played Premier League football for Newcastle United after signing from Portsmouth, who he signed for costing the club £2million but never made an appearance





# Celtic 2016/17

Invincibles League Record	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
<b>Celtic</b>	38	34	4	0	106	25	+81	106

Manager: Brendan Rodgers. His first year at the club!

Captain: Scott Brown

Top League goalscorer: Scott Sinclair (21)

Top overall goalscorer: Moussa Dembele (32)

Scottish Cup: Winners

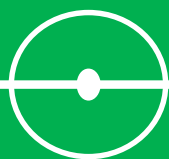
Scottish League Cup: Winners

Champions League: Group Stage



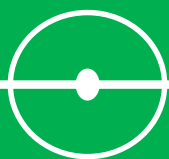
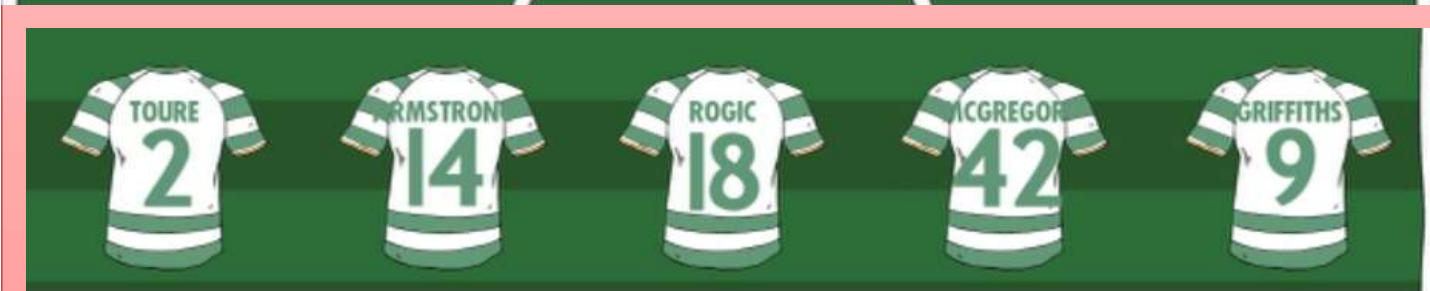
Celtic's title winning points margin of 30 points was also the second largest points gap ever between first and second place in top flight leagues across Europe (only bettered by PSG who won Ligue 1 by 32 points in 2015–16). Celtic's total of 106 points accumulated in the league is a European record for top flight league (Barry Town of Wales in 1996–97 reached 105 points)

Kolo Toure was part of the Celtic squad, meaning he had completed a double of Invincible seasons, having been part of Arsenal's triumph in 2003/04 as well.



Ali Guzelal – Former Turkish attacking midfielder who spent time at Bakirkoyspor before moving to Istanbul Basaksehir





Lorenzo Tonelli – Italian centre defender, on loan to Sampdoria from Napoli, was once punched by an opponent who had burst into Empoli's (his club at the time) dressing room



# AC Milan 1991/92

Invincibles League Record	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
AC Milan	34	22	12	0	74	21	53	56

Manager: Fabio Capello. His first year at the club!

Captain: Franco Baresi

Top League goalscorer: Marco Van Basten (25)

Top overall goalscorer: Marco Van Basten (29)

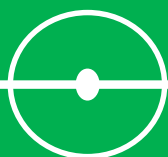
Coppa Italia: Semi Finals



The team's unbeaten run totalled 58 matches between 1991 and 1993, a record in Italian football, encompassing games from the following season as well.

The points total may seem low, however this was because it was still during the time of 2 points for a win.

Remarkably, this was the second time a team had been unbeaten in an Italian season. Even more remarkably Perugia finished the 1978/79 season undefeated, yet some how didn't win the Serie A title!



Shamsiddin Shanbiev – Former Russian U21 versatile defender/midfielder left Spartak Moscow for FC Ural, but never made an impression







Josh McPake – Youth player still on the books at Rangers, but out on loan gaining valuable experience, on the wing, for Harrogate Town



# Juventus 2011/12

Invincibles League Record	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
<b>Juventus</b>	38	23	15	0	68	20	+48	84

Manager: Antonio Conte. His first year at the club!

Captain: Alessandro Del Piero

Top League goalscorer: Alessandro Matri (10)

Top overall goalscorer: Claudio Marchisio,  
Alessandro Matri and Mirko Vucinic (10)



Coppa Italia: Runners Up

The team's unbeaten run was the first in Serie A with 3 points for a win, first for a 20 team league and first for a 38 league game format.

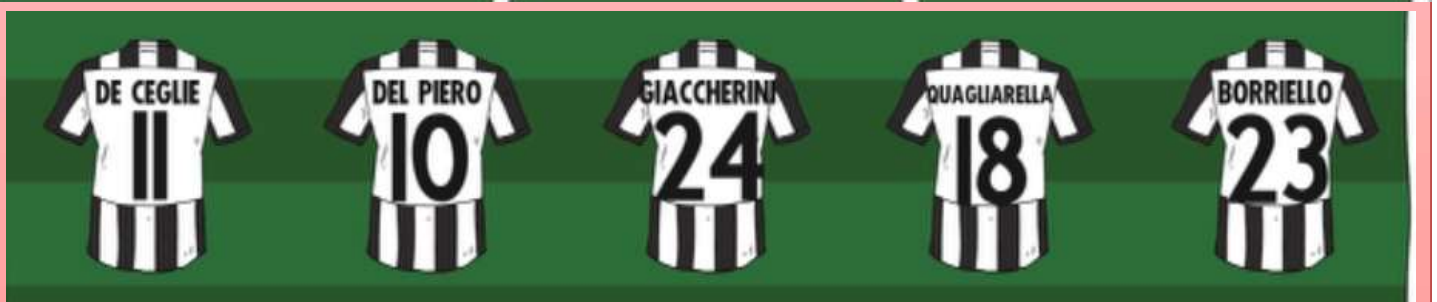
The team had no distraction of European football this season, as in the previous Serie A campaign, they had finished a lowly 7<sup>th</sup> and therefore not qualifying for any European competition.

Not only was it Conte's, the coaches, first season in charge, as well as the first season for new signing Andrea Pirlo, it was also the first season the team played in their new stadium, the Juventus Stadium.



Georgi Gurtskaia – Former Russian forward who's claim to fame is a singular league appearance for Dynamo Moscow in 2004





Luis Loureiro – 6 times capped Portuguese defensive midfielder took a well trodden path in the mid 2000's heading to the Russian league from the Portugal Primeira Liga





# Porto 2010/11

Invincibles League Record	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
<b>Porto</b>	30	27	3	0	73	16	+57	84

Manager: Andre Villas-Boas. His first year at the club! Is there a theme here?

Captain: Helton Arruda

Top League goalscorer: Hulk (23)

Top overall goalscorer: Radamel Falcao (39)

Taca de Portugal: Winners

Taca da Liga: Third Round

Supertaca Candido de Oliveira: Winners

UEFA Europa League: Winners!



Andres Villas-Boas became the new manager of Porto in June 2010, after less than a full season in his first role as manager of Académica.

Two months later, he won his first trophy as a manager when Porto defeated Benfica 2-0 to win the Portuguese Supercup. Villas-Boas went on to lead them to an undefeated season in the Primeira Liga, only the second time this had ever been achieved in Portugal and winning the title by more than 20 points.

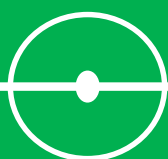
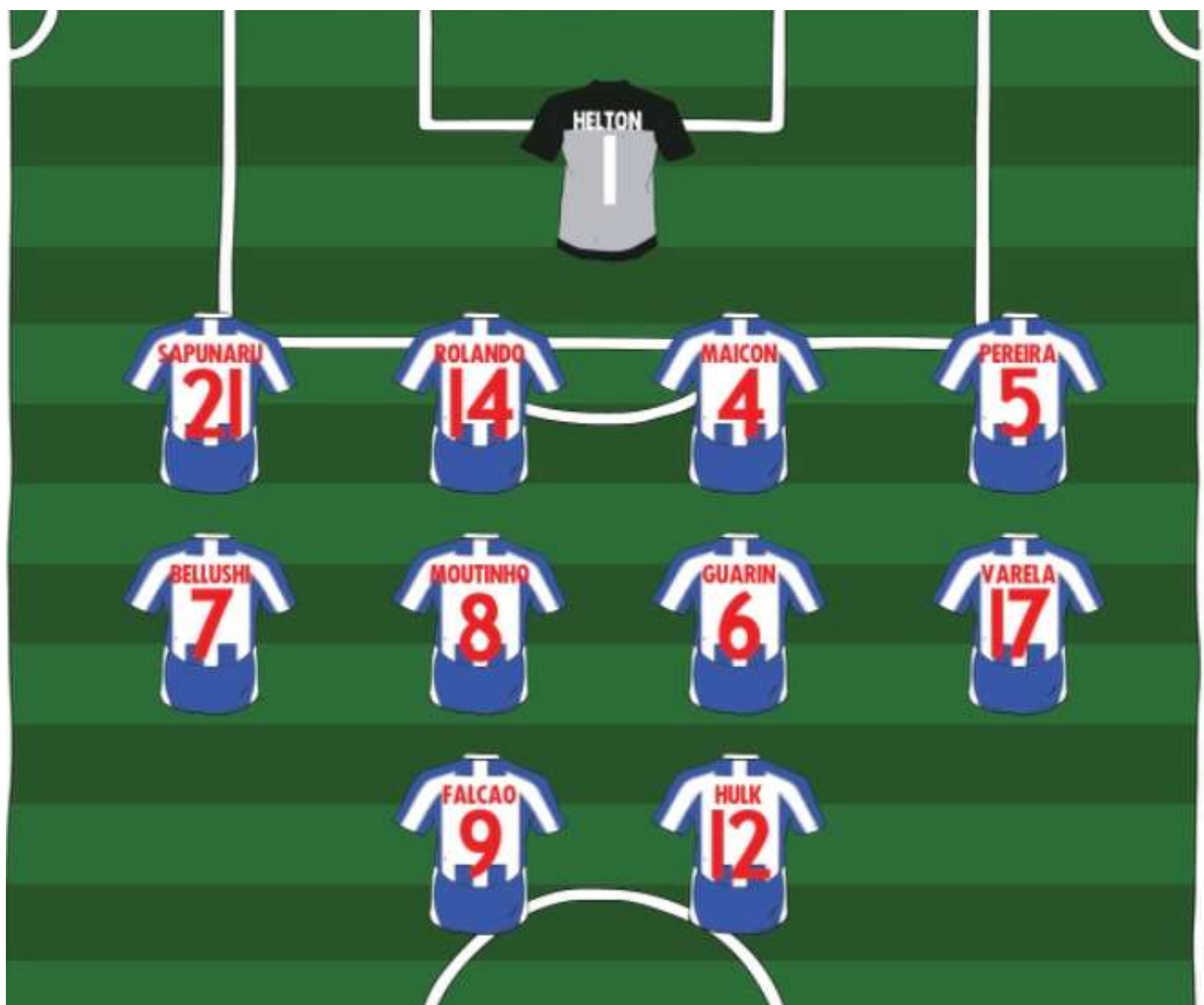
Villas-Boas went on to follow up this success by leading Porto to win both the Portuguese Cup and the UEFA Europa League, thus completing a treble in his first season in charge.

By doing so, Villas-Boas became the third-youngest coach ever to win the Primeira Liga (behind Mihály Siska in 1939 and Juca in 1962) and the youngest manager ever to win a European competition, at the age of 33 years and 213 days.



Alpay Kocakli – Turkish right sided midfielder now on the books of Sakaryaspor, his 7<sup>th</sup> club at only 22 years of age





Nurio Fortuna – An Angolan international left back, who played for Braga in Portugal before moving to Belgium with Charleroi and now Gent



# Ajax 1994/95

Invincibles League Record	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
Ajax Amsterdam	34	27	7	0	106	28	+78	61

Manager: Louis Van Gaal.

Captain: Danny Blind

Top League goalscorer: Patrick Kluivert (18)

Top overall goalscorer: Jari Litmanen (27)

KNVB Cup: Quarter Final

Johan Cruyff Shield: Winners

Champions League: Winners!



Between 1994 and 1996, Ajax completed an unbeaten run of 52 domestic matches + 19 UEFA Champions League matches.

The feat of winning simultaneously both the Champions League and domestic league without a single defeat is a historical achievement unmatched by any other team to date.

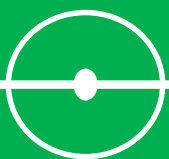
You'll see a repeat appearance for 2 Invincibles; Frank Rijkaard, also achieved at AC Milan in 1991/92, and Nwankwo Kanu who also achieved this at Arsenal 2003/04.



Sergey Efimov – Now retired Russian centre back who played for Lokomotiv Moscow before seeing out his career at Torpedo Moscow







Patrick M'boma – Named African Footballer of the Year in 2000 after helping Cameroon win gold at the Olympics. Also had a 9 game spell with Sunderland in 2002





# Never played in a World Cup Best XI



Antonios Nikopolidis – The Greek goalkeeper in their victorious Euro 2004 campaign, being voted into the All Star team. Finished his international career with 90 caps to his name.



# Never played in a World Cup Best XI

Below we list a line up of XI players, who despite their domestic successes, they were never able to make a single appearance at perhaps the greatest competition in Football, the FIFA World Cup.

**Neville Southall – WALES** – The former Everton shot stopper, appeared for Wales 92 times over the course of 15 years. Sadly the nation never qualified for a major tournament during his career.

**Sami Hyypia – FINLAND** – The Finnish centre back who performed and captained Liverpool so admirably, also played for Finland 105 times over 18 years, but the nation never qualified for the World Cup in that time.

**Basile Boli – FRANCE** – The Ivory Coast born centre back excelled for Marseille in the early 1990s, and represented France on 45 occasions, but sadly for him never at a World Cup Finals.

**Hasan Salihamidžić – BOSNIA** – The right sided utility player, who performed in a dominate Bayern Munich team in the between 1998 and 2007 never got the chance to do so at the national team level for Bosnia, as they never qualified for major tournaments during his international career.

**George Best – NORTHERN IRELAND** – Perhaps the finest of his generation and one of the greatest ever from the British Isles. Best dominated the domestic game for Manchester United but his beloved Northern Ireland never managed to get World Cup finals qualification during his career, and also surprising to us was his caps total, of just 37.

**Duncan Edwards – ENGLAND** - A fellow Manchester United great, and England great, but Edward's career, and sadly life was cut short as a result of the Munich plane crash tragedy. He was just 21 at the time, and surely had the tragedy been avoided he would no doubt have gone on to feature for England, perhaps helping lift the trophy in 1966.

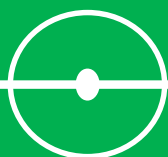
**Bernd Schuster – GERMANY** – The powerhouse midfielder, had won the European Championships with West Germany in 1980, and was voted the second best player of the tournament. He played for, amongst others, Barcelona, Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid but his refusal to take part in a match for West Germany against Albania to be home for the birth of his second caused a disagreement with German Football Association and Schuster retired from the German national team at the age of 24, with just 21 caps to his name.

**Ryan Giggs – WALES** – The winner of the most Premier League medals, 'only' won 64 caps for Wales, and never managed to feature in any major international tournament for Wales. He did appear in the Olympics for Great Britain in 2012.

**Alfredo Di Stefano – ARGENTINA/COLOMBIA/SPAIN** – One of the greatest ever to play the game missed out on multiple occasions to play at the World Cup. Even in 1961 when Spain qualified, he succumbed to injury and missed out once again.

**Eric Cantona – FRANCE** – The charismatic French forward missed out in 1990 and 1994 as did the entire French nation having failed to qualify, and having retired in 1997, he could only watch France win it in 1998.

**George Weah – LIBERIA** – The only African to win the World Player of the year, and his 75 caps for Liberia were a tremendous achievement, but not one of those caps was at a World Cup tournament, as Liberia have never qualified.



Giorgios Fekkas – Young Greek attacking midfielder on the books of Olympiakos but out on loan with Chania to gain experience. One to watch





# "World Champion"

The world's elite agrees:  
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of equipment for their new sensational soccer boot, not to forget  
the official World Cup balls of adidas and the brilliant textile programme.  
The year of the Soccer World Cup proved beyond any doubt:  
Winners wear adidas!



Jamie Ness – A former youth player with Rangers who had high hopes of the midfielder but he left for Stoke City and managed zero league appearances in 3 years for them before moving to the lower leagues



# Historical Line Ups

In this issue we are celebrating the underdog, but specifically in the FA Cup Final.

A huge majority of the cup finals play out to form, and the pre-game favourites get to lift the FA Cup Trophy, but on occasions the form book goes out the window and the surprise package come out on top.

So infrequent does it happen, we really only had 5 cup finals in the modern game to pick from, and even one of those could be debated.

Take a look, and see if you can remember the line ups from the victorious underdogs, that give all teams the dream that perhaps next year, could be their year.

The controversial pick is the 4<sup>th</sup> final on the list, as it was Liverpool's 2001 win over Arsenal. The Arsenal team at the time were the countries best, and by the 82<sup>nd</sup> minute it appeared the form book was bang on, with the Gunners leading the way. Perhaps this game could have featured in our comeback feature!

- 1) Coventry City versus Tottenham Hotspur 1987
- 2) Wimbledon versus Liverpool 1988
- 3) Everton versus Manchester City 1995
- 4) Liverpool versus Arsenal 2001
- 5) Wigan Athletic versus Manchester City



Dmitri Markitesov – Teenage Russian midfielder on the books of Spartak Moscow but mainly featuring for their reserve side until ready for the first team





16<sup>th</sup> MAY 1987

COVENTRY  
CITY

TOTTENHAM  
HOTSPUR

3

-

2

BENNETT (8)

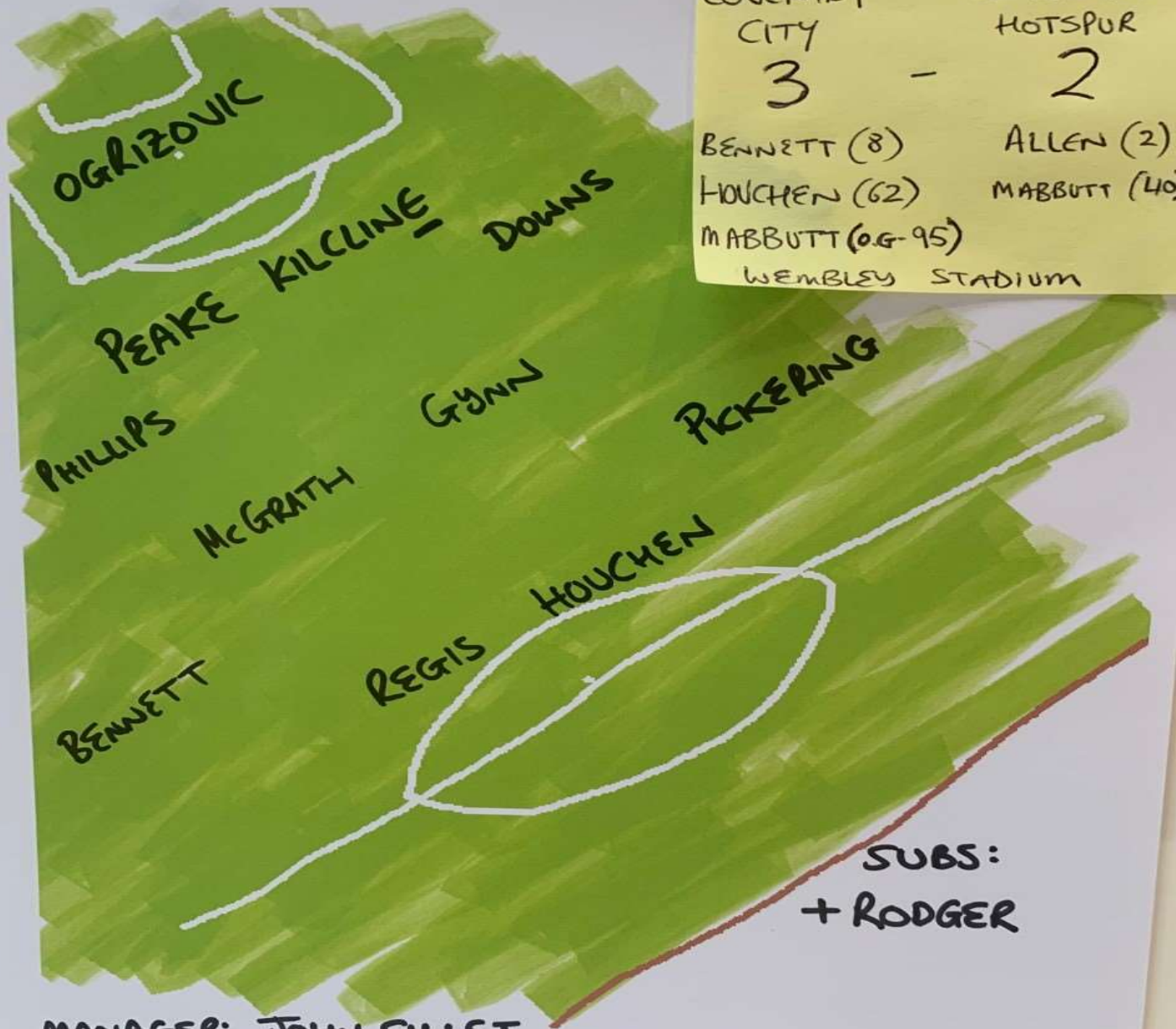
ALLEN (2)

HOUCHEN (62)

MABBUTT (40)

MABBUTT (0.G-95)

WEMBLEY STADIUM



MANAGER: JOHN SILLET  
AND GEORGE CURTIS



Michael Uchebo – Nigerian who played in Holland, Belgium and Portugal as well as for the Super Eagles as a striker, who also failed trials at Stoke City and Rangers





14<sup>th</sup> MAY 1988

WIMBLEDON - LIVERPOOL

1 - 0

SANCHEZ (37)

WEMBLEY STADIUM

BEASANT

THORN YOUNG

PHELAN

GOODYEAR

SANCHEZ

JONES

WISE

CORK

GIBSON

FASHANU

SUBS:

+ SCALES

+ CUNNINGHAM

MANAGER: BOBBY GOULD



Roman Sharonov – Retired Russian international right back (8 caps) who played the majority of his career with Rubin Kazan in his home country



20<sup>th</sup> MAY 1995

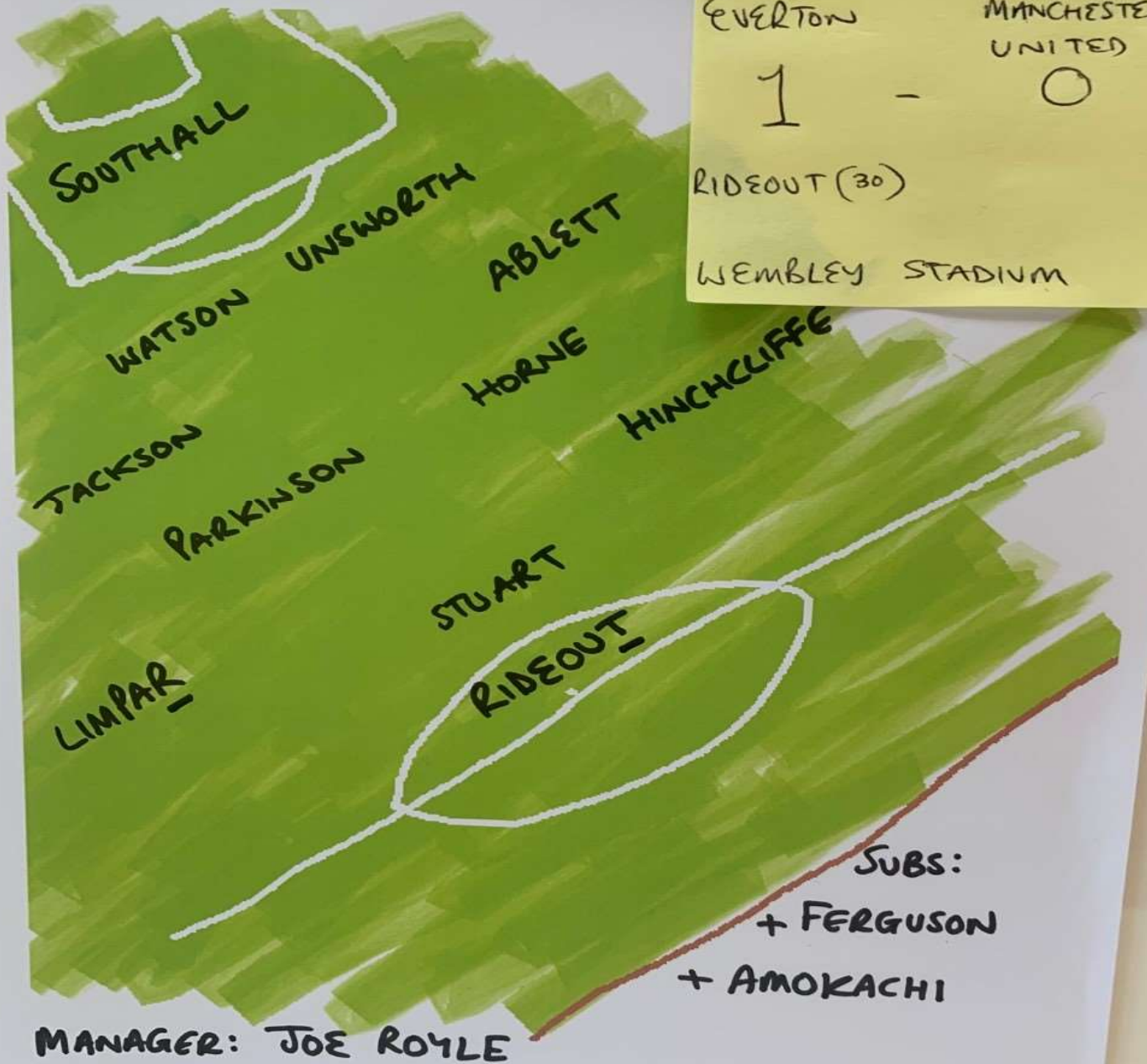
EVERTON

MANCHESTER  
UNITED

1 - 0

RIDEOUT (30)

WEMBLEY STADIUM



Albert Riera – Played Premier League football with Manchester City and Liverpool before moving on to Galatasaray and Watford amongst others





12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2001

LIVERPOOL      ARSENAL

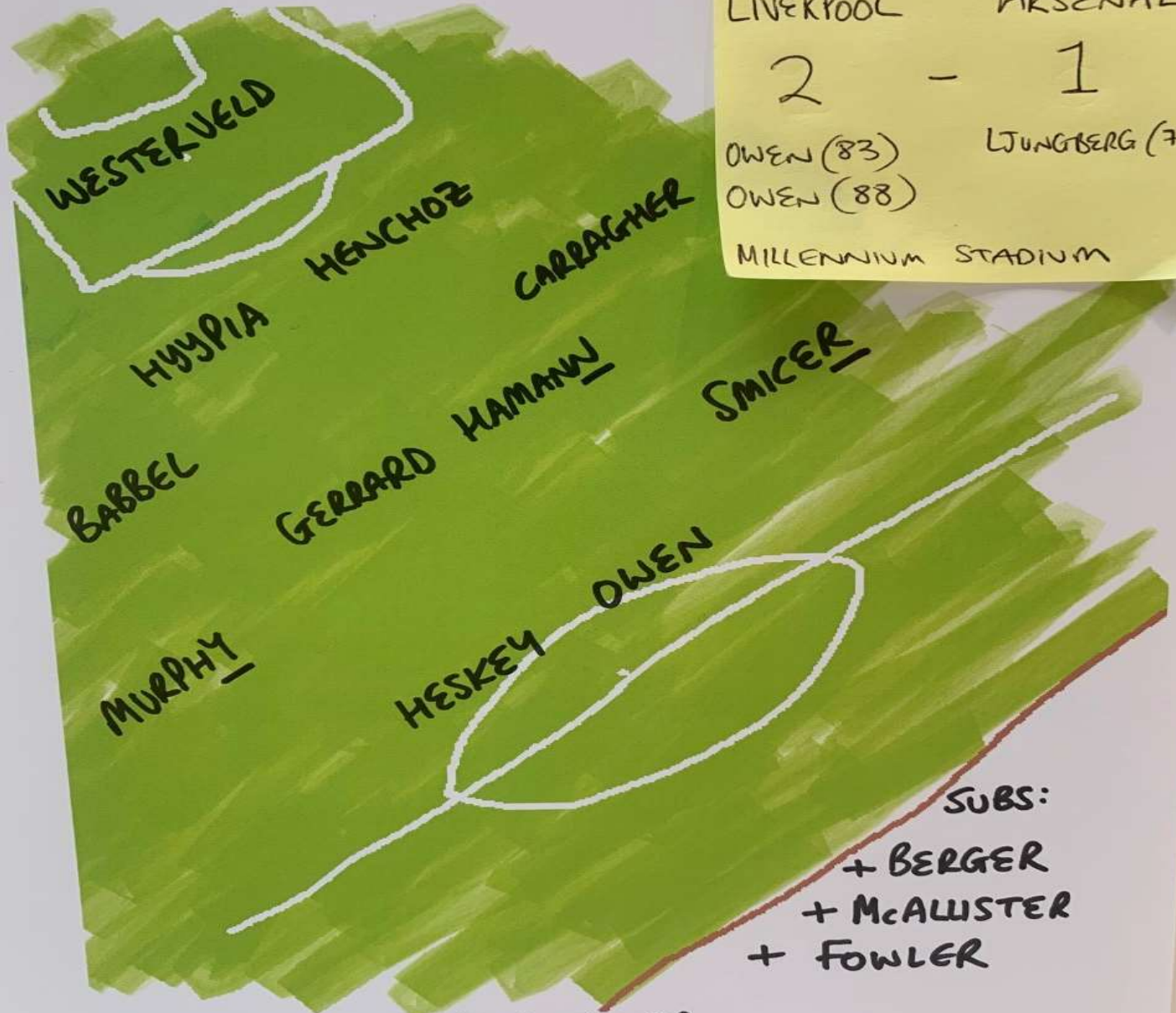
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OWEN (83)

LJUNGBERG (72)

OWEN (88)

MILLENNIUM STADIUM



MANAGER: GERARD HOULLIER

SUBS:  
+ BERGER  
+ McALLISTER  
+ FOWLER



Ivan Maklakov – Young Russian defender who made his debut for CSKA Moscow in 2018, then moved to Zenit St. Petersburg and now on the books of Baltika Kaliningrad





11th MAY 2013

WIGAN  
ATHLETIC

MANCHESTER  
CITY

1 - 0

WATSON (90)

WEMBLEY STADIUM

ROBLES

SCHARNER  
ALCARAZ

ESPINOZA

BOYCE

MCCARTHY  
MCARTHUR  
GOMEZ

MALONEY

MCNAMAMAN

KONE

SUBS:

+ WATSON

MANAGER: ROBERTO MARTINEZ



Vitali Lystsov – Russian defender who started his career at Lokomotiv Moscow and earned a move to Benfica in 2015, but failed to make an impression and finds himself back at Lokomotiv



# Score goals or don't concede goals? What wins you titles?

We mentioned a few useful factors in the introduction to the Invincible feature of what helps a title winning team bring the trophy home and it's a debate we've promised to have at The Halfway Line for some time. One question that keeps popping up is; Are title winning teams goal scorers and rely on banging in more goals than anyone else or are they fiercely competitive at the back and concede less goals than anyone else? Of course the ultimate dream is to be both..

Well we won't solve it all here, but we start preliminary discussions and will revisit it in a later issue with some more statistical analysis.

To start we are bringing in few graphics to see what evidence we can take from the inclusion of players from title winning teams in the PFA Team of the year and see which position features more, goalkeepers and defenders or strikers. Apologies to the midfielders, who'll have to take a back seat for this one.

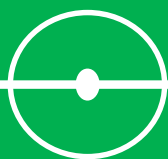
Our findings make for some interesting reading..



El Hadji Diouf – Twice named as African Footballer of the Year (2001,2002) but sadly remembered on these shores for disgraceful spitting incidents whilst with Liverpool and Bolton Wanderers



Season	Champions	Goalkeeper	Defenders	Strikers
1992/93	Manchester United	Peter Schmeichel	Gary Pallister	X
1993/94	Manchester United	X	Gary Pallister, Denis Irwin	Eric Cantona
1994/95	Blackburn Rovers	Tim Flowers	Colin Hendry, Graeme Le Saux	Alan Shearer, Chris Sutton
1995/96	Manchester United	X	Gary Neville	X
1996/97	Manchester United	X	Gary Neville	X
1997/98	Arsenal	X	X	Dennis Bergkamp
1998/99	Manchester United	X	Gary Neville, Jaap Stam, Denis Irwin	Dwight Yorke
1999/00	Manchester United	X	Jaap Stam	Andy Cole
2000/01	Manchester United	Fabian Barthez	Jaap Stam, Wes Brown	Teddy Sheringham
2001/02	Arsenal	X	X	Thierry Henry
2002/03	Manchester United	X	X	X
2003/04	Arsenal	X	Lauren, Sol Campbell, Ashley Cole	Thierry Henry
2004/05	Chelsea	Petr Cech	John Terry	X
2005/06	Chelsea	X	John Terry, William Gallas	X



Georgios Seitaridis - He was part of the Greek national team which won Euro 2004, for which he was voted into the Team of the Tournament at right back





Season	Champions	Goalkeeper	Defenders	Strikers
2006/07	Manchester United	Edwin Van Der Sar	Gary Neville, Rio Ferdinand, Nemanja Vidic, Patrice Evra	X
2007/08	Manchester United	X	Rio Ferdinand, Nemanja Vidic	X
2008/09	Manchester United	Edwin Van Der Sar	Rio Ferdinand, Nemanja Vidic, Patrice Evra	X
2009/10	Chelsea	X	Branislav Ivanovic	Didier Drogba
2010/11	Manchester United	Edwin Van Der Sar	Nemanja Vidic	Dimitar Berbatov
2011/12	Manchester City	Joe Hart	Vincent Kompany	X
2012/13	Manchester United	David De Gea	Rio Ferdinand	Robin Van Persie
2013/14	Manchester City	X	Vincent Kompany	X
2014/15	Chelsea	X	Branislav Ivanovic, John Terry, Gary Cahill	Diego Costa
2015/16	Leicester City	X	Wes Morgan	Jamie Vardy
2016/17	Chelsea	X	Gary Cahill, David Luiz	X
2017/18	Manchester City	X	Kyle Walker, Nicolas Otamendi	Sergio Aguero
2018/19	Manchester City	Ederson	Aymeric Laporte	Sergio Aguero, Raheem Sterling
2019/20	Liverpool	X	Trent Alexander-Arnold, Virgil Van Dijk, Andrew Robertson	Sadio Mane



Nikita Andreev – Young Russian midfielder finds himself without a club after unsuccessful spells at Zenit St. Petersburg, Anzhi Makhachkala and FC Van



We understand this is completely arbitrary and no science or statistics behind the findings, it's merely pointing out on each of the Premier League seasons, is there an even split of representation from defending and attacking players voted into the PFA Team of the Year. It doesn't give us concrete answers, but it gives an interesting steer.

To make it a more even comparison, we won't do an overall count of players, as defenders get 4 births in the line up. Firstly, there is only one season, 2002/03 when Manchester United won the league, where no player from the league's winning team appeared in goal, defence or in the striker positions in the PFA team of the year.

Of the 28 Premier League Seasons:

On 3 occasions we see no goalkeepers or defenders from the league champions in the PFA Team of the year.

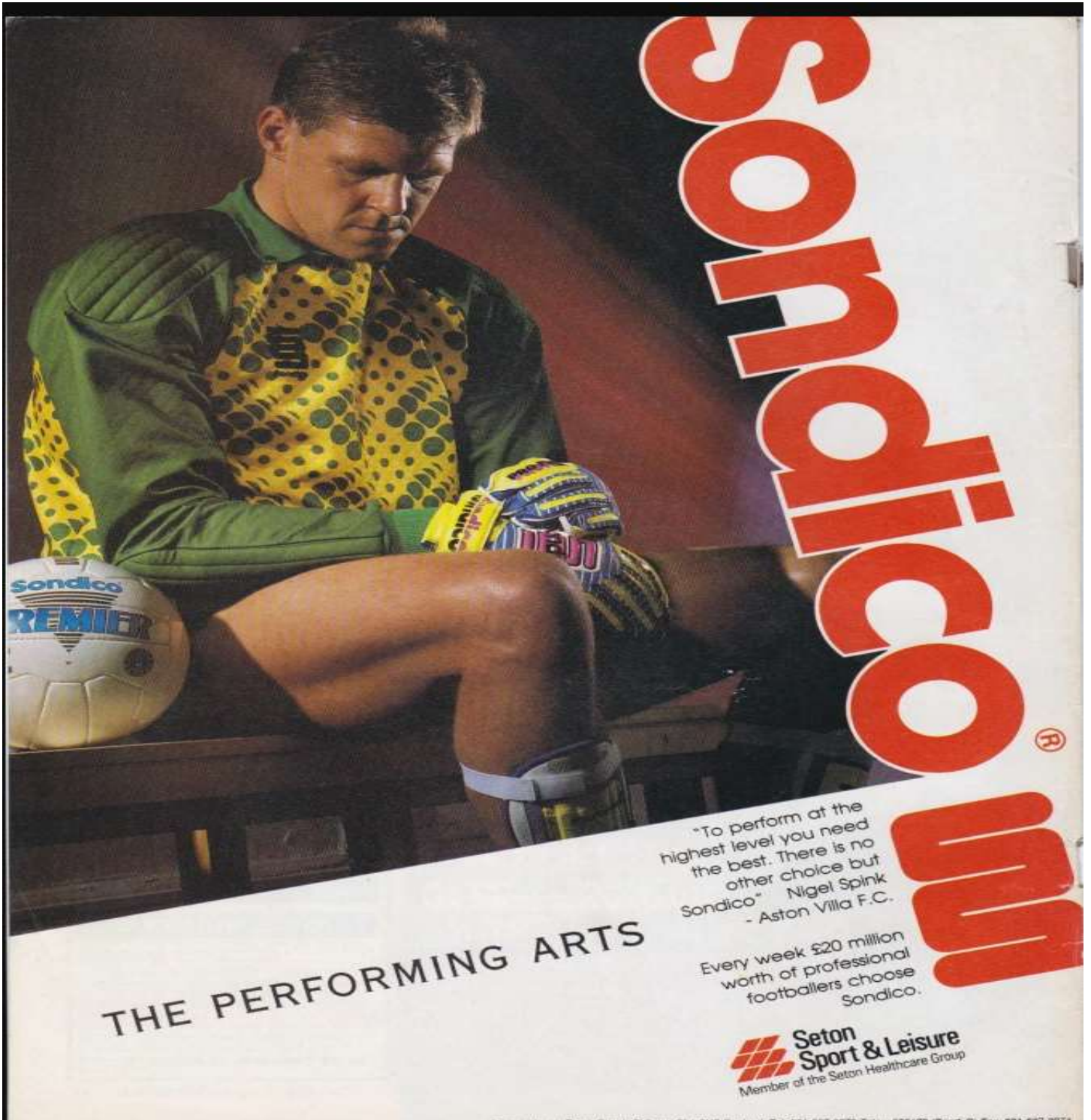
On 12 occasions we see no strikers from the league champions in the PFA Team of the year

1-0 to the defence argument, though this is to be continued....



Christopher Samba – Republic of the Congo central defender was a bargain finding for Blackburn Rovers, and went on to play for QPR and Aston Villa in England as well as Anzhi and Dynamo Moscow in Russia





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Serhat Akyuz – Turkish defender with a nomadic career in his home country featuring mainly for Istanbulspor, Caykur Rizespor and Basaksehir





# TREATMENT ROOM

## The Groin

The three most common causes of groin pain in football are a strain in an adductor muscle, a tendon injury or osteitis pubis, an instability around the pelvis. This feature shows the details of each of these injuries – how they happen, what you feel and how they can be treated.

### **Adductor muscle strain – How it happens**

Muscle tear or rupture to any one of the five adductor muscles, most commonly the adductor longus.

Sudden acute injury often from an overstretched sliding tackle, side step, sudden change in direction while running.

Depending on the severity, groin strains are graded:

Grade 1 strains are a mild injury, where a few fibres are torn or disrupted but the muscle bundle is still intact.

Grade 2 strains are a moderate severity injury, a number of muscle fibres are torn. This will affect your sporting performance and ability to walk.

Grade 3 strains are severe, complete rupture of the muscle. This will affect your ability to run, jump and hop. These injuries may require surgical intervention.

### **What do you feel?**

Immediate pain or pain developing as you cease playing football.

Tenderness in the muscle belly.

Stiffness.

Swelling or bruising along the muscle.

Pain when stretching or contracting the muscle.

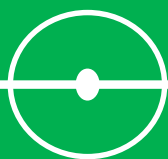
### **Treatment**

Immediately following injury follow the PRICE protocol: Protect the muscle, Elevate the leg, Rest, Ice, Compression of the muscle.

After 48–72 hours you will be assessed to the extent of the injury and treatment can start including: Physical therapy to promote tissue healing and ensure minimal scar tissue formation.

Massage and manual therapy to release tight surrounding structures and address any underlying back, pelvis or hip issues.

Exercise therapy – slow and progressive over stages depending on the severity of the initial tear.



Chidi Osuchukwu – Nigerian winger who started in Europe with Braga of Portugal and now in Russia playing for Tom Toms



### **Adductor tendinopathy – How it happens**

Chronic overuse injury of an adductor tendon.

Tendinopathy can develop from over training or overload, poor technique, or following a previous injury like a muscle strain.

Degenerative wear and tear changes to the tendon fibres which are slow to heal due to poor blood supply in the tendon.

#### **What do you feel?**

Pain at the top of the groin, radiating down leg, Pain with hip flexion, Pain on a specific bone in the groin, Pain squeezing legs together against resistance, Pain running, especially sprinting.

Stiffness in the mornings and sense of weakness when trying to kick or use the leg.

#### **Treatment**

Ice regularly through the day.

Stop stretching the adductor muscles.

Have physical therapy to mobilise tight structures and promote tissue healing using massage, acupuncture and other modalities.

Do isometric exercises 2–3 times per week especially if still painful.

### **Osteitis pubis – How it happens**

An overuse injury, caused by repeated trauma rather than a specific incident. However, there can be a history of a specific incident that triggered the symptoms.

An instability of the pelvic bones, in particular the pubic symphysis, aggravated when asymmetrical loads are placed through the pelvis such as running or kicking.

Associated with poor lumbopelvic (lower back and pelvis) control.

There is often history of previous groin injury, 'sportsman's' hernia or low back pain.

#### **What do you feel?**

Pain over the pubic symphysis with referred pain into the groin, Acute tenderness directly on the bony pubic symphysis, Pain on resisted muscle contraction and pain stretching adductor muscles

Coughing, sneezing, performing sit-ups can cause pain.

Often unable to lie flat on back or on stomach because of pain/discomfort.

#### **Treatment**

Rest to unload the injured region, often a cessation of running and kicking, even the use of crutches in acute severe stages.

Retrain stabilisation control of the pelvic girdle with specific exercises prescribed by your physical therapy specialist.

Manual therapy treatments to normalise soft tissue and muscle flexibility across groin and pelvis.

Early return to activity with low impact, like cycling, swimming with a pool buoy.

Once pain permits, light straight-line running drills may commence.



Bakary Soro – Burkina Faso centre back signed for Charlton Athletic in 2006, although never featured and now plays in Turkey for Sanliurfaspor





# THE BOOT ROOM

We looked at some unsung heroes earlier in this issue, and it's going to be a feature in the Boot Room this time round as well.

We have picked three boot manufacturers that do not get the attention they perhaps deserve and haven't travelled that well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is surprising based on the quality of the examples we've highlighted.

2 of the boot makers were heavily endorsed by absolute monsters of players.

Firstly **Mizuno**, who had the Brazilian Rivaldo as their star sponsor and then **Diadora**, a 90's classic, with a 90's superstar in tow, Roberto Baggio.

Our third boot, **Asics**, follow suit in the fact (that we've debated before) why mess with a winning formula of a black leather boot, white sports logo, and a fold over tongue. We'll even allow the yellow logo with the Diadora 10 Baggio boot (imagine wearing that with a Borussia Dortmund home kit – what a combo!!)



Carlos Eduardo – Brazilian winger who won 6 caps for his country and played in Europe with Hoffenheim in Germany and for Rubin Kazan in Russia







Anderson - The Brazilian, who cost Manchester United £20 million, won the 2008 Golden Boy award and won 4 League titles during his time at Old Trafford





Savio Nsereko – Arguably the worst signing in West Ham United's history, costing £10 million from Brescia making just one start for the club before departing. Also once faked his own kidnapping!





Younes Belhanda - The Moroccan was Montpellier's number 10 in their title winning season of 2011/12 in Ligue 1 as well as winning Goal of the Year and Young Player of the Year





## COUNTRY FOCUS

For this issue of The Halfway Line we are focusing on India as our country of choice.

The All India Football Federation, simply known as the AIFF, is the governing body of association football in India. Formed in 1937, the federation was one of the founding members of the Asian Football Confederation, the overseer of football in Asia.



The Indian Super League (ISL) is the professional football league which represents the sport's highest level in Indian football system.

The competition was founded in October 2013 with the goal of growing the sport of football in India and increasing its exposure in the country

The league comprises of 11 clubs with each season generally running from November to March.

Since the league's inaugural season, a total of three clubs have won the ISL Final and one club has won the ISL League Winners Shield, the trophy awarded to the top team at the end of the league stage. The current champion is ATK, and they have won the trophy 3 times now, the most by any one team.

The leading goalscorer in ISL history is Ferrán Corominas Telechea, commonly known as Coro. He has 48 goals to his name in 57 appearances. Due to the infancy of the league, the record appearance holder in the competition is Mandar Rao Dessai, with 105 games to date.

The Indian national team, known as 'The Blue Tigers' are currently managed by former Croatian international defender Igor Stimac. They are ranked 104<sup>th</sup> in the world, and the highest rank they have ever achieved is 94<sup>th</sup> back in 1996.

The nation have only once qualified for the World Cup, back in 1950, but it was decided that they wouldn't travel to the competition, and have not got close to qualifying since.



Marko Matic - Former U19 Croatian midfielder started his career Udinese but now in his homeland with NK Tabor Sezana



The most successful competition for the Indian national team has been the South Asian Football Federation Championship or SAFF Championship, officially called SAFF Suzuki Cup for sponsorship reasons. Founded in 1993, the Indian national team have won the competition 7 times.

The record goalscorer for 'The Blue Tigers' is Sunil Chhetri (right) with 72 goals, in 115 appearances, that is also a record for the national side. Chhetri has also been named AIFF Player of the Year a record six times in 2007, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2018–19.



Third on the list of all time top scorers for the national team is Bhaichung Bhutia (below), who is worth a mention. In the absence of any Indian International playing in the Premier League, Bhutia signed for Bury in 1999, thus becoming the first Indian to sign a professional contract with a European club. He remained at Bury from 1999-2002, playing 27 league games, scoring 8 goals.



The closest the Premier League as had to Indian international representation, at present, is based on heritage: Jimmy Carter, formerly of Arsenal and Michael Chopra, who played for Sunderland and Newcastle United in the top English division both have links to India based on their father's families.

The ISL's growth in recent years has seen a number of former Premier League players head to India.

These include David James (also managed Kerala Blasters), Gary Hooper, Jermaine Pennant, Michael Chopra himself, Steven Taylor, Wes Brown and Robbie Keane, who also took the reigns at ATK as a player manager, though it was Teddy Sheringham who signed him!

Other players of note are Nicolas Anelka, Alessandro Del Piero, Marco Materazzi, Freddie Ljungberg, Luis Garcia, John Arne Riise, Dimitar Berbatov, Adrian Mutu and Robert Pires.



Kamer Qaka - Kosovo born midfielder who played in the Norwegian league and won U19 caps for Norway then moved to Steaua Bucharest, won Albanian full caps and now back in Norway



# Quiz time

Try your luck with the following questions and find out the answers next month

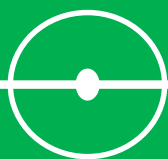
1. Which 2 clubs link Kevin Campbell, Andy Cole and Ian Wright?
2. Which club side was represented the most in the 1990 England World Cup squad? (thank you Skooner)
3. Which club are allegedly the oldest professional association football club in the world, and also claim to be the inspiration for Juventus' club shirt colours?
4. What achievements did the 3 stars on the Panathinaikos shirt of the 2002/03 season signify?
5. Who was the first Croatian to win a Premier League medal?
6. 7 clubs have won the Premier League since 1992, and we've spotted 3 players to play for 4 of the clubs. Can you name one of them, that hasn't won a Premier League winners medal themselves?

## Teammates (all club level)

1. I have been club teammates with El Hadji Diouf, James Milner, Karim Benzema, Nwankwo Kanu and Arda Turan – Who am I?
2. I have been club team mates with Carlos Vela, Daniel Sturridge, Gary Cahill, Tyrone Mings and Pablo Zabaleta – Who am I?
3. I have been team club team mates with Luis Suarez, Graham Alexander, Nicky Butt, Alexander Song and Jonjo Shelvey – Who am I?
4. I have played with Premier League/Division 1 winners Paul Ince, Alan Shearer, Eric Cantona, Chris Sutton, Damien Duff, John Barnes and Peter Beardsley, won 86 international caps, but I have never won the Premier League/Division 1 – Who am I?
5. I have been top goalscorer in a Premier League season, never started a Champions League game, been a team mate of Peter Crouch, Gary McAllister, David James, Stan Collymore and Steve Staunton but I have never played for Liverpool – Who am I?

## What club links the following players?

1. Andy Roberts, Hermann Hreidarsson, Eric Young and Carl Leaburn?
2. Mick McCarthy, Marc Vivien Foe, Jason Denayer, Steed Malbranque?
3. Josh Maja, Lillian Laslandes, Gabriel Obertan and Wahbi Khazri?
4. Alton Thelwell, Peter Crouch, Jon Jonsson and Tobias Linderoth?
5. Daniel Agger, Brad Friedel, Stig Inge Bjernebye and Marc Rieper?
6. Paul Gascoigne, Ravel Morrison, Alen Boksic and Mark Fish?
7. Gianfranco Zola, Mario Stanic, Adrian Mutu and Gervinho?
8. Daniel Amokachi, Les Ferdinand, Demba Ba and John Carew?



Ousmane Drame - French born winger who has played in Italy and in Portugal after having a spell with Sporting Lisbon





## Quiz Answers from Issue #9

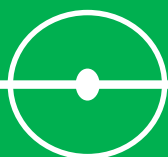
1. Gabriel Batistuta played for 3 Italian sides in his career, can you name them? **Fiorentina, Roma and Inter Milan**
2. USA goalkeeper Tim Howard played for Everton, USA goalkeeper Kasey Keller played for Fulham, but which USA goalkeeper signed for both Everton and Fulham? **Marcus Hahnemann**
3. Steve Guppy and Jeff Kenna were the first players to achieve what in relation to Wembley stadium? **First players to have played at both the old and the new Wembley stadium**
4. Who was the first African player to play in the Premier League? **Peter Ndlovu**
5. Which two 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox animal based animated films (released 2011 & 2017), when put together give you a title winner Premier League defender? **Rio Ferdinand**
6. Luis Suarez and Ronaldo both left Barcelona in transfers that saw the world transfer record broken. True or False? **True. Ronaldo in 1997 and Luis Suarez in 1961 both whom left Barca to join Inter Milan for record fees at the time!**

### Teammates (all club level)

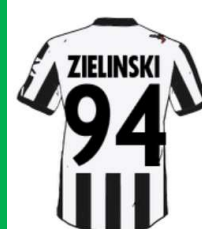
1. I have been club teammates with Robbie Keane, Teddy Sheringham, Jonathan Woodgate, Roberto Soldado and Luca Moura but I have never played for Tottenham Hotspur. Who am I? **David Beckham**
2. I have been club teammates with Darren Peacock, Kevin Gallacher, Alan Shearer, Steve Guppy, Steve Howey and been managed by Kevin Keegan, but I have never played for Newcastle United. Who am I? **Tim Flowers**
3. I have been club teammates with Stilian Petrov, Neil Lennon, Chris Sutton, Jiri Jarosik, Olivier Tebily, Stephane Henchoz and Olivier Kapo and been managed by Martin O'Neill, but I have never played for Celtic. Who am I? **Emile Heskey**
4. I have been club teammates with Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, Nicolas Anelka, Michael Duberry, Bolo Zenden and Shaun Wright-Phillips but I have never played for Chelsea. Who am I? **Robbie Fowler**
5. I have been club teammates with Peter Schmeichel, Andrew Cole, Dion Dublin, Clayton Blackmore, Niall Quinn, Darius Vassell, Gary Pallister, Gareth Barry and David James, but I have never played for either Manchester United or Manchester City. Who am I? **Paul Merson**

### What club links the following players?

1. Chris Armstrong, Les Ferdinand, Gudni Bergsson and Matthew Jansen? **Bolton Wanderers**
2. Samir Nasri, Vincent Kompany, Mbo Mpenza and Cheick Tiote? **Anderlecht**
3. Nacho Monreal, Julio Baptista, Santi Cazorla and Isaac Success? **Malaga**
4. Henrik Mkhitaryan, Fred, Andrei Kanchelskis and Douglas Costa? **Shakhtar Donetsk**
5. Jan Age Fjortoft, Dean Windass, Ashley Ward and Brian Deane? **Sheffield United**
6. Darren Huckerby, Robert Snodgrass, Jon Newsome and Ade Akinbiyi? **Norwich City**
7. Kylian Mbappe, George Weah, Yuri Djorkaeff and John Arne Riise? **Monaco**
8. Philippe Coutinho, Jurgen Klinsmann, Lothar Matthaus and Matthias Sammer? **Inter Milan**



Piotr Zielinski - Polish international cut his cloth with Udinese and Empoli before a big money move to Napoli where he continues to impress



# Forgot they played for them?

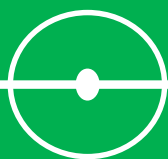
They'll always be a healthy chat when it comes to naming your favourite player to represent your club. For some club's obvious candidates will dominate (top goalscorer or club captain) and perhaps some fans will have a random favourite who is their choice for special reasons (Scored in the first game you went to).

But for a selection some teams it is also possible to name a starting line up of players that it is very easy to forget they actually played for the club, let alone become a fan favourite.

In this issue we look at clubs who have featured prominently in the Premier League since 1992, sharing around promotions and relegations between them.

Portsmouth, Queens Park Rangers and Derby County are the 3 teams in this issue.

Have a look at the line ups and see if you remember the players pulling on the shirt in and when you can't, try to rack that memory bank and work out when and perhaps more relevant, why???



Ivan Ilic – On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 he became the youngest debutant in Red Star club history and first player born 2001 to appear in the Serbian SuperLiga and earned a move to Manchester City



# PORTSMOUTH

6 games



27 games  
1 goal

12 games



14 games  
0 goals

15 games  
0 goals



7 games  
0 goals

18 games  
3 goals



17 games  
1 goal

13 games  
2 goals



Konstantin Sovetkin - Russian midfielder debuted for Spartak in 2008 before moving to on to other Russian clubs without great success





# QUEENS PARK RANGERS

24 games



23 games  
0 goals



21 games  
1 goal



15 games  
1 goal



29 games  
0 goals



14 games  
0 goals

8 games  
1 goal



2 games  
0 goals

20 games  
0 goals



Robert Vilceanu - Scored on his Steaua debut at just 17 years old but only made another 17 appearances for the club and is now in the third tier of Romanian football with ACS Dacia Unirea Brăila



# DERBY COUNTY

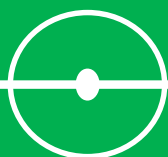


Vanja Vučićević - Young Serbian striker who despite playing for close to 5 seasons has yet to score a goal in league football!



## Page number glossary: Shows player and seasons they wore the associated number

1	Alisson Becker	Liverpool	2019-2021	51	Timothy Fosu-Mensah	Manchester United	2015-2016
2	Clint Dempsey	Tottenham Hotspur	2012-2013	52	Emyr Huws	Manchester City	2013-2014
3	Lucio	Bayer Leverkusen	2002-2004	53	Julio Pleguezuelo	Arsenal	2018-2019
4	Fernando Hierro	Real Madrid	1992-2003	54	Aleksey Vasiljev	CSKA Moscow	2005-2008
5	Mauricio Pochettino	PSG	2001-2003	55	Sabri Sarioglu	Galatasaray	2003-2017
6	John Arne Riise	Liverpool	2004-2008	56	Ilya Gapanov	Spartak Moscow	2018-2021
7	Eden Hazard	Real Madrid	2019-2021	57	Sergey Gorelov	CSKA Moscow	2004-2008
8	Freddie Ljungberg	Arsenal	1998-2007	58	Evaldo	Porto	2003-2004
9	Davor Suker	Croatia	1994-2002	59	Leonardo Ruiz	Boavista	2017-2018
10	Francesco Totti	Roma	1997-2017	60	Mike Williamson	Wolverhampton Wanderers	2016-2017
11	Mario Reus	Borussia Dortmund	2012-2021	61	Ali Guzelal	Basaksehir	2007-2009
12	Carlos Vela	Arsenal	2008-2010	62	Lorenzo Tonelli	Napoli	2016-2020
13	Alex	PSG	2011-2014	63	Shamsiddin Shanbiev	Spartak Moscow	2016-2018
14	Claudio Pizarro	Bayern Munich	2001-2007	64	Joshua McPake	Rangers	2019-2020
15	Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain	Liverpool	2019-2021	65	Georgi Gurtskaia	Dynamo Moscow	2005-2007
16	Gabriel Heinze	Real Madrid	2007-2009	66	Luis Loureiro	Dynamo Moscow	2004-2005
17	Jerome Boateng	Bayern Munich	2011-2021	67	Alpay Kocakli	Alanyaspor	2017-2018
18	Michael Owen	England	1998-1999	68	Nurio Fortuna	Braga	2013-2014
19	Alphonso Davies	Bayern Munich	2018-2021	69	Sergey Efimov	Lokomotiv Moscow	2006-2010
20	Nick Barmby	Liverpool	2000-2002	70	Patrick M'boma	Parma	2000-2002
21	Tony Yeboah	Leeds United	1994-1997	71	Antonis Nikopolidis	Olympiakos	2004-2011
22	Gylfi Sigurdsson	Tottenham Hotspur	2012-2014	72	Georgios Fekkas	Olympiakos	2018-2019
23	Mesut Ozil	Real Madrid	2010-2011	73	Jamie Ness	Rangers	2008-2009
24	Brad Friedel	Tottenham Hotspur	2011-2015	74	Dmitri Markitesov	Spartak Moscow	2019-2021
25	Emmanuel Adebayor	Arsenal	2005-2009	75	Michael Uchebo	Boavista	2014-2016
26	Ledley King	Tottenham Hotspur	1998-2012	76	Roman Sharonov	Rubin Kazan	2007-2014
27	Richard Dunne	Everton	1996-1999	77	Albert Riera	Galatasaray	2013-2014
28	Vinicius Junior	Real Madrid	2018-2020	78	Ivan Maklakov	CSKA Moscow	2016-2019
29	Jese Rodriguez	PSG	2019-2020	79	Vitali Lystsov	Lokomotiv Moscow	2012-2014
30	Richarlison	Everton	2018-2019	80	El Hadji Diouf	AEK Athens	2008-2009
31	James Vaughan	Everton	2004-2005	81	Georgios Seitardis	Dynamo Moscow	2004-2006
32	Laurent Robert	Newcastle United	2001-2005	82	Nikita Andreev	Anzhi Makhachkala	2017-2018
33	Ben Davies	Tottenham Hotspur	2014-2021	83	Christopher Samba	Dynamo Moscow	2013-2014
34	Robbie Keane	West Ham United	2010-2011	84	Serhat Akyuz	Basaksehir	2010-2011
35	Jermain Defoe	West Ham United	2000-2001	85	Chidi Osuchukwu	Braga	2013-2017
36	Kyle Walker	Aston Villa	2010-2011	86	Bakary Soro	Alanyaspor	2015-2016
37	Armand Traore	Wolverhampton Wanderers	2018-2021	87	Carlos Eduardo	Rubin Kazan	2010-2015
38	Jay-Emmanuel Thomas	Arsenal	2008-2010	88	Anderson	Fiorentina	2013-2014
39	Jonathan Woodgate	Tottenham Hotspur	2007-2011	89	Savio Nseresko	Bologna	2009-2010
40	Haruna Babangida	Olympiakos	2005-2007	90	Younes Belhanda	Dynamo Kiev	2013-2016
41	Jimmy Bullard	West Ham United	1998-1999	91	Bojan Matic	Partizan Belgrade	2019-2021
42	Danny Rose	Leeds United	2006-2007	92	Kamer Qaka	Steaua Bucharest	2018-2019
43	Stephen Bywater	Derby County	2006-2008	93	Ousame Drame	Sporting Lisbon	2013-2016
44	Kazuyuki Toda	Tottenham Hotspur	2002-2003	94	Piotr Zielinski	Udinese	2013-2015
45	Lee Camp	Derby County	2002-2003	95	Ivan Ilic	Red Star Belgrade	2016-2018
46	Lynden Gooch	Sunderland	2015-2017	96	Konstantin Sovetkin	Spartak Moscow	2007-2009
47	Antonio Nocerino	West Ham United	2013-2014	97	Robert Vilceanu	Steaua Bucharest	2013-2015
48	Stephen Hughes	Rangers	2001-2001	98	Vanja Vucicevic	Red Star Belgrade	2016-2018
49	Kenwyne Jones	Bournemouth	2014-2015	99	Vagner Love	Flamengo	2011-2012
50	Danny N'Guessan	Rangers	2005-2005	100	Jesus Angelo	Dorados de Sinaloa	2016-2017



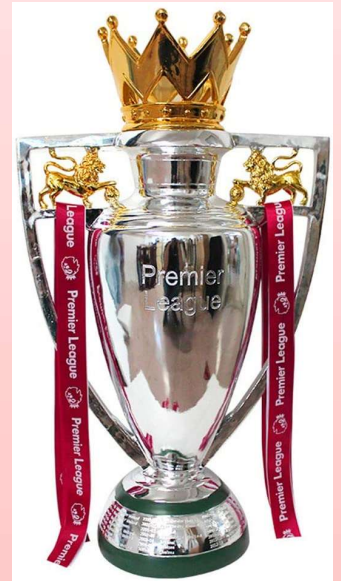
Vagner Love - The second name Love was given to Vágner while playing for CSKA Moscow as he was known for his playboy lifestyle, that he was forgiven for due to his success at the club





# What's coming up in the next issue of The Halfway Line?

- The Premier League Years Special
  - 18 years of the league reviewed
  - PFA teams of the year
  - Top goal scorers season by season
  - The best players of each season



## And the usual:

- The Boot Room
- Classical Kits
- Historical Line Ups
- The Treatment Room
- Forgotten Men
- Team XI never to have...
- And much much more



Jesus Angelo - Played for Dorados de Sinaloa who were the club Diego Maradona had his penultimate manager role with. Angelo now plays for Deportivo Guadalajara aka Chivas



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