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19-05-2011 17:22 #1

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

How To Meet The Next Season

Introduction

So another season has been and gone. The last kick of the ball in the last game of the season has passed, the squad has gone on holiday, and the manager is now left with a period of one or two months free from matches in which to put all his slowly fermenting plans from last season into motion. It is a time of reflection, a time of invention, a time of analysis and reconstruction and revamping. Maybe rebuilding or rethinking. There is always something to do in the Off Season, always something to be tinkered and changed, indeed for the virtual manager that takes pains to actually be a virtual manager this is a time to do everything. To tweak every fine detail of every area of your club to ensure that you are as ready to meet next season as you were to meet the last, if not more ready.

But OMG I hear you cry, that is such a vast quantity of mind numbingly intricate attention to detail. Well you are wrong, because in FM when you run a well run club from top to bottom, all the tiny little details and tweaks to every inch of the team occur naturally. Improvement flows inexorably like water into the sea. But when you are clever about it, when you forget about micro-management and think about football, not only does improvement flow inexorably forward but the Off Season becomes a time where fun and improvement become one and the same.

All that is required is that you stop thinking about a computer game called FM that can somehow be "cracked" and instead think about being a Football Manager. It's easy.

Part 1: The Final Days

All new seasons begin with the end of the old and as soon as my last game finished I made two decisions that were already made for me. My 41 year old backup Goalkeeper Frank Rost and 35 year old backup Striker Dimitar Berbatov had both expressed their unhappiness at lack of football at my club. While I was keeping them around to offer them Coaching roles once they retired, neither player was hanging his boots up yet, and so in the best interests of everyone these two players were released, and done so after a few cleverly placed media comments about their suitability as coaches. Everyone was happy, a very natural decision was effortlessly and painlessly made. Ofcourse I added both players to my shortlist and subscribed to their news items. I plan to have them back as coaching staff when they retire. I am running an old boys club here.

The next thing to occur was that both my feeder clubs got promoted, Burnley to the Premier League and Stockport to the Championship. Glad to see my youngsters had fun seasons, and so when I recalled them I had a bit of a smile to see each of them expressing sadness at having to leave and hoping their good experiences would help them break into my First Team. And of course I now have more space in my First Team. This was the perfect opportunity to look through my Youth Team and pick out those players I want to take with my First Team on the Pre-Season tour. And these two lads were the obvious choices:



I have a sneaky suspicion Stockport County might be interested in their services to avoid relegation next season.

With my First Team Squad for the Pre-Season Tour filling out rather rapidly and that is before any potential signings and before the 18 year olds get promoted from my Youth Team, it was time to make some tough but necessary decisions on the careers of a few players. I had a look through all those players that were on loan that season but had failed to impress me, and I transfer listed them and sent them to the Reserves. Transfer Listing them will not only bring in some cash if I sell them, it will not only provoke a reaction and tell me who is "Determined to Prove His Worth" but it is also a handy way of knowing who got promoted from the Youth Team when it happens, because everyone else will be Listed.

So with a bit more room opened up in my First Team Squad, it was time to allow myself a little think about which of my transfer targets I should go for. Also with the European Championships starting up soon I had some interesting decisions to make, move quickly or wait and watch and observe players playing in unusual and different circumstances? Hmm decisions. However when spending a while to trek through some of the more interesting news items in my inbox I came across a message that made up my mind instantly.

"Francisco rejects new 5 year contract".

Francisco is someone I have been keeping an eye on, a young and decent DM with adequate playmaking skills, the ideal kind of player for my team. And if I can find a playmaking DM good enough for my First Team I can then set my long term plan of retraining Sandro as a Centreback into motion. This is exciting news, because if he is rejecting a five year deal he must be wanting out. So I pull up his profile and check out all his contractual details. Minimum Fee Release Clause of £14 million for a 22 year old player valued at £11.5 million? Someone mucked up there, I will have a shot of that thank you very much.

So £14 million bid sent and accepted and we head into contract talks. Francisco is currently on £22,000 a week and is Indispensable to club. He is asking me for £70,000 a week and First Team status. How about £40,000 a week and Rotation with a 10k appearance bonus? Yeah happy? Deal.

And so Francisco will be joining us on the 1st of July.



Ugly brute with a few flaws, but with with a bit of training he can atleast be a really useful squad player, if not a potential First Teamer. We shall see. I could always retrain him to play Right Back for when I play teams like Burnley at Old Trafford.

One of the sad things about football is that people retire and as I inch a few days closer to the European Championships my long serving Scout Martin Ferguson retires from football. Excellent at spotting youth and he will be missed. As with all things in football though this presents me with an opportunity. At the end of this season one of the chunks of the giant loans my club is saddled with will be paid off, an entire £1.8 million *per month* will stop going to loan sharks and so at the end of the season my club will start making an extra £21.6 million per season ontop of everything else. I have been waiting for this year for a *long* time.

I decide that because of the position I am in just now I will replace Martin with one of the best scouts in the world. I have heard a rumour that Scout Reputation plays a role in the quality of their reports, so I decide to look for the highest reputation, best quality scout I can find for a non utterly rediculous wage. I settled on this chap to join Oliver Beirhoff et all in my scouting staff, you might have heard of him:



I reckon he will cost me around £600,000 a year in wages, but at the end of this season my club will start making an additional £21.6 million a season. Overpaid? Or worth it? Well I'm not going to notice his wages eating into my cash once I start making £21 million more a season.

Seeing as I am sorting out my scouts anyway I thought this would the ideal opportunity to sort out my scouting assignments for the upcoming European Championships. I cancel all scout assignments and I select my two best scouts to go scout the entire Championship as a whole and the other to go scout the Under 21 European Championship Qualifiers. I then decide to have a look through all the squads taking part in the European Championship, there is only 16 of them, and any players that show up blue for being on my short list get one of my scouts watching them for 3 matches. This way my best scouts are watching the competition for any gems I might have missed, while my good scouts are specifically watching all the players I am interested in, and watching them closely.

And that is the last few days of my season, the club is ready and rocking to go for the European Championships, I have a new player already signed up and waiting and a new top notch scout I am about to put through his paces. Not exactly a chore was it?

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19-05-2011 17:22 #2

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The "Off" Season

The name taunts me because as sure as anything I will end the season with a fully fit squad and one or two injuries and the players will come back to me with a bunch of Key Players having torn hamstrings or broken ankles or other such inevitable injuries that comes with International Managers refusing to drop Wayne Rooney when he is 75% fit. By my calculations he has only had about six months rest in ten years, and ofcourse it's up to me to make sure he doesn't become jaded or I don't play him to exhaustion or to make sure he is maintaining a good level of form. You chaps in the lower leagues have an easy ride.

The main focus for me this "Off Season" is to strengthen my midfield and/or defence. I play with two defensively minded playmakers but I only have the two right now. I have a few good attacking CM's and this works well in squad rotation against the meat of the league, when I can rotate and keep my two defensive playmakers fit and fresh for the big games, but if one gets injured then I don't have that same midfield strength in the big games. Plus I have one of these defensive CM's shoehorned in to become a Centreback in the future, so although I am getting Francisco I wouldn't say no to another defensive playmaker, or a quality Centreback.

That's what I *need* but I am not averse to taking a punt on some interesting young random player that catches my eye. My scouts are in place and ready, I have a few matches hunted out I want to watch in person that have a bunch of my shortlisted players playing, it's time for the big kick-off.

To cut a long story short a player pops up that causes equal parts excitement and frustration. How the f*** did I miss this lad?



I am tempted to sack my German scout on the spot, but I make a mental note to send someone to scout Turkey from now on.

Quite simply this player is *the one*. He is the absolute perfect player for my team, my needs, my plans. There is only one small hitch, £26 million value on a four year deal at FC Bayern that don't like me very much. Ouch! Well choices have to be made and the choice here is obvious. No matter what it costs me I have to have this player. If I cannot buy him this season then I will spend only what I absolutely *must* and I will save up for him next season, or the season after, however long it takes to purchase this absolute, ultimate gem of a player for my team.

My transfer budget this season is hefty, and I mean hefty. But even then, even with balancing budgets and selling off a *lot* of young talent I doubt if I will be able to raise enough cash this season to prise him away from Bayern. It's such a shame because he is utterly ideal for my team.

But then a plan begins to form. I wonder....



Gourcuff has been a fabulous player for me, even considering this feels like adultery, but last season he started to lose his place to younger and better suited players down his traditional right flank. Most of last season I used him as a CM but he is not exactly suited to that either. I think if Gourcuff stayed he would not be a genuine First Team regular and at 29 he is not going to get better. With a value of £29 million I could sell him for maybe £40 million and *then* I would surely have enough to buy Koray. I already have Francisco coming in so I wouldn't be a man lighter if my attempt to buy Koray fell through, but with the Gourcuff transfer fee I doubt it would.

I wont enjoy selling Gourcuff but if sacrificing him means I will significantly improve my team then there is no room for nostalgia and ceremony. You have been a great player for me Gourcuff and I will always think kindly of you, but now comes the time when the team comes before the man, now it is time to make you want to leave...

It's a harsh business this.

However Gourcuff is with the France side and they have reached the Final of the European Championships. It's not yet time to put him up for sale. I will wait and see if his stock rises even further before parading him around the marketplace. What? You think that because I like the player I wouldn't exploit every opportunity to maximum advantage? That's a skill you need learn then isn't it?

With England inevitably knocked out of the European Championships early, and the promotion of my young and high potential Centreback from the under-18's, two messages appear in my inbox from Wes Brown and then Rio Ferdinand. Both intend to Retire from Football at the end of the season. I have kept these players on my books because they are excellent Mentors and until last season were both capable of filling in when needed. Both players got few starts last season, and seem to recognise that their time has come. I have planned all along to offer them coaching jobs and have managed their contracts accordingly. I have a rule at my club that anyone 30 or over only ever gets a two year deal, basically a continuous stream of one year extensions year after year so I can manage their wages in line with their abilities, or even outright release them with little penalty if it's desirable. Because both players are on low wages, and because both players intend to retire at the end of the new season, I have no problems offering both players instant Youth Coach roles at my club.

For the pricely sum of £1,500 per week I get Wes Brown, a four star Tactics and Defending coach. For the slightly higher £3000 a week I get Rio Ferdinand, a 4.5 star tactics and defending coach. Both players disappear from my playing lists although they keep their playing attributes. Perfect. Age had caught finally up with them but I rewarded these excellent servants with Youth Coaching roles, and they in turn have rewarded me with their excellent defensive Coaching abilities. This could not have been managed better, or come at a better time. They join the ranks of Neville, Van der Sar, Giggs and Scholes as players I have kept on as coaches after they retire. Quite a good collection I am building up there.

While I am in the coaching screen I might as well sort my coaches out and see if I can maximise the star ratings, workloads, and coverage by my Assistant/Reserve/Youth Team Managers. I do that fairly easily and I am left with a slight surplus of coaches. Lo and behold the next day the long serving Tony Whelan announces his decision to retire as Coach. Like a river flowing into the sea, a well run club just flows along with minimal fuss.

I wonder if this is why it's called the "Off" Season?

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19-05-2011 17:23 #3

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

Part 3: The First Few Days

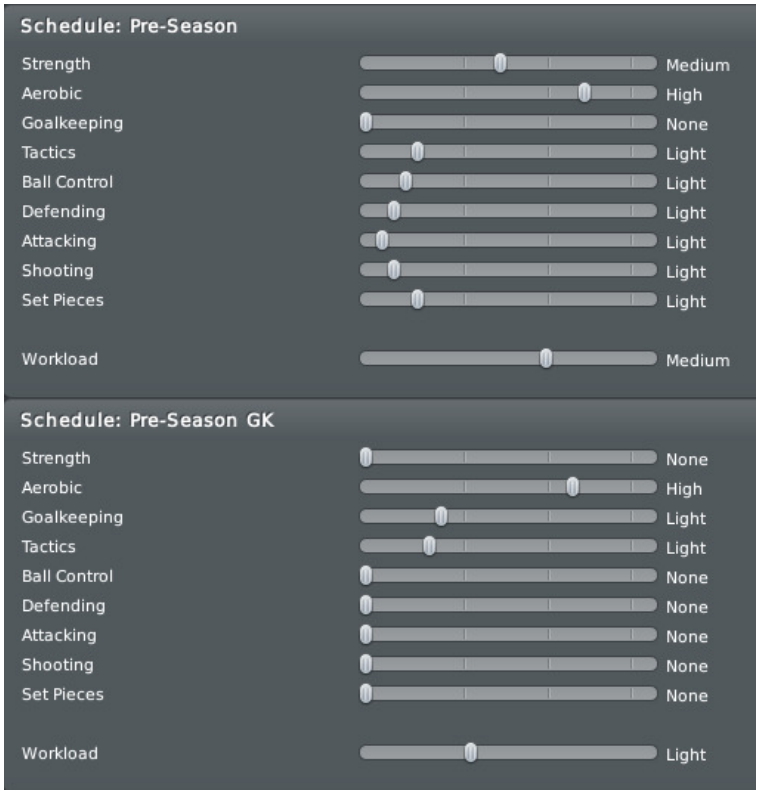
On the 24th of July all hell breaks loose in England. Quite literally *everything* that could possibly happen to do with football happens simultaneously. The FA releases fixture lists for every single competition at every level of football at precisely the same time as season transfer and wage budgets are finally calculated by clubs, at precisely the same time as thousands of youngsters are found for the first time, at precisely the same time as every player in the entire footballing pyramid returns for Pre-Season training. The managers office is a maze of faxes pouring out from every direction as hundreds of phones ring and coaching staff and players and scouts and tea ladies came running in and out of the office all day long. The younger managers deal with this by deciding to go and have a kick about with the players, the older managers simply go home for a lie down.

The way I deal with all this, well, mess is to start with the basics. The first thing you want to handle is Fitness and Pre Season Friendlies. Experience has taught me two things, one that a specialised Pre-Season schedule is a very wise tool to have, and two that early Pre-Season tours are a complete disaster when it comes to fitness.

Pre-Season Training

Pre-Season training isn't something you can "tick" or "choose". It's something you have to invent yourself, and you need to know why you are "inventing" it. The biggest challenge a manager faces during the Pre-Season is preventing as much Physical Decline as possible while you race to get the players Match Fit. In terms of training this means you want a reasonably low Overall Workload to recover condition quicker, but with a huge bias towards Physical Training so that these attributes have the biggest resistance to change.

Remember it is not maximum levels of Physical Training you are after, but maximise bias towards Physical Training without injuring players or reducing their ability to recover condition. My Pre-Season schedules look like this:



It's pretty much what you would expect a Pre-Season schedule to look like, but it wasn't until I realised what was actually going on during Pre-Season that I built any. They are a fairly recent addition to my management process, and once again without specifically coding in "Pre-Season Schedules" SI have made a game where they are completely relevant. The Overall Workload of my schedules is significantly less than my usual schedules, but the bias in favour of Physical Attributes is significantly higher. These are Ronseal Schedules.

The next thing I did, because I have been complacent in the last couple of seasons, is CTRL A every schedule barring my Pre-Season ones and then hit delete. I am going to rebuild individual schedules for my players from the ground up after Pre-Season is finished, most of you can skip this step but the benefit imo is worth it if you have the patience and the ambition.

Pre-Season Friendlies

The timing of these is important. Start off too intensive too early and you will knacker all your players. Start off too late and your players will fester and rot, literally. I have a basic template for friendlies that goes something like this:

Warm up game -> Rest -> Four Match Tour of US of A -> Rest -> Big Team -> Rest -> Warm up game -> Rest -> Charity Shield.

That's seven matches between now and the Charity Shield but I currently have a big squad and it will contain a whole bunch of players that will be going on loan after the Pre-Season. So long as I don't get bored and rush and screw up all my plans, so long as I take the Pre-Season slowly and properly, then plenty of my young guns will get plenty of matches while my main players achieve and maintain fitness. That's what it's all about.

So when do you start? Well what I do is start with the Charity Shield and work backwards. Seven days rest is a bit much, three days rest is far too little. So say 5-6 days is the ideal rest period between games. This puts me at a starting position somewhere around the 3-4-5th of July for the first "warm up match" or ten days to two weeks from now. This will give players time to "cool off" after their International exhertions, it will give me time to poke Bayern a bit and see what they want for their player, it will give me some time to flog Gourcuff, and it will give me time to sort out a whole bunch of other stuff.

Sorting Out Your Squads

The next thing you want to do is make sure your squad is in tip top shape as a squad right on day one of the new season. Your First Team Squad should be pretty hale and hearty anyway but it is always a good idea to turn your view to "Contract" and set out the squad status levels for the coming season, and to make sure there are no contracts running out soon that you have forgotten about. It's possible you may

ruffle a few feathers adjusting squad status, so get it out of the way early and use the usual management of tricks of being sickly nice to everyone that has a problem for as long as it takes for them to shut up.

Your Youth Team is a different story and is likely to be in a complete mess. A bunch of players will have been promoted to the Reserves so check them out and decide who and how many you want to keep. If you want to keep some and loan them out stick them in your First Team for now and give them the odd Pre-Season sub appearance to generate some interest. Sell the rest.

Now go into your Youth Team and look at some of the really dire players that have come through your youth Academy. Anticipation 1?? You should be an accountant not a footballer, out you go. Be ruthless and get rid of junk now, but try to keep some semblance of an actual team around. You can sack other players once you find adequate replacements later.

Bits and Bobs

Unless you always keep a checklist there will be things you forget to do and just pop into your head throughout the Pre-Season, it happens. This time I nearly forgot to hunt out a second feeder club as my link with Burnley was terminated. I'm opting for Leicester as they have a great manager, but will they be keen?

The Transfer Saga Begins

Now for the fun bit, trying to get Bayern to sell me their amazing young midfielder. I just checked out their manager and it would appear he has a fairly poor opinion of me, oh yes the wind is at my back here...

I think I need to try and butter him up, but with an evasive and short tempered personality I am starting to find this whole thing quite amusing. Oh how you mock me football gods.



So that's how it looks. He doesn't like me, he does like FC Bayern and the options are not exactly self evident as to what to choose. If I comment on him I am likely to get short shrift, so that leaves me with commenting on his team. There is one that sticks out for me, it is complimentary yet aggressive. It could provoke outright hostility as well as provoking a positive reaction, but it's the one that feels most natural *to me* and that one is "Tell Augenthaler you think FC Bayern are the biggest team in Germany".

Probably not a clever choice to imply his side is weak outside Germany if I am trying to pinch one of his key players, but then relations can't really get a whole lot worse. So lets go for it. Complimentary and aggressive, praise and provocation, give with one hand and take with the other. It's the perfect choice for me. I'm a football manager not a chat show host, and above all else he should respect *that*.

Or so I hope anyway.

End of Day One

I keep feeling there is something I have forgotten to do, something niggling away at the back of my mind. I'm wracking my brain trying to think what it could be. There is probably a lot I have forgotten to do but one thing is niggling more than most.

Ah I remember, the perfectly timed £37.5 million bid for his player.

Let the games begin.

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19-05-2011 17:23 #4

SFraser

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Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

Marching Towards The 1st of August

A mere four hours later after my first press of Continue, I get a whole bunch of news. Some of my youngsters have signed new contracts almost instantly, while a few of my players have taken the huff at being knocked down a notch in the pecking order. There are also a whole bunch of contract terminations and much to my annoyance it turns out I forgot to check the age of my young goalkeepers who have been promoted to the Reserves without me noticing and I have sacked all my remaining under-18 goalkeepers. Makes my previous advice all the more relevant. So once I settle my main transfer target one way or another it will be time to go out hunting some young goalies.

The most interesting piece of news is that while my initial transfer bid for Koray was rejected, it seems his manager thinks the two of us could become friends. My mind games have worked and a transfer now looks possible this season. Poor guy. I make a new bid of £45 million to show I am deadly serious and set about hunting for spare cash in the guise of players I don't need. I have quite a few youngsters that simply wont get much attention this season, including two 18 year old goalkeepers. I already have a First Choice and Backup goalkeeper, I don't need four. I do however like to have three, possibly with one out on loan for a while, so I put the weakest up for sale, and do the same with a lot of other youngsters. This is where some astute investment a few seasons ago can pay off.

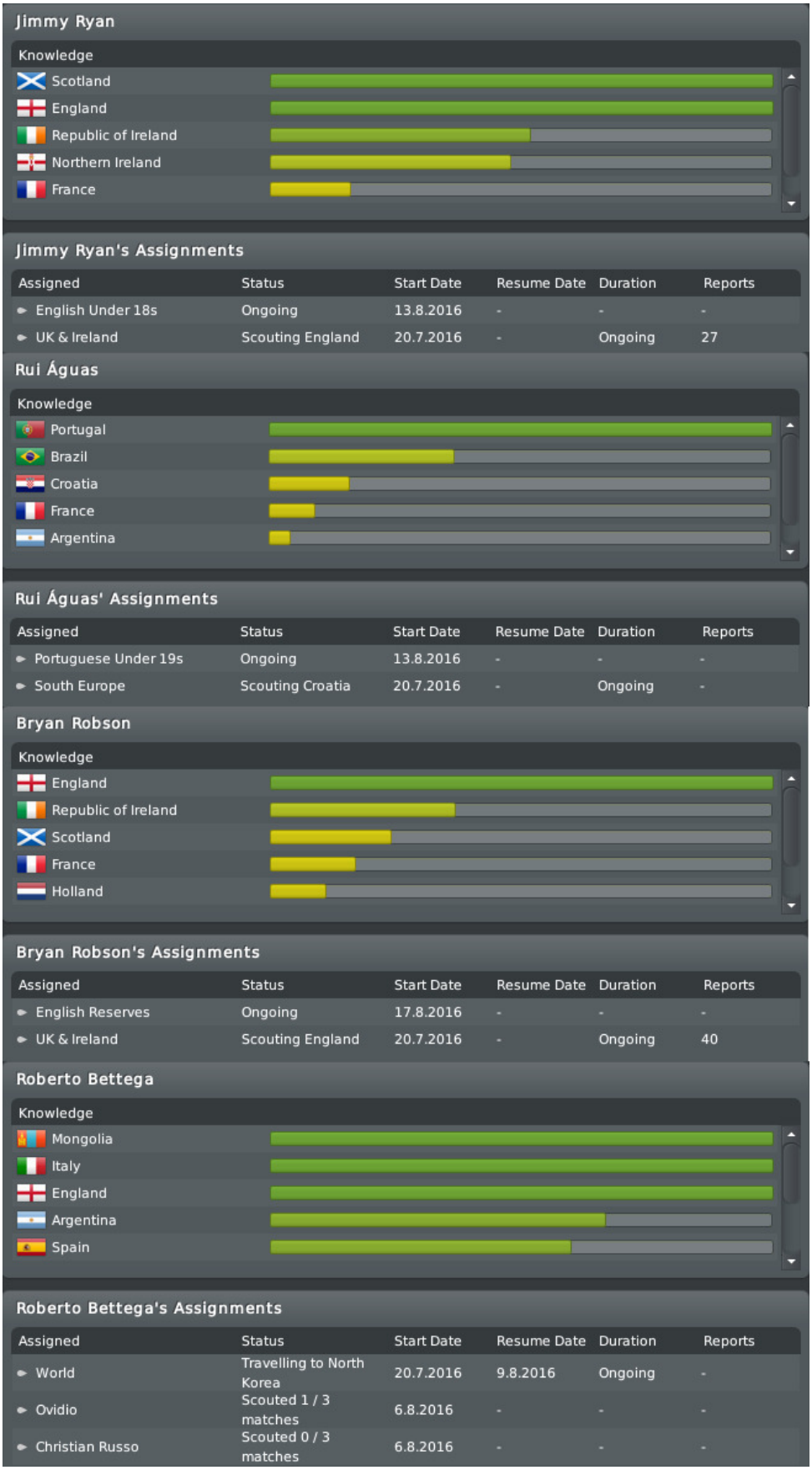
There really isn't a whole lot else that goes on between the 24th and the 1st. Once the European Championship Final is past I put the unlucky Gourcuff up for sale and set about sorting out my scouts.

The Scout network

After Koray managed to slip through my net in the past few seasons by moving from Turkey to Germany, I decide that this season I am going to focus on maximising my knowledge of all European and surrounding regions. I not only want to know what is coming through the ranks, but spot anything else I have managed to miss in Europe. And I decide that this time I am going to take my scout network deadly seriously and extract every inch of scouting potential I possibly can from my group of scouts.

Something I have neglected in recent seasons is the fact that Scouts can scout a competition and a region at the same time. It's time to make my scouts work for their bloated wages. Every single scout at my club is going to get told to scout an active competition in my save as well as the region of the world they have most knowledge of but is not yet complete.

Here are a few examples of the new, improved "sweat for your supper" scouting workload I have decide upon for my team.

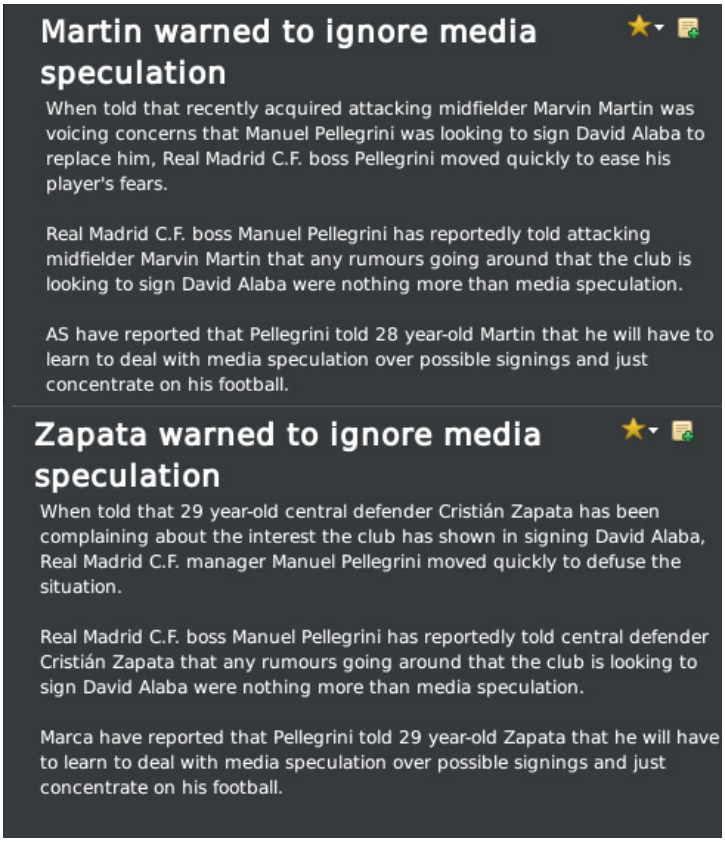


Roberto Bettega is going to be piling up those air miles this season.

There are a few overlaps but I am happy with that. I want to scout the major regions intensively for as

long as it takes to increase my knowledge to the point where I stop missing absolute gems like Fritz Michels to Tottenham or Koray to Bayern.

Not much else happens over the next few days. There are a few media comments aimed at my unsettled players and a few cheeky bids, but these quite laughably all backfired on the hapless manager involved. This is what happened when Real Madrid tried to coax my unsettled left back David Alaba:



Slick Pellegrini, real slick. Handled that one well.

I'm tempted to comment that Marvin Martin is a player I really admire and really set the cat amongst the pigeons at the Bernabeu. Hopefully it might even get David Alaba to rethink his whinging.



Clever boy. On the plus side though it did have the other effect I was hoping for:



I would like to thank Pellegrini for giving me the opportunity to improve the morale of my squad while destroying his. A suitable Whisky is in the post, you will be needing it.

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19-05-2011 17:23 #5

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Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

The Big Start

The 1st of August is a big day, the transfer window opens and it's the first day of the first proper football month. I get my monthly report and it turns out all of my squad have returned fit (a first for me) barring Jonjo Shelvey who has returned bloated and slightly hungover, so he gets sent home for two extra weeks going by the advice of my physio. It's three days untill my first "warm up" friendly against Port Vale, with seven days recovery before we play the American tour. It's also the day when a bunch of players join my club and leave my club, their transfers having been all sorted weeks or even months ago.

It's always a nice surprise when some youngster you signed in mid February and then forgot all about turns up on the 1st of August, and alongside the much anticipated Francisco a few of these forgotten youngsters pop up in my First Team.



Sweet. The first guy looks like he could be a real player, the second lad also has a fair bit of potential. £8.5 million for them both, but that cash was spent last season and doesn't come out of this seasons kitty. It's going to be fun giving these lads starts in the Pre-Season, I am looking forward to it.

I also get a few scout reports coming in around this time, give or take a few days, and I raid Blackburn and Sunderland for these two midfielders for my under-18's:



In and around this time I also ship out a whole bunch of players, probably for a lot less than I could have got but I was in a hurry to get the cash to try and finalise my purchase of Koray from Bayern. Gourcuff gets sold for £27 million and alongside the rest of my sales my total transfer income this August is around £45 million pounds.

The bidding for Koray is going well, I have got Bayern to start negotiating. But the lad is going to cost a lot no matter how friendly the manager is towards me. The £45 million income added to my transfer budget should certainly make this transfer achievable, if a little brutal.

Ultimately I get my man for the bargain price of £63 million pounds. Ouch. My total transfer spending this season is £97 million, my transfer income is £45 million for a net transfer spend of £52 million. However the transfers of Francisco and a few of my youngsters were done at the end of last season and the money came out of last seasons budget the instant the deals were agreed. So a good £20 million of this seasons spend was spent with last seasons remaining budget. MY actual spend this season is closer to £32 million net, which means I have a few quid left over for signing any youngsters or exploiting any contract opportunities later in the season. All in all a good summer of business.

The relationship with Bayern is amusing. As soon as Koray is sold there is a massive uproar from the fans. My relationship with the manager can be seen in the following:



Looks like someone realised they got taken for a ride. Never mind, I just signed possibly the best midfield playmaker in the game and he is only 21.

I sign a few dodgy under-18 goalkeepers on the cheap while I wait for my scouts to find me better players, and I am all set for the Pre-Season friendlies.

Pre-Season Friendlies

Ideally I like to have all my transfer business done and dusted by the time the first few friendlies are over with. I absolutely hate transfers dragging on into the start of the season, and this time I got everyone I wanted in and everyone I wanted out by the time my second friendly was about to kick off.

The Pre-Season is all about getting Fitness and Condition, and then slowly ramping up to match conditions. Working backwards from the Charity Shield I have a six day recovery period after my Warm Up match against Ramsgate, which itself is six days after my first "competitive" match away to Celtic. The friendlies before Celtic are about getting the majority of my team match fit. The Celtic friendly is about getting the last few match fit under competitive conditions, the Ramsgate friendly is about keeping fitness levels up before the Charity Shield and then the start of the season.

It's also a time when I can start introducing players to their new positions, most notably Sandro who thanks to my signing of two new defensively minded playmakers is now firmly in the frame for getting a Centre Back position. Chiellini is 31, Vidic is 34, Evans is 28 and Sandro is 27. If I can retrain Sandro quickly enough then he will slot in right next to Chiellini. If not then Sandro and Evans should be my partnership for a good 4-5 seasons once Chiellini starts to decline.

This planning has been there for many seasons already, I have planned this long in advance. And it also presents me with the opportunity to send my young but excellent 17 year old Centreback out on loan. He is already packing Determination 17 from previous mentoring, and should slot straight into the Stockport first team who will probably be fighting against relegation from the Championship. Should get plenty of the right experience at that team.

In the meantime though my Pre-Season friendlies progress well. My youngsters all get plenty of games and I am quite impressed with some performances. Wijnaldum looks to be an ideal replacement for Gourcuff down the right flank, and his performs excellently setting up a fair few goals for my young lads I have playing through the middle. In particular Santamaria and Allsop impress playing as either an AMC or FC and I am thinking of keeping them around in my First Team for the entire season. My new signings will probably go on loan while I give these two lads the opportunity to impress me further and give me clues as to what to do with them in the future.

By the time the Charity Shield comes along everyone is fighting fit and raring to go. My only injury is a promising young lad that did his cruciate in last season, ouch. He was impressing me before he wrecked his knee, so I have him in my first team and I am going to manage him personally back from his injury.

The Charity Shield comes along and Manchester City look like they have had a dire Pre-Season with their fitness all over the shop. I opt to field a team that is part experience and part youth, all match fit and well conditioned, and I go one up in the First Half completely dominating the match and playing good football. The second half kicks off and City look a different side, pressing hard high up the pitch and injuring themselves all over the place to prevent my young lads playing their good football. Two stunners from Tevez and we lose the match...

And so competitive football returns with a bang, and a well timed wake up call.

Conclusion

I am not sure how much "guide like" stuff there is to take from this thread, or even if it is in the right forum, but it has been a remarkably fun and active and detailed and enjoyable "Off" Season period for me and I have revamped my team and my club entirely without ever once feeling like it was a chore to do so.

I guess the main thing to take from this thread is again just how much playing the like as if it actually was football reaps rewards both in terms of positive outcomes and complete enjoyment and immersion.

Anyway, my Pre-Season is finished. I'm off to go build those custom schedules for each individual player I forced myself into with my CTRL-A delete much earlier in the Off Season. Joy. See you in a few weeks.

Last edited by SFraser; 19-05-2011 at 17:40.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 17:52 #6

R0ca

Amateur
Join Date: 16th October 2008
Posts: 382

Your Most impressive Post to Date.

A Masterclass in how to run a club.

More tips to try and implement, I Like how despite your team being so successful you don't just keep bashing continue, you think out a clear structure on how to play I'm sure you could have bought Koray outright but you played the game i can only admire this approach.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 18:17 #7

footballmanager84

Amateur
Join Date: 17th February 2011
Posts: 88

"Guide-like" or not, it was a great read. It's always nice to read how others play the game. What they do, how they do it and most importantly, the thinking behind it. As R0ca above said, even though you're successful, you don't just bash continue. Something I've been guilty of and probably am still. This thread shows what you always say, "you get what you put into the game". By taking the time to properly manage your club, you're really reaping the rewards... EVERYWHERE (except the charity shield loss). Thanks for another great insight into your virtual world.

19-05-2011 18:32 #8

Romanista1994

Amateur
Join Date: 18th October 2008
Posts: 709

Fantastic how you always manage to outdo your previous work. One can really see why you use the terms 'slick' and 'well oiled' to describe your club.

Oh, and 16 users browsing this thread? Enough said.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

#9

19-05-2011 18:50

bjoggi33

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2009
Location: Keflavík, Iceland
Posts: 851

Wow, great read. Koray sure looks like something!

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 19:26 #10

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **bjoggi33**
> *Wow, great read. Koray sure looks like something!*

You should see him play! The guy is an absolute genius with a football. It's amazing what a difference of 18 technique makes to him compared to the 15 technique of Ramirez who looks like he should be the better playmaker. Some of the stuff he did in the Pre-Season was like nothing I have seen before, and I play probably the most flamboyant, creative system that's ever actually worked in FM. My left back is a converted midfield playmaker that can tackle a bit.

> Originally Posted by **Romanista1994**
> *Fantastic how you always manage to outdo your previous work.*

That's the whole point, the name of the game

The truth is that even now the more I enjoy the game the more I do in the game and the more I learn about the game, which means I enjoy the game more by putting my new found knowledge in practice and so I do more in the game and then learn more.

These threads are as much about me learning to get more out of the game as they are threads to help others get more out of the game.

And have no fear, the next time I find something else cool you can do in FM, I will tell you about it.

> Originally Posted by **Romanista1994**
> *One can really see why you use the terms 'slick' and 'well oiled' to describe your club.*

I don't use these terms to boast, I use these terms as they are principles I play by. The easier you can make the game on yourself, the easier it is to do all this stuff.

The name of the game isn't about how "crack" the perfect "whatever", the name of the game is how long it takes to see past the complexity and actually see the vast amount of football in the game. And the best way to do this is to make the game easy for yourself by setting up youth conveyor belts and using smaller squads and inventing small rules for your entire management approach.

Because it is a game it is theoretically possible to "crack" it, and that's what all my old threads used to be about. Crack this, that and the next. But it's so complex that you can't possibly "crack" it all and trying to completely misses the point.

Stop trying to "crack" it, start trying to play it, and it's an absolutely, rediculously brilliant game.

19-05-2011 19:36 #11

ssaun is cool

Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th July 2004
Location: Gamertag: Dans Hatch
Posts: 1,441

As impressive as Koray is, it's the other 'smaller' players that are impressive for me. Getting that Francisco for comparative peanuts for his quality. These sort of things are what make your threads so enjoyable

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 19:45

lucatonix

Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th December 2008
Posts: 1,017

During the off-season do you look at the top performers of the foreign leagues. I often did this on my QPR save on FM09 and it helped in picking up some of the elusive stars earlier in their career.

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 19:53 #13

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **lucatonix**
> *During the off-season do you look at the top performers of the foreign leagues.*

I didn't actually. That's some nice advice.

I think sometimes I get caught up in the minutae of my own team and sometimes miss what happens outside the team. As the whole missing the rise of Fritz Michels and Koray would indicate.

Alot of people seem to think there is nothing to do between matches, but actually between matches there is so much to do it's pretty much impossible to remember it all.

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 19:57 #14

cerud

Amateur
Join Date: 26th April 2009
Location: Vancouver, Canada
Posts: 329

I gain so much insight into not only this PC game, but into football as a whole. A big fan of all your posts! Thanks and hope you conitnue to provide your views.

cerud

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 20:04 #15

Coentrao

Amateur
Join Date: 23rd February 2010
Posts: 929

Another fantastic thread by Sfraser

You really changed the way that i play this game, nowadays i just try to run a football club the way i would instead of just trying to win everything using game mechanics.. it enhances the experience so much!

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 20:14 #16

Matj

Amateur
Join Date: 27th December 2010
Posts: 11

Hello. After reading a few of your topics I want to get a game started with my beloved spurs, I do have a quick question before I do tho, how many leagues do you run and how large is the database?

Reply | Reply With Quote

19-05-2011 20:24 #17

Zimmah

Amateur
Join Date: 27th May 2010
Posts: 5

Fantastic read SFraser, I really admire your patience to find out all this stuff!
Some questions: how would you tackle an off-season with a continental competition (EC/WC), when most key/first teamers are gone for a large part of the holidays?
And if you can recall your first/second season, what where your steps and activities with the original ManU setup still in place and did it differ from this off-season?

Zimmah

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 20:30 #18

Ville Valo
Semi Pro
Join Date: 24th December 2005
Posts: 2,195

Funny you should post this, i'm just working through preseason on my own FM10 United game, working by all your guides! I've sold alot of players to keep a small first team, looking to intergrate under 18's when I can. (I have 34 players at the club at the moment, looking to extend that with a few youth team additions, and an AM to rotate with ol' Berba.)

Great thread.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 20:47 #19

den-dockx1993
Amateur
Join Date: 11th June 2009
Posts: 5

Basically, I have the same question as Matj, I want to start a new Liverpool game after reading your topic. Which leagues did you select at the start. I must admit that I really like your Man U story, as a Liverpool fan, which means a lot. I can honestly say that I'm looking forward to your next thread!

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 21:15 #20

SFraser
Semi Pro
Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **den-dockx1993**
> *Basically, I have the same question as Matj, I want to start a new Liverpool game after reading your topic. Which leagues did you select at the start. I must admit that I really like your Man U story, as a Liverpool fan, which means a lot. I can honestly say that I'm looking forward to your next thread!*

I always go for the three main leagues, England + Italy + Spain and I like to have the second tiers up as well. Then I go for as many of the rest of Europe that works on my system, Germany/Holland/Portugal /France.

My current save, which was aimed at being United Manager, is England full with Spain/Germany/Portugal /Holland/Italy/France first divisions and second divisions.

As a Scot I regularly find myself wishing I had Scotland as a playable league, but I'm continuing my save on a better PC and I haven't set up my save for the abilities of this PC.

It comes down to a question between accuracy and performance. If I had an amazing PC I would choose every league available, but I don't and so I go with Europe. I was tempted by South America but the only reason is for youth and the youth prospects shouldn't change that much and can be scouted.

Basically it's up to you, the wider the world you simulate the more accurate the entire game will be but you wont always be focusing on the whole world, and for me personally I started as boss of Man United and never plan to leave.

Bet you loved that banner

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 21:19 #21

furiousuk
Amateur

Join Date: 5th April 2007
Location: UK
Posts: 558

I feel your pain when you said you HAD to get Koray. It'll be 20 years before another comes along, my unicorn turned me down to join Palermo when he was cheap, joined Juventus instead when he was more expensive, and when I finally had 60+ Million Juve wouldn't budge for anything less than 9 (!) figures, if only I had known then about the 'buttering up the other chap' trick!

Last edited by furiousuk; 19-05-2011 at 21:24.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 21:25 #22

warm

Amateur
Join Date: 3rd September 2007
Posts: 51

It's taken a while, but here it is;

Well done SFraser.

While I don't always agree with your thoughts, I am always excited to read your excellent posts.

I'm really enjoying this off-season topic as it's probably my favourite part of the game. Towards the end of a season (April) I look at what my team needs. My scouts are always on the go, so I have a huge shortlist. I take a swipe at the players that I need, no more than 6 in any year, and aim to have them with me on the 1st of July. Then it's time to knuckle down to pre-season and then onto the full season.

I never make a signing in January and try to go the year with the squad I've assembled.

Thanks again for such an inspiring read.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 21:55 #23

den-dockx1993

Amateur
Join Date: 11th June 2009
Posts: 5

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
> *Bet you loved that banner*

In fact I didn't :-D although I'm a Liverpool fan I can be honest and say Man U deserved the league title this year. I'm hoping we can give them a little more competition next year (or the year Sir Alex retires). I'm in doubt, should I start a new game in Belgium (the country where I live) or should I start a new career at Liverpool? Do you thinking it's possible to use your 'tips' in a smaller league? What should I adjust? I'm thinking of things like using 13 in determination as a guideline rather than 15 for loaning.

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 22:06 #24

R0ca

Amateur
Join Date: 16th October 2008
Posts: 382

> Originally Posted by **den-dockx1993**
> *In fact I didn't :-D although I'm a Liverpool fan I can be honest and say Man U deserved the league title this year. I'm hoping we can give them a little more competition next year (or the year Sir Alex retires). I'm in doubt, should I start a new game in Belgium (the country where I live) or should I start a new career at Liverpool? Do you thinking it's possible to use your 'tips' in a smaller league? What should I adjust? I'm thinking of things like using 13 in determination as a guideline rather than 15 for loaning.*

Stick with 15 Determination Liverpool are a top club, and thats 1 attribute which shouldn't be undervalued

Reply **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 22:12 #25

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **R0ca**
> *Stick with 15 Determination Liverpool are a top club, and thats 1 attribute which shouldn't be undervalued*

Absolutely true. Apart from the Liverpool bit.

Last edited by SFraser; 19-05-2011 at 22:15.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 22:15 #26

den-dockx1993

Amateur
Join Date: 11th June 2009
Posts: 5

> Originally Posted by **R0ca**
> *Stick with 15 Determination Liverpool are a top club, and thats 1 attribute which shouldn't be undervalued*

OK, I understand, but what if I were to start at a mid-table Belgian team? I'm sorry if my English is bad, I'm not a native speaker.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 22:20 #27

warm

Amateur
Join Date: 3rd September 2007
Posts: 51

> Originally Posted by **den-dockx1993**
> *OK, I understand, but what if I were to start at a mid-table Belgian team? I'm sorry if my English is bad, I'm not a native speaker.*

You could try heathxxx's guide to lower league management. It's a sticky. I know you're level is above that, but the principles are good.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

19-05-2011 22:28 #28

R0ca

Amateur
Join Date: 16th October 2008
Posts: 382

> Originally Posted by **den-dockx1993**
> *OK, I understand, but what if I were to start at a mid-table Belgian team? I'm sorry if my English is bad, I'm not a native speaker.*

It's something i'd aim for with any team to be honest, Determination is one of those stats which do appear lower down the leagues too, if your playing in a lower reputation league you could look at loaning in more experienced determined players.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

20-05-2011 03:04 #29

Marsupian

Amateur
Join Date: 22nd June 2010
Posts: 371

I play in the Eredivisie and I just scale down the attributes to the league level. I'd say 13 for loaning in the dutch or belgium league is fine. If it's possible higher is always better but it's difficult enough to get first team players with 15 determination let alone youngsters.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

20-05-2011 11:50 #30

ky jelly

Amateur

Join Date: 28th June 2007
Posts: 58

How do you get the best possible price out of some unwanted junks in your team during the pre season? Obviously some of these guys have rarely played football or their qualities are not up to standard with what I am looking for. Besides, I'm in my first season with Newcastle and we have donkeys on high wages whom nobody seems to want (Ameobi, Leon Best, Ryan Taylor, Alan Smith, Lovenkrands etc)

I've tried selling them off for nothing up front and fees only after 10 apps or 12 months installment but it seems like nobody wants to take the bait

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 12:02 #31

footballmanager84

Amateur
Join Date: 17th February 2011
Posts: 88

At the start of the game, teams won't really spend a lot of money (reflecting real life), but will rather look for loans with perhaps an option to buy. What you could try is to "showcase" them in a friendly or 2, like what Sfraser has done in this thread. That might generate some interest.

If you're struggling to sell players, you'll have to think about loaning them out (for the first season anyway) so that you have a lower wage bill.

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 13:32 #32

R0ca

Amateur
Join Date: 16th October 2008
Posts: 382

> Originally Posted by **ky jelly**
> *How do you get the best possible price out of some unwanted junks in your team during the pre season? Obviously some of these guys have rarely played football or their qualities are not up to standard with what I am looking for. Besides, I'm in my first season with Newcastle and we have donkeys on high wages whom nobody seems to want (Ameobi, Leon Best, Ryan Taylor, Alan Smith, Lovenkrands etc)*
>
> *I've tried selling them off for nothing up front and fees only after 10 apps or 12 months installment but it seems like nobody wants to take the bait*

get them playing and well in pre season, if you can do this and get them noticed then you have a chance. Ofcourse if they are over paid then you may struggle to find a taker.

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 14:05 #33

ky jelly

Amateur
Join Date: 28th June 2007
Posts: 58

got 3 of them on loan and i'm pretty sure they are coming back to me by the end of the season. before i can implement what sfraser has said, i really need to trim my squad of dead woods and overpaid underperformers. i guess it's a wait and see for me this first season.

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 14:42 #34

footballmanager84

Amateur
Join Date: 17th February 2011
Posts: 88

> Originally Posted by **ky jelly**
> *got 3 of them on loan and i'm pretty sure they are coming back to me by the end of the season. before i can implement what sfraser has said, i really need to trim my squad of dead woods and overpaid underperformers. i guess it's a wait and see for me this first season.*

That's fine. Hopefully they'll impress at the other clubs, so more teams will be interested in them. You'll be able to sell them much easier next season.

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 16:17 #35

forget

Amateur
Join Date: 2nd April 2010
Posts: 4

I always learn something new with Sfraser's post's (:

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 16:19 #36

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

Like a few others SFraser, you have inspired me to start a proper save as Everton, my favourite club because of the passion you regularly show when making these posts, I believe this to be one of your best posts not because it is about Tactics or Training or Motivation or Morale but because it is you taking us through something you love.

It's clear you love football and it's great it shows in your posts, I hope I too will find the passion in my save which I haven't had for a while now in FM.

I have a save now which I am really getting into, managing Fitness, bleeding in youngsters, Training and everything else is constantly being taken care of and for once I am actually getting into the game world. The other night whilst International fixtures were processing and I was bored so I watched some Key Highlights of games that had gone on so far this season, some International Friendlies, some matches in Serie A, La Liga and the Bundesliga which I've never even thought of doing before and I really enjoyed it. Even if that is rather sad!

Hopefully soon I will have stories to tell like you do now as I get further into the game and experience different stuff!

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 21:40 #37

Gee_Simpson

Amateur
Join Date: 27th August 2008
Location: Edinburgh
Posts: 652

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
>
> ***As a Scot I regularly find myself wishing I had Scotland as a playable league**, but I'm continuing my save on a better PC and I haven't set up my save for the abilities of this PC.*

I never knew you were Scottish Which Scottish team do you support?

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 22:26 #38

mike-rs

Amateur
Join Date: 13th June 2008
Location: plymouth
Posts: 364

amazing story/guide, iv always been clueless in the pre season with the timings of stuff i do (transfers etc) thanks must be like the 10th guide i have bookmarked from sfraser now

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-05-2011 22:37 #39

Gee_Simpson

Amateur
Join Date: 27th August 2008
Location: Edinburgh
Posts: 652

> Originally Posted by **mike-rs**
>
> *amazing story/guide, iv always been clueless in the pre season with the timings of stuff i do (transfers etc) thanks **must be like the 10th guide i have bookmarked from sfraser now***

Same Here

Reply | Reply With Quote

21-05-2011 06:43 #40

jaycar
Part-Timer
Join Date: 29th April 2003
Location: Championship with Leeds!
Posts: 1,378

Sticky this somebody

Reply | Reply With Quote

21-05-2011 17:35 #41

lucatonix
Part-Timer
Join Date: 17th December 2008
Posts: 1,017

Is there a reason you tour the US or is it soley for financial gain?

Reply | Reply With Quote

21-05-2011 20:08 #42

furiousuk
Amateur
Join Date: 5th April 2007
Location: UK
Posts: 558

> Originally Posted by **mike-rs**
> *amazing story/guide, iv always been clueless in the pre season with the timings of stuff i do (transfers etc) thanks must be like the 10th guide i have bookmarked from sfraser now*

My favourites tab is similarly adorned with SFraser posts

Reply | Reply With Quote

21-05-2011 20:44 #43

axehan1
Amateur
Join Date: 23rd February 2005
Posts: 254

i'd hazard a guess that as manager of man united thats where you go for pre-season

> Originally Posted by **lucatonix**
> *Is there a reason you tour the US or is it soley for financial gain?*

Reply | Reply With Quote

21-05-2011 22:50 #44

mikcheck
Amateur
Join Date: 26th November 2008
Posts: 141

SFraser did you get Koray?

Reply | Reply With Quote

23-05-2011 13:55 #45

JesterSTJ
Amateur
Join Date: 25th March 2006
Posts: 88

Great guide, really helpful. *Book marked*

Reply | Reply With Quote

25-05-2011 15:26 #46

Rio_V

Youth Team
Join Date: 19th June 2008
Posts: 4,464

Just an outstanding, good read. You managed to compile a great deal of what I already do in the offseason, but add a lot of little things like how to organize friendlies and the preseaons training schedules that make a lot of sense and add new dimensions to the game.

Oddly, while I am trying to pull of a treble, I am actually eager to play out the season to start the off season after this read.

A couple of questions:

When reviewing a squad of a big side, I always find that the under 18s are filled with many useless players. I usually get rid of most of them slowly. Do you keep them or do you get rid and sign new kids? Do you do it immediately or just as their contracts come up?

Do you usually comment on media speculation about your players? I find that ignoring a lot of it is wise b/c sometimes getting involved makes a mountain out of a molehill. In particular, if a player has a long contract with us and I am determined to keep him, I will almost ignore all hype/interest shown designed to unsettle him b/c he is going nowhere for a few years.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

25-05-2011 18:27 #47

SFraser

Semi Pro



Join Date: 19th September 2008
Posts: 2,664

> Originally Posted by **Rio_V**
> *When reviewing a squad of a big side, I always find that the under 18s are filled with many useless players. I usually get rid of most of them slowly. Do you keep them or do you get rid and sign new kids? Do you do it immediately or just as their contracts come up?*

Well I like to keep an actual "team" together for my under-18's so it depends on what I can find and sign.

When it comes to the youth team you don't have to get stuck into every detail, but make sure you know what positions you are light in, what positions you have a lot of players in, and I like to check how my favourite youngsters are doing quite regularly.

What I find tends to happen as that to begin worth the youth team can be a difficult to get a handle on because you don't really know the players and you are not working with them regularly. Over time though simply by taking an active interest in mentoring and keeping things logical and balanced you will find your youth team becomes much more a thing of your own making.

And something I find that helps immeasurably is setting up a Custom View for your squad screen:



Pkd	Inf	Name	Position	B Pos	Age	Morale	Con	Last 5 Games	Av Rat	Apps	Gls	Ast	Personality	Cur A	Pot A	Rec
	Yth	Mimoun Buijs	GK	GK	16	Superb	100%	7.22	7.10	6 (1)	-	1	Fairly Sporting			
	Yth	Sebastian Wagner	GK	GK	15	Superb	97%	6.70	6.70	4	-	-	Balanced			
	Wnt	Roberto Cangini	D RC	D R	17	Superb	73%	6.96	6.96	5	-	-	Unambitious			
	Lrn	Pedro Gil	D R	D R	17	Superb	100%	7.22	7.13	3 (3)	-	1	Resolute			
	Wnt	Phil Hartley	D RC	D R	17	Superb	73%	7.40	7.28	5 (1)	-	1	Fairly Determined			
	Inj	Will Smith	D R	D R	16	Superb	64%	7.24	7.15	5 (2)	-	-	Ambitious			
	Yth	Nolan Vernay	D RL	D R	16	Superb	100%	7.16	7.08	4 (2)	-	-	Fairly Professional			
	Lrn	Brad Winn	D LC	D L	17	Superb	94%	7.08	7.12	11	-	-	Balanced			
	Wnt	Jean-Marc Berthon	D C	D C	17	Superb	96%	7.10	7.16	5 (4)	-	1	Resolute			
	Yth	Nicolas Galy	D C	D C	16	Superb	100%	6.58	6.70	5 (3)	-	-	Fairly Sporting			
	Yth	Günther Gunkel	D C	D C	16	Superb	99%	6.86	6.60	7 (3)	-	-	Fairly Determined			
		Werner Merk	D C	D C	17	Superb	76%	7.34	7.23	13 (1)	-	1	Determined			
	Lrn	Gregoire Lanfranchi	D C, DM, M C	DM	17	Superb	100%	6.84	6.84	4 (4)	-	2	Spirited			
	Lrn	Jack Smith	DM, M C	M C	17	Superb	91%	7.20	7.03	8 (1)	2	3	Fairly Determined			
	Yth	Trevor Venables	DM, M C	DM	16	Superb	98%	6.94	6.92	5 (1)	-	-	Balanced			
	Yth	Duncan Clayton	M C	M C	16	Superb	79%	7.12	7.21	7 (2)	-	6	Determined			
	Yth	Robert Wiltshire	M C	M C	16	Superb	95%	6.92	6.77	6 (4)	3	-	Fairly Loyal			
	Bid	Javier Valentijn	M C, ST	M C	17	Superb	71%	7.92	7.45	12 (1)	4	4	Fairly Ambitious			
	Wnt	Terry Adams	AM R	M R	18	Superb	97%	6.94	7.08	7 (2)	-	1	Driven			
	Yth	Mirko Bellucci	AM RC	M R	16	Superb	92%	7.00	6.99	7 (1)	1	1	Fairly Professional			
	Yth	Basile Versini	AM RLC, ST	M R	16	Superb	78%	7.16	7.17	10	1	2	Fairly Professional			
	Inj	Yassine Ben Ayad	AM/F C	ST	16	Superb	70%	7.50	7.33	8 (1)	6	2	Resolute			
	Yth	Johnny Halliday	ST	ST	16	Superb	94%	7.56	7.52	6 (6)	8	4	Ambitious			
	Yth	Thomas Höfler	ST	ST	16	Superb	93%	7.70	7.21	8 (2)	4	3	Balanced			

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

25-05-2011 19:25 #48

Coentrao

Amateur

That's where i find nicknames to be very useful for my youth team specially to make it easier to identify

Join Date: 23rd February 2010
Posts: 929

the players to be tutored.



The ones with the BK between brackets are considered backups for my youth squad and don't really have priority in tutoring, it also makes it easier to see what your squad lacks, right now i have an excess of strikers and DC's and i'm missing a couple of left backs though i have two full backs that can play on both sides.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-05-2011 03:15 #49

Rio_V

Youth Team
Join Date: 19th June 2008
Posts: 4,464

Love the custom screen. Copied

Are the best position, current and pot ability and recommendation the assman's or a scout's? I used assman.

Also, I tweaked mine a little to add Home Grown Status b/c I need more of them!

Last edited by Rio_V; 26-05-2011 at 03:19.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

26-05-2011 12:51 #50

Tyballs

Amateur
Join Date: 26th July 2009
Location: Vika, Sweden
Posts: 6

Great great post.

It makes me want to quit my job and just play FM all day, if my wife and children would let me.

One thing I like to do is a seasonal follow up. In all project and business process descriptions the last step is always follow up and learning. So I do this after every season. I check my teams form development over time and player statistics. From this I can learn where the room for improvements are. As I am at work at the moment combined with the fact that the rest of the week is booked with funerals and children birthdays I will probably not be able to post examples with pictures and everything. And when I will have some spare time next time I will probably focus on my PSG team 100%. If I will remember this post and if I feel motivated I will try to show some examples. If anyone else does this and wants to share it would be nice.

Reply | **Reply With Quote**

#51

26-05-2011 16:29

Ville Valo

Semi Pro
Join Date: 24th December 2005
Posts: 2,195

I'd like to ask something, I noticed your striker regen is 'Right Only' footedness, what's your opinion on this? I try to avoid it is all.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-05-2011 09:37 #52

Super Bladesman

Reserves
Join Date: 21st July 2003
Location: Hiding in the Editor
Posts: 11,938

I have to thank SFraser for the time he has taken over these guides - I've been reading with interest lately, and the suggestions made have really helped have a big impact at my club. I stripped out all my reserves and streamlined my squad from 55 to 45 players. I cancelled an affiliation that I never used and set up a new feeder club deal with Scunthorpe in the Championship. I completely rebuilt my U18 side with new prospects, which has turned them from also-rans to a table-leading squad with players on my first team bench. A completely different pre-season approach, allied with improved squad management mean I have a happy and healthy squad, for a change.

Having changed how the club operates, I could pinpoint what else wasn't working - the tactics. Some tweaks here and there, and I'm now performing much better than last season. Cheers Steven!

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-05-2011 11:05 #53

phnompenhandy

Third Team
Join Date: 14th March 2004
Location: Phnom Penh, Scambodia
Posts: 8,202

Heh, SB you finally got time to play the game, after spending the better part of 3 years making brilliant databases for everyone else! Hope to see more of you around here, mate.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-05-2011 13:22 #54

Super Bladesman

Reserves
Join Date: 21st July 2003
Location: Hiding in the Editor
Posts: 11,938

You will do - I need all the tactics advice I can get. Not editing means I am four seasons in to a save for the first time in years (maybe decades :S) and I can no longer hide from my rubbishness by editing instead

Reply | Reply With Quote

02-06-2011 20:35 #55

den-dockx1993

Amateur
Join Date: 11th June 2009
Posts: 5

SFraser, when do you renew the contracts of your older players (over 30)? I thought you once said you would only give them one year contracts. Do you renew them around January, or do you renew them when their contracts really expire, in June, with the risk of your players leaving on a free transfer?

Reply | Reply With Quote

17-07-2011 11:17 #56

lam

Part-Timer
Join Date: 1st June 2007
Location: London
Posts: 1,915

SFraser,

I'm very interested in knowing how you decide who gets Rotation, First Team and Key Player status.

The Key players seem fairly obvious..... the outstanding talent that you know you are going to play almost every game
The issue I have is choosing between First Team and Rotation.

Regards

LAM

ps.... I couldnt find if I had posted in this thread before, if I did, then great, if I didn't..... then .... congratulations, a great thread indeed (I read it ages ago)

Reply | Reply With Quote

17-07-2011 14:27 #57

442 is dead

Amateur
Join Date: 15th July 2008
Location: San Siro, Milan (In my dreams)
Posts: 140

Another Gem from you SFraser.

Mods somebody should Sticky this

Reply | Reply With Quote

20-07-2011 11:52 #58

ham_aka_stam

Moderator
Join Date: 10th September 2008
Posts: 24,172

> Originally Posted by **SFraser**
> *Alot of people seem to think there is nothing to do between matches, but actually between matches there is so much to do it's pretty much impossible to remember it all.*

This point sticks out for me a lot. I often rue match days as they require concentration, decisions and time that the bit between the matches doesn't need. I can pick the game up, tinker with training, scouting, tactics or squad management for 10mins and then put it down, but a match is a bit different. Unfortunately, also playing a United game means that "between" is not very long.

> Originally Posted by **Iam**
> *SFraser,*
>
> *I'm very interested in knowing how you decide who gets Rotation, First Team and Key Player status.*
>
> *The Key players seem fairly obvious..... the outstanding talent that you know you are going to play almost every game*
> *The issue I have is choosing between First Team and Rotation.*

Answering this from my point of view, I consider my First Teamers as all of those who are going to get lots of game time, but might not be Key players. And Rotation is those who don't quite get much game time, but are far better that a backup.

So looking at the United squad of last year, Key Players would be vdS, Vidic, Rio, Evra, Nani, Rooney. First Team: O'Shea, Rafael, Fletcher, Carrick, Scholes, Valencia, Hernandez, Berbatov. Rotation: Kuszczak, Fabio, Park,Owen. Backup: everyone else.

That might not be the way everyone else sees it, and sometimes I will adjust a player's squad status to keep them happy, but it won't affect how much I play them. If they then request more playing time, and don't deserve it, I'll let them move on.

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20-07-2011 20:31 #59

ZdlR

Amateur
Join Date: 13th December 2004
Location: Devonshire, Bermuda
Posts: 587

I would also add the minor point that anyone given a number from 1-11 is considered "in the first XI" and therefore should be a Key Player or First Teamer, lest they get annoyed at the disparity.

Reply | Reply With Quote

21-07-2011 07:33 #60

ham_aka_stam

Moderator
Join Date: 10th September 2008

I must admit I've never seen that. There's a media message, but I've never seen it affect a player.

Posts: 24,172

Reply | Reply With Quote

26-07-2011 20:19 #61

JEEBO

Amateur
Join Date: 6th February 2008
Posts: 18

Superb post mate my laptop is getting fixed at the moment (tomorrow 430) and your post felt as if i was playing the game myself sheer class mate!

Reply | Reply With Quote

26-07-2011 20:50 #62

Iam

Part-Timer
Join Date: 1st June 2007
Location: London
Posts: 1,915

> Originally Posted by **ZdlR**
> *I would also add the minor point that anyone given a number from 1-11 is considered "in the first XI" and therefore should be a Key Player or First Teamer, lest they get annoyed at the disparity.*

Really?

How do you then account for the players that want a higher number shirt? VDV always wants 23 (I think).

Funnily enough, in part agreement with your post. I will not give a 1-11 number shirt to someone if i dont consider them first team enough, despite how many i may have spare.

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-07-2011 14:49 #63

Ein

Amateur
Join Date: 12th July 2009
Location: Malta
Posts: 34

Great post.

Is there a reason the preseason GK schedule involves no strength training?

Reply | Reply With Quote

27-07-2011 15:08 #64

Jenko_EFC

Amateur
Join Date: 4th January 2010
Posts: 593

> Originally Posted by **Ein**
> *Great post.*
>
> *Is there a reason the preseason GK schedule involves no strength training?*

On FM10 (I am not sure about FM11), the Strength catregory trains Strength and Stamina. SFraser must not value these attributes in his Goalkeepers and since they're declining rapidly in their Physicals, Stamina and Strength will probably drop and the CA will not be taken from other categories so they will not decline much.

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