

Barsa Beat Spurs To Champions League Crown

Game 100, Season End February 2006

A much better split of the trophies this season in game 100 to last (see box below – ‘Newcastle win all Five’) saw AC Milan cashing in with three but then there was a better sharing out of the other titles. Milan were certainly the dominant team in Serie A, David Jackson’s team going top in week 4 and staying there for the remainder of the season. They won their first 7 games before being held 0-0 by Real Madrid in week 8 – a result which led many to believe that Michael Paoloni’s Madrid could stop the Milan giants. Madrid stayed with the leaders through most of the season – trailing them by just two points until a week 16 draw at Roma followed by defeat to Milan in the San Siro in week 17. That allowed Alex Clayton’s Barcelona into second spot – but only for a week as they lost 1-0 in Madrid the following turn. Even though they were surprisingly hammered 3-0 by Valencia in the penultimate week of the season, Milan took the title by five points with a total of 53, Madrid were second with 48 pts and Barsa third on 47. Piddy Kahn’s Bayern Munich finished fourth with 41 points. The FA Cup saw Milan up against Ryan Brandy’s Juventus side – and a 2-0 victory for David Jackson’s team thanks to goals from Rooney and Van Nistelrooy. This cup Milan added to the League Cup picked up a few weeks earlier with a 1-0 victory over Valencia.

The first trophy of the season, the Super Cup, went to Michael Paoloni’s Cardiff City. In a competition where the big names so often disappoint, this seemed to be no exception. Barcelona failed to make it through the group stage whilst Milan crashed out in the quarter finals – beaten 1-0 by the Welsh side. Arsenal put Newcastle out in the semi final, but were beaten themselves in the final – Cardiff winning 2-1 with two goals from Di Vaio. Cardiff were also in the running for the Premiership at that point, sharing top spot with defending champions Newcastle. Week 14 was probably the key game in that title race – Cardiff losing 1-0 to their rivals at St.James’ Park and never recovering. The lead at the top stretched to 5 pts a couple of weeks later when Cardiff were held to a draw by Fulham, and Newcastle were virtually home and dry. In the end, Ryan Doyle’s Arsenal sneaked in to take second spot, a point ahead of Cardiff after Mike Paoloni’s side were beaten 3-1 in the final day of the season by Spurs. Newcastle finished the season on 53 points, with Arsenal second on 47 and Cardiff third with 46. Ashley Keyte’s Man United came fourth with 40 points. Jamie Maycroft’s Tottenham won both domestic cups – beating Burnley 2-0 in the League Cup final and then recording a 2-1 win over the champions Newcastle in the FA Cup. They were well in the running for a third cup too, making it to the Champions League final where they faced Barcelona. Both sides won their respective groups, as did Newcastle and Liverpool. The Magpies found themselves drawn in the traditional ‘Group of Death’ with Real Madrid, AC Milan and Chelsea – and won the group with just nine points (on goal difference from Madrid, Milan missing out by finishing third and Chelsea drawing five of their six games to finish bottom). Tottenham then beat Real Madrid 1-0 in the quarter final, whilst Barsa beat Bayern Munich by the same scoreline. The semis saw a late goal from Aguero see Barsa beat Newcastle 1-0, whilst strikes from Totti and Torres helped Spurs to a 2-0 victory over Liverpool. That left the final – the last game of the season. Owen Hargreaves fired Barcelona ahead in the first half, Del Piero equalised, but Robbie Keane snatched the winner for Barsa with 10 minutes left. Barcelona win the Champions League!

Newcastle Win All Five!

Game 100, Season End July 2006

Luke Deveney’s Newcastle showed total dominance as game 100 completed its second season, winning five out of five trophies. The Magpies came close last season to the Premiership, but this time around they made no mistake, finishing the season on 56 points – 12 clear of Phil Dean’s Liverpool side. Everton finished third with 37pts and Ashley Keyte’s defending champions Manchester United could only manage fourth place with a disappointing 35 points. The first trophy of the season arrived at St.James’ Park in week 12 when Ashley Keyte’s Barcelona were beaten 1-0 in the Super Cup final thanks to a second half goal from Simpson. That was followed up by the League Cup in week 18, the Magpies beating George Clay’s Middlesboro 2-1 in the final. The FA Cup was won in the final week of the season as a Patrick Vieira goal saw off David Jackson’s Tamworth 1-0 before the grand slam was completed with the Champions League – Newcastle beating Phil Dean’s Liverpool 1-0 in the final thanks to a goal from Takahara. Serie A was dominated in similar style by David Jackson’s AC Milan who completed the league and FA cup double – Milan seeing off Steven Cox’s Santos who were runners up in both. A late Andrii Shevchenko goal saw Milan win the FA Cup final 1-0, whilst they finished 11 points clear in the league, amassing 59 pts to Santos’ 48. Dan James’ Valencia were third with 42 whilst Ryan Brandys’ Juventus were fourth on 37pts. Milan made it a treble with the League Cup – beating Valencia 3-1 in the final, but were denied at the quarter final stages of the Champions League where they lost 1-0 to Liverpool.

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Juve Battle To Serie A Title !

GAME 4 – Season Ending February 2007:

It was another tough battle for the Serie A title in game 4, with Juventus, Real Madrid, Barcelona and Fiorentina in the running for most of the campaign. Adrian Wright’s Real Madrid set the early pace and held a three point lead after six games when the manager of defending champions Roma, Enzo Misuraca, tipped them for the title. However, a poor three games - defeat to Barcelona in week 7 followed by a home draw with Roma in week 8 and then a loss to Juventus in Turin in week 9 – saw a complete turn around at the top. By week 10, Ashley Lewis’ Juve were suddenly four points clear of Ralf Ingrao’s Fiorentina, with Real third and Steven Wright’s Barcelona finding a bit of form to move above Roma into fourth place. Juve’s lead was closed immediately as they were held 0-0 by Roma and their rivals won, but they slowly opened it out again – leading by five points in week 15 and surely having the title in the bag. Not quite though – two defeats in a row followed, Juve going down 1-0 at AC Milan and then by the same scoreline away to Barcelona and top spot was tied – Fiorentina joining Juve on 37 points. Real Madrid were a point further back and Barcelona two points off the top. Unfortunately for Ralf Ingrao’s side, Fiorentina could only manage one point from their final four games – a worrying run of form for Ralf – and they dropped to fourth place, finishing with 41 points. Juve lost 1-0 at Real Madrid in week 19 to lose to spot for the first time in three months as the Barcelona took over pole position. They held top spot in week 20, Juve second and Real third, but week 21 results saw Juve win 3-2 at Parma whilst Barsa were held 0-0 by Roma. Going into the final games, with Juve at home to bottom of the table Messina, they led Barcelona and Real Madrid by a point. Both Spanish sides won their final matches, but to no avail as Juventus beat Messina 3-1. Juve finished the season on 49 points, with Real Madrid and Barcelona just behind on 48 points. Fiorentina were fourth with 41 points whilst Jamie Maycroft’s RC Lens finished the season strongly to take 5th place on 37 points. Luke Hayberd’s Valencia were 6th, also with 37 points ahead of a disappointing title defence from Enzo Misuraca’s Roma on 33 points. Roma took points off all the top sides, but failed to beat any of them when it counted. Also very disappointing were Giuseppe Traina’s AC Milan, finishing down in 8th place with just 31 points. Like Roma, on their day Milan were good enough to beat anyone in the top flight, but lacked any consistency and will be hoping to improve dramatically next season. Simon

Rugg’s PSV Eindhoven took 9th place – after finishing strongly to avoid relegation. Inter, Messina and Parma were the sides to drop down to Serie B.

The cups went to Spain though – Barcelona with a 2-0 win over Roma in the League Cup final thanks to goals from Sorin and Eto’o, whilst the FA Cup was won by Real Madrid – they beat Barsa 1-0 in the final, Ronaldo the scorer.

There was never really any doubt about the Premiership winners – Ryan Bird’s Manchester United dropped just two points as they completed the league and cup double. United finished the season on 64 points, second were Lee Cook’s Arsenal on 38 with Tony Cuthbertson’s Liverpool third with 34 and West Ham taking fourth place with 29 points. United won the League Cup beating Brighton 3-2 in the final and also took the FA Cup – they beat Arsenal 1-0 in the final of that one. David Trezeguet got the winner for United in at Wembley, in his first game after a £25m move from Juventus. Interesting that – as many pundits were calling Juventus a one man team all season and credited the Frenchman with single handedly earning the title for them. United failed in Europe though – scraping through the group stages on goal difference (though they did finish ahead of Juventus in their group – Madrid topping the group, ahead of United with Juve missing out by just one goal) then crashing out to Milan 1-0 in the quarter finals. The semi finals were an all Serie A affair, Real Madrid beating Barcelona 1-0 and Fiorentina recording the same scoreline against Milan. The final was an equally close run thing- Fiorentina overturning their late season form to pick up the games number one trophy with a 1-0 victory over Real Madrid, JuanFran with an early winning goal.

A great season in game 4 then, and with even more high quality managers joining up over the close season, the battle for honours should be even more intense over the next season.

Free Turns Competition!

Hundreds – maybe even thousands – of pounds worth of FREE turns are up for grabs in this month's competition...

Everyone who enters will receive a team in a brand new game with FIVE free turns to play. Two lucky winners picked out of the hat from all the correct answers we get will receive a full SEASON for free. Teams in the game will initially be allocated at random, but you'll be able to switch to an available side once the game gets going by emailing or writing in.

The names of nineteen Premiership teams are hidden in the grid below. You need to find all of those – and then tell us on the form at the bottom which Premiership team is missing from the grid. Then send that part fully filled in with your name and Necom account number back to us by 30th March. We'll get packs sent out straight after that. Happy hunting.

H	B	L	A	C	K	B	U	R	N	H	G	D	F
G	N	F	O	E	E	L	T	S	A	C	W	E	N
U	E	R	N	O	T	L	R	A	H	C	F	T	A
O	V	L	O	S	P	U	D	S	Z	W	U	I	N
R	A	A	T	R	H	R	E	D	A	N	L	N	C
B	R	N	R	J	D	E	E	T	U	C	H	U	I
S	C	E	E	O	D	T	F	V	Q	H	M	D	T
E	G	S	V	H	I	O	N	F	I	E	A	L	Y
L	N	R	E	N	R	C	O	U	E	L	H	E	T
D	I	A	U	D	F	U	T	F	B	S	T	I	I
D	D	N	A	G	I	W	L	V	T	E	S	F	C
I	A	L	L	I	V	N	O	T	S	A	E	F	N
M	E	F	S	D	R	O	B	F	T	A	W	E	A
L	R	U	P	O	R	T	S	M	O	U	T	H	M
B	M	A	H	N	E	T	T	O	T	M	A	S	M

My Name Is : _____

My Necom Account No. Is : _____

And I Think The Missing Premiership Team Is : _____

Cut this bit out and send it back to Necom before the end of March to win!

Contract Pay Offs

It has been mentioned often before – and is in the rulebook – but here's the info once again so please don't say you haven't been warned!

When you SELL a player who hasn't asked to be sold, if he was on a higher wage than the standard wage for his overall rating, your club has to pay that player compensation – the extra wage multiplied by the number of weeks left on his contract.

This situation slightly reflects what happens in real life – for example Leeds United signed players like Robbie Fowler and Danny Mills on long contracts with big wages – and ended up paying them even when they were at other clubs. As far as League Soccer goes, it is a further factor for managers to consider when offering wages to players on the Out of Contracts List. As an example : If an 84ov player normally gets around £50,000 per turn, but you are paying him £100,000, then if you sell him when he has 30 weeks left on his contract, you'll have to compensate him by paying him 30 x £50,000 which is £1.5m

Obviously if you're getting the player for next to nothing from the Out of Contracts list, then it still may be a good deal for your club ... but that's for you to work out!

We've given managers a long grace period on this – and some probably thought we'd never get round to introducing it – but you will now be paying off your players contracts when you sell them from the start of February.

Lots of Info Online!

Ever find yourself in the situation where you need answers to a League Soccer question, but nobody can give you the answer. There's loads of information in the official necom boards FAQ (frequently asked questions) covering all aspects of filling in your sheets and running your team. If you don't find the answer there, sign up for the noticeboards and you can ask one of the many experts your question...

To access the necom boards go to

www.necomgames.com then click on

'Noticeboards'. If you've not been on there before, you'll need to create an account to post – you'll need to be authorised by us first (it's a good idea to email us neil@necomgames.com to speed this bit up too – we need to know your necom account number before you can post on the noticeboards)

Scouting Players Reminder

Scouts are brilliant – you can use them to bring extra players to your club for free (you get them on an 8 week trial basis). However, lots of managers aren't really sure how to use them or how to add up and coming new real life talent they've found out about to the necom database. So here's a reminder.

Firstly, you need to SCOUT the player. Do not send any information in. Somebody else probably already has sent in that info, or maybe he's already in your game. So scout him using his full name and you'll find out. The action required is
SCOUT (scout number) (player name)

This should be written in the STAFF ACTIONS section of the return sheet.

If, and only if, you find he's not on the database, then it's time to send information in to us. We require full name, date of birth, nationality, position and real life club. All of that needs to be sent in with your turn. Once that is received he will be added to the database and available to be scouted.

You then need to scout the player again – using the action as outlined above. Providing you're the only person after him, you'll get him on an 8 week trial. If you want to keep him longer you'll need to agree a new deal with him (and pay him a signing on fee).

All the best to everyone – more next month hopefully!