

Necom News

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Staff Members – What Do We Know?

A lot of the talk on the Necom web boards seems to be about staff members. How do we get more of them? Why do we pay them so much? And what is going on with their ratings? In this exclusive "Staff Member Special" we attempt to lift the lid on the shady goings on of those people who take so much of your clubs money and do so much in return...

Starting with wages. The complaint is often that staff members are paid too much money. Well they aren't. If a coach improves a players rating from 80 to 81, it can boost his value so much that it's worth four or five million to the club; perhaps when you look at things like that you may not after all begrudge him those wages he's being paid. A good physio can bring a multi million pound player back from injury much quicker – multiple physios do the job even quicker. This means those with more staff benefit by getting away with a smaller squad and can save money in transfer spending and wages. Scouts bring you new players – and you don't have to pay for them.... it has been known for League Soccer clubs to sign players through scouting that have gone on to be rated well into the 80's so again these guys are earning their pay.

As I say in answer to many questions, you must remember that League Soccer is a game, not a super realistic simulation, and so – as a result – there are aspects which need to work for that game to be interesting, entertaining and challenging. Certain things have to balance – for example it's important that club finances are worked correctly. I don't think there are any issues with the amount of money staff members get, because from a game point of view it's necessary that they are paid that much.

Clearly the amount a staff member expects to receive in wages depends on the rating he has when he agrees his contract. An 7 rated staff member will expect to be paid much more than a 4 rated staff member (to give a rough idea of the values, a 7 rated coach would expect around £15,000 per week whilst a 7 rated scout would want about £9,000 and a 7 rated physio about £12,000). Any change in his rating once he's agreed that deal isn't his problem – if his rating increases then you as a club benefit from the fact that you had him training (paying his wages whilst he studied rather than working to improve the club in some way). If his rating decreases – well that's your fault for working him too hard and not giving him enough time to keep up with modern methods... but more on that later. The point is that you'll be able to re-negotiate his wage when his next contract is being discussed, but in the meantime you have committed to paying him that wage for that period of time.

Staff members don't get unhappy, and they don't put in transfer requests. You can sell them to other clubs of course if you wish, and if you fail to agree new contracts with them their contracts can expire and they will at that point move on – possibly appearing on the out of contracts list where other teams can bid to acquire their services.

So another question that is often asked, is why do ratings go all the way back down to zero when a staff member is retrained. Do they really forget all that knowledge that they've

built up over many seasons of hard work? The answer of course, as you know, is – yes their ratings do reset to zero. Indeed, if you retrain a staff member back to a speciality that he had done in the past he'll still be zero.... even if he was a 9 rating in that area previously. Times and methods move on, clearly he no longer has a clue what he is talking about and needs to brush up on all his theories. In fact of course it's again about making a challenging game environment, and it's simply the case that being able to chop and change staff specialities would make life too easy for you managers and we can't have that...

You can attempt to retrain anyone at all into a staff member. Not all will agree to become one. In practice, any player aged under 30 will probably say no. The odds of a player agreeing to become a staff member reduce as their overall rating gets higher – so again you're very unlikely to turn anyone rated over 80 into a member of your backroom setup. Other than that, turning old and unwanted players into staff members is definitely the best way to get more – just put the player number down in the right box on the transfers section, write 'RETRAIN' in the action column and then the code number for the speciality you want them to take up in the final amount column.

On to that highly contentious current issue – why do staff members ratings drop? I've already given plenty of explanation here of course – the obvious reason is that if they didn't, the game would simply be too easy. And, generally, football is anything but easy...



It might be easier for everyone to understand why staff ratings drop in the way that they do if I try to explain the mechanism behind them.

Staff ratings are all stored on the system out of 100 - the value you see on your printout is just that value divided by 10 and rounded down - so a 99 or 92 rated staff member would both show as 9. This is done so that ratings don't change every turn and also to allow them to change at different speeds depending on how high the rating is (hence it's quicker to move a 40 to a 50 because he might go up by 8pts per turn, than an 80 to a 90 who may increase by only a couple of points).

A staff member will drop in rating by a few points (out of a hundred) every single turn if they are not studying. This is due as

explained above to the fact that when they're not studying, they are not keeping up to date with recent developments and techniques in their area of expertise. Note that a staff member might only drop by a couple of points (out of the one hundred) each turn, but because of the way this is shown on your printout as a rating out of 10, there might not actually be any effect on his rating as printed out. For example if his actual rating was 95 and he dropped by three points then his rating would be 92 – but both times this would print out as a “9” rating. If however his rating was 92 and it dropped by three points to 89 then the staff member would have dropped from a “9” rating to one of “8”...

This is the reason why you'll often find that the week you stop a staff member training himself and get him to work coaching, doing some physio or whatever his rating will drop straight away. If say you had got the staff member trained up to a 9 rating and straight away gave him another job to do, his actual rating would probably have only been around 91 or 92 say, and would then immediately drop back down to 88 or 89 – on your printouts this would appear as a drop from 9 back to 8,. Of course if the staff member carried on working on players rather than doing any more training, his rating would stay at 8 for a few more turns, dropping say to 86, then maybe 83. Eventually of course he would drop back to a 7.



Happy staff members

Now that we run games where turns take place every two or three days, the effect of this seems much greater – you can have staff members drop more than one point in the same week in game 8 for example, but the system is exactly the same.

So – to finish off - the system is set up in such a way as to make it certainly possible for teams to have unlimited numbers of staff, but in doing so you'll need to be clever in how you manage those. If you want high rated ones you'll need to keep training them over and over again. Of course the number of spaces that are available for staff actions on the return sheet is limited too – again this is something you need to work with in order to be successful.

Turn Deadline News

With holidays and jubilees coming up at the end of the month, we have a few unusual deadlines coming up. Hopefully I'll read the calendar correctly when I put them down for your printouts.

Games 1, 5, 13 and 20 will be on Wednesday 23rd May and then no turn for a fortnight – next one Wednesday 6th June

Games 33, 56, 75 and 99 will be on Thursday 24th May and then again no turn for a fortnight – next one Thursday 7th June.

Games 3, 7, 25, 41, 49 and 69 will be on Thursday 24th May and then no turn for a fortnight – next one Thursday 7th June.

Game 8 and 64 will take place as normal up to Thursday 24th May and then both start up again on Sunday 3rd June.

Niall Quinn's Disco Pants

Manchester City are English champions, and as regular readers of my column will know, I doubted them all the way. Even when they were top of the table I couldn't see it, so as we were watching a bizarrely flat but still a bit tense match at the Stadium of Light on Sunday, when the news game through that City were losing 2-1 I honestly wasn't massively surprised. Our game finished, and it looked like United were champions when suddenly everyone around me went mad and all the Sunderland fans started doing the Poznan! It was incredible – almost as if we had won the league ourselves, and the United players and fans looked totally sick. As I've said before though, City have definitely been the best team this season, they've scored more goals than anyone else, they've conceded less goals than anyone else and they beat all their main rivals comfortably. It just looked like at crucial times their nerve had gone which is kind of understandable when you've not been in that position before. But they did it so real huge congratulations to them. Leaving the ground on Sunday at the end of a really good Premier league season we had to smile even more at the news that Newcastle had missed out on the Champions League. Sorry Newcastle fans, but that's the way it goes, I'm sure you'd feel the same if it was us.

Some great performances this season, Robin Van Persie, Yaya Toure, Vincent Kompany all potential players of the season, for manager of the season Roberto Martinez, Paul Lambert, Brendan Rodgers did amazingly, as did Pardew. Mancini got it right when it mattered over those last three or four games and Sir Alex Ferguson still showed that despite not having the best team he could do it and taking a Manchester United squad with so many weaknesses and getting 89 points with them is also an incredible achievement.

Some poor performances too. Wolves changed their manager and suffered, Blackburn didn't change theirs and also suffered. Bolton had all sorts of anguish on and off the field, but in the end just weren't good enough. Liverpool won the cup that nobody else is interested in, got to the final of another but they were staggeringly poor in the league and their players and management will have to do much much better next season.

So lots to look forward to – who are City going to buy next? Can United match them in the transfer market or will the Glazer's keep the purse strings tightly closed? Will Van Persie stay at Arsenal where he'll be joined next season by Podolski? What can Chelsea do – will winning the Champions League be enough to keep Di Canio in a job? Spurs – now Harry isn't England manager can they start to look like a decent team again? Will Newcastle keep hold of their top players or will their chairman look for profit first, particularly now they didn't make the Champions League. Do Liverpool have the money to buy big again (and do they trust Dalglish with it after most of his buys haven't really come off).

And there's the Euro's – England go into that with a new manager, only one world class player (who is banned for the first two games anyway) and internal strife with the two top centre defenders supposedly hating each other with a passion. I can't think of a tournament ever that England have gone into so badly prepared, and to be honest I've not much faith in the manager so just watch them go on to win it now.