

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.

Repeat Newsletter !

Those of you who get your turns and newsletters through the mail will be wondering why this issue is very much similar to the one sent out a couple of weeks ago. Unfortunately a fault with the email system meant that those who got turns by PDF format only were actually receiving the same newsletter week after week. Oops. The fault has hopefully now been fixed, but I felt that there was some vital information in this one that they would not have seen. From next week onwards we'll be back to doing all new ones of course.

Niall Quinn's Disco Pants

England are gone, out of the European Championships without putting up much of a fight. The players looked tired, and were rather disappointing, though most people seem to be putting a brave face on things due to the low expectations in the first place. Quite a few players underperformed according to the media, a good few more in my eyes were nowhere near as good as the media say, and is there really much hope that things can get better. When you're struggling, is Jordan Henderson really the player to bring in? Italy played really well without punishing England, and I honestly don't see what the fuss is about Balotelli; with a decent striker Italy would have battered us.



Germany have been the team of the tournament so far, without a doubt and are most peoples tip to line up in the final along with Spain. The two seem to play quite different styles of football, that strange Spanish way at the moment of keeping the ball and essentially running the opposition into the ground without doing a great deal is working for them, but they've yet to come up against a truly decent team. Maybe Portugal will test them more. I would imagine the semi finals will have been played by the time this goes in the newsletter so I don't want to make myself look even dafter than usual, hopefully we'll just have two good games.

Next Deadlines

Coming up this weekend is the Relay For Life Stockport, an event which I organise in aid of Cancer Research UK. It takes up the whole weekend, from early Friday morning until late Sunday – somewhere in the middle of that will be a bunch of people walking around a track for 24 hours! That means no turns on Sunday 1st July for game 8'ers – we'll be back with that on Wednesday. Other games though should be pretty much unaffected.

Tuesday 26th – Game 64

Wednesday 27th – Game 8, Games 33, 56, 75, 99

Thursday 28th – Game 50

Friday 29th – Game 8, Game 64

Monday 2nd July – Game 50, Games 1, 5, 13 and 20