

Necom News

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United Snatch Game 99 Title !

Paul Matthews' Manchester United side won the game 99 Premier Division title a couple of weeks ago, seeing off the challenge of Glen Pine's Blackburn Rovers in the final game. With four games to go, United had a six point lead at the top, but a draw at Man City was followed by a shocking 5-0 hammering at Chelsea and then defeat to Blackburn at Ewood Park – and suddenly United dropped to third place with just one game to go, Kieran Hundal's Manchester City up into second and Blackburn two points clear at the top. City took on Anthony Brockway's Cardiff City away from home – and lost, 3-1 the score to the Welsh side. Blackburn travelled to Stuart Robertson's Everton – needing just a point to be sure of the title – but they also lost, Van Persie doing the damage as Everton ran out 4-1 winners. United travelled to bottom of the table Fulham needing a win to be crowned champions – and that's what they got. Two goals apiece from Tevez and Berbatov meant that they won the league.

Joe Hughes' Roma did the Serie A and Champions League double (they also lost in the final of both the FA Cup - 2-1 to Bayern Munich – and the League Cup – 4-3 to Milan – so quite a season all round for Roma). Ashley Keyte's Chelsea were destroyed 4-0 in the Champions League final, whilst the rest of Serie A fared little better – second placed Bayern Munich and Real Madrid both finishing six points adrift. The margin of victory could in fact have been greater for Roma, they were 10 points clear with three games to go, but with the title won took their foot off the gas somewhat.

Game 75:

Stunning Start For Liverpool

Kieran Hundal's Liverpool have made a great start to the current game 75 season, 8 games in they've won seven of them. This week saw Huntelaar and Totti on target in a comfortable 2-0 victory over Fulham at Craven Cottage. Stuart Flight's Spurs are their closest challengers, four points back, but suffered a 4-2 home defeat this time out against Craig Rathey's defending champions, East Stirling. They move into third, alongside Glen Pine's Grimsby after a 1-1 draw at Shaun Wilford's Everton.

Glen Pine's Lyon are matching Liverpool so far with 7 wins from 8, this week saw a 3-1 win at Inter Milan. Lyon's lead isn't so big though – James West's Borussia Dortmund only two points behind after a crushing 4-1 home win over Stuart Flight's Bayern Munich.

Game 56:

Three Horse Race?

It is at the moment – the battle for Serie A is certainly between three teams, particularly given that there are only three jockeys! Jamie Messenger's Atletico Madrid came from a goal down to beat Spartak Moscow and stay top, thanks to goals from Robinho and Gourcuff. Ben Alexis' AC Milan are two points behind after a 2-0 win over Dynamo Kiev, Van Der Vaart and Tasci their scorers, with John Ferrier's Barcelona a further three points behind after beating Juventus 5-3. Xavi amongst the scorers with two.

Man United and Everton are tied at the top of the Premier, James West's United winning 3-1 at QPR this week whilst David Carney's Everton won 2-1 at home to Chelsea – who are third. With 11 games gone, the top two have 28 points. Jamie Messenger's Manchester City, like Chelsea, are just a point off the top so it's absolutely all to play for at the moment.

Game 33:

Another Title For Preston!

Jamie Messenger's Preston North End remain the dominant side in game 33, winning the Premier by some 10 points from Man City a couple of weeks ago, with Chelsea third and Adam H's Man United in fourth place. Joe Spencer's Bayern Munich had similar success in the European League, as they finished the season 10 points clear of Gerard O'Brien's Barcelona side with Jamie Messenger's Real Madrid trailing in third some 14 points behind the champions. Madrid did win the Champions League though, beating Chelsea 4-1 in the final.

Niall Quinn's Disco Pants...

A regular look at the "real life" world of football outside Necom land with our columnist **Niall Quinn's Disco Pants!**

Harry For England!

I happened to run into an old friend last week in a boozier, used to work in football around here when I was a lad, but then moved on to bigger things and ended up with Harry Redknapp at Portsmouth, Southampton and now Spurs. Not surprisingly I suppose he refused to give anything away at all on the subject everyone wants to know about – is Harry going to take the England job – but still it was great to hear from someone who has so much respect for Redknapp's – particularly the way he is able to see what others don't necessarily. Not that it did him a huge amount of good at weekend – Spurs being run ragged by an incredible second half Arsenal performance at the Emirates. Redknapp has got to be first choice for England, and I for one hope he gets the job. There's no reason why he can't do it part time until the Euro's and then on a full time basis from then on.

A Trophy For Liverpool!

It seems a long time since Liverpool last won something – it took a penalty shootout to pip West Ham to the FA Cup last time, and again they needed penalties to get past Cardiff in a quite thrilling Carling Cup final. Cardiff did themselves proud, but once again I have to be critical of Liverpool under Kenny Dalglish. For me they are really too negative, looking to get men behind the ball wherever possible and shut down the opposition, which means when they're attacking they don't have the numbers to really break down opponents. They're drawing so many games that really with the players they've got they ought to be winning. Will Kenny turn it around? I reckon another two or three quality players in the summer will give him the confidence to go for a bit more, like Mancini has done at Man. City this year after being much more negative last season.

United Will Do It

You just know that Man. United are going to win the Premier League this season. Whilst City and Tottenham have been getting all the praise – quite rightly in fairness – for playing the great football, United just keep on winning. Doing enough, and getting the three points. You might say that they've been pretty lucky on occasion, with comebacks, questionable decisions and late goals – but they're right in there just two points behind City and a much easier run in. Why? Well it's got to be the boss. Clearly a football genius, Sir Alex keeps on doing it year after year. I see United winning the League again, then going for the Champions League one last time before the great man finally calls it a day.

A Lesson For Sunderland!

Okay, this column is about all football – not Sunderland football club – so I promise I won't hark on about them every week, but in my first one I've got to say what an amazing job Martin O'Neill has done to turn around a struggling side, a bunch of players completely shot in confidence who had suffered under the inept management shown by Steve Bruce. A resounding failure in every job he's had, I hope 'Brucie' never gets back into football management. A man that showed no loyalty anywhere and who was rightly given the boot by Sunderland, probably a year too late. Martin O'Neill took the same players and turned us into a decent side. This week though things didn't go our way – and we were battered 4-0 at West Brom. It should prove a valuable lesson that things aren't always going to be as easy as they've been these first few months.

Hope you've enjoyed my first column – there's plenty more where that came from. I'll be back next week with more from **Niall Quinn's Disco Pants!**

The Best Team In The Land And All The World...

Who has the best team in all the games of League Soccer? It's a question that has confounded philosophers over the years, and one that doesn't perhaps have an answer! We set up the "Universal Rankings" on the website to compare teams – but that doesn't tell the whole story. For the first time here in print we hopefully will take you through a few of those squads in what should become a regular series. Starting off with the team that currently sit at the top of those Universal Rankings, **Mark Watters' Inter Milan** from **game 7**.

Inter are second in the table after four matches, losing to current table toppers Borussia Dortmund 2-1 away in week 4. It's early days yet though – last season they trailed the leaders by seven points at one point and still won the league by five points with an impressive 55 point total, also taking the UEFA Cup and FA Cup in a pretty impressive season. Prior to that though they only had the FA Cup from the season before in the trophy cabinet, so not a great history of winning stuff by any means. Mark has been manager for 99 turns, so has had plenty of time to build a squad that is to his liking – let's have a look at how he's done.

Firstly the keepers. First choice is the 85ov rated Julio Cesar, trained up to be – along with Iker Casillas of Man United the best goalkeeper in game 7. His able substitute is the 82ov Vladimir Gabulov – also ranked in the top 10 in game. In front of those safe hands, Mark selects Maicon and Evra at fullback with the pairing of Puyol and Ferdinand as his centre halves. Maicon, Ferdinand and Puyol are all rated 85 in game 7, whilst Evra and backup man John Terry is an 84. Mark also has the 83 rated Arne Friedrich in reserve. Across the midfield, Inter currently line up with two out wide – 83 rated Malouda on one side and 86 rated Iniesta on the other, with 87 rated Sneijder and Nani, 84, in the middle. Positional ratings are fantastic for all – 95's in the important ratings everywhere you look – which also explains why positionally perfect Malouda gets the nod ahead of 84 rated Stankovic and 83 rated Nigel De Jong. 84 rated Samuel Eto'o also features as a midfielder, but not a happy one – lack of first team action has led to him putting in a transfer request. Nani leads the team goalscoring so far this season with 3, Sneijder has one as do each of the defenders. Up front – again great players – but only room in the side for two. Mark somehow has to rotate Zlatan Ibrahimovic, David Villa and Robin Van Persie – Ibra and RVP are 85's whilst Villa is an 86. Mark's first choice appears to be Villa and Van Persie – both having scored two goals each this season. Like Eto'o, Ibrahimovic hasn't taken the rejection well and put in a transfer request. Despite that ultimatum, the Swedish superstar still isn't being selected by his boss, and with 32 weeks left on his contract he will probably be moving on sometime this season.

So – great side, great players. Mark has to keep those that aren't in the side every week happy, and move on those that he doesn't want to keep around. He looks set to be in for a real battle this season with Billy Black's Dortmund side – a team that certainly don't match up to Inter when it comes to ratings, but a team that did more than that when they met recently in the league.

What's This Relay For Life Stuff All About?

You may recall last weeks newsletter had a feature on a managers meet at an event called 'Relay For Life'... it's going to be on 30th June 2012 in Stockport, and we want to get as many Necom managers to come along as we possibly can.

"Relay For Life" is a charity event that I have organised for the past four years, raising something like £250,000 for Cancer Research UK in the process. The event itself sees teams made up of people like yourselves camp out overnight, and join in all the fun. Play some football, partake of the outside bar, lie back and enjoy the sun – and of course talk Necom and League Soccer with your fellow managers.

There's more information on the Necom noticeboards part of the website (go to www.necomgames.com and then click on noticeboards). You can post up on there if you're interested, or else go to the Cancer Research UK website directly for more news on what Relay For Life is – www.relay.cancerresearchuk.org/

As far as accomodation goes, most of us will be camping at the Relay, but of course if you don't fancy that you could always go and book into a local hotel. However, so much fun will be had sitting outside your tents until the early hours of the morning with a beer in one hand and some return sheets in the other. I remember some amazing overnight meets from back in the early 90's (I'm sure Rich does too) where some fabulous transfers took place though the night. At that time of day you might even be able to get some exclusive secret information out of me...

The cost - well it's just £15 to register for the Relay itself - all that money goes to Cancer Research UK. That also covers your camping plot, so all you need to pay on top is your food and drink (which you can buy on site or smuggle in!) You get a T-Shirt and some other bits and bobs from Cancer Research UK for your money too, and any more perks I can think of to throw in at the time..

Am I Seeing Double?

By Kieran Bobpool Hundal

With so much to possibly write about for my first article I decided to pen my views on the dishonest and some might say blatant misuse of the Player Database, more commonly known as the Necom DB.

Over the years there have been more and more issues where a certain player has appeared more than once on the DB in a slightly different guise. Be it a different DOB, spelling of name, a different name format or indeed a totally different name altogether.

Some managers will recall Stefan Radu/Radu Stefan, Igor Akinfeyev/Igor Akinfeev, Lucas/Lucas Leiva and more recently there have been issues surrounding the daSilva twins of Man Utd. They were on the DB as Fabio/Rafael, Fabio Silva/Rafael Silva, Fabio Da Silva/Rafael Da Silva and finally as Fabio daSilva/Rafael daSilva.

The list is actually quite vast, but my breaking point came recently when someone who's integrity I will and could never question, Craig Rathey of g75 and more recently g64 posted he had scouted in a certain Alcantara Rafinha in g64. Now those of us who are well versed on young football talents as most of us are would have noticed, as I did that this is part of the name of Thiago Alcantara, who has a younger brother Rafael Alcantara, both of whom are on the DB as those names. The problem arises when players have several formats of names or spellings. Now Alcantara Rafinha is not incorrect but the name Rafael Alcantara is correct too. Why can a manager, when searching the DB via the member pages, not just type in ALCA and see what Alcantaras are there already. If he is unhappy with the Rafael connotation, email Neil and see if he will change it and post about it on the ratings or General L.S board. Why convolute the system and cause issues about "Who is the real Rafael Alcantara?"

To me, it's a simple question of integrity and honesty, these managers, and you all know who you are are blatantly trying to benefit from getting an alternative name or spelling added and gaining a FREE player via scouting, but why do that when there is already one there?

It is massively unfair on managers who already have that player with a slight mis-spelling or different name format and they lose out on the player and money too.

A pathetic situation arose recently with a manager paying for Urby Emanuelson and there was another one with two M's spelt Emmanuelson. Why would the manager who got Neil to add the Emanuelson not tell Neil to amend the mis-spelt one.

A simple solution to this is ALL players being added are checked first for similar players as certain managers quite obviously cannot be trusted and therefore massively increasing Neils workload.

All for the sake of one, two or three players? REALLY? I'd urge those managers to look at the desperation of adding these duplicates and instead of making us all question whether we "Are seeing double?". Just do the right thing and inform Neil of any changes that need to be made, if you missed out on the player you missed out. You will get another. Players are emerging daily, scout Matt Tubbs hoping he will be the next Ian Wright rather than create a 2nd, 3rd or 4th version of Rafael blooming Al flipping Cantara.

Thanks for reading, look forward to hearing about all your emails to Neil for DB amendments. And feel free to discuss this in the next live chat on the Necom Proboards.

Any suggestions for my next article, PM me.