

Podcast 1 2008-9 Worksheet

The Premier League is back!

By Damian Fitzpatrick (August 14th 2008)

Pre-Listening (Background information)

The Premier League returns and on this week's show we ask fans of Tottenham, Arsenal and Liverpool fan to take a look at how their teams will perform this season. Answers and transcripts are at the end of the worksheet.

A. Main idea

Listen to the first part of the report and explain if these statements are true or false.

1. T / F Manchester United are once again most people's favourites to win the Premier League title.

2. T / F According to the report, Liverpool and Arsenal will both struggle this season.

3. T / F The speaker lists four teams that he thinks might have a chance of breaking into the top 4.

4. T / F Everton are the current FA Cup holders.

5. T / F Derby are tipped to go down.

B. Listening – note taking

Listen to the rest of the report and fill in the chart with appropriate information.

Speaker	Fan	Predicted Position	Title Winners	New Players to watch	Nightmare Scenario	Dark Horse
Damon (1)			Not mentioned	_____’, Dossena and Plessis	Be _____ followed by spiral down the league	
David (2)			Manchester United		_____ and going out of Champions League early. Finish below Spurs	_____ / Aston Villa
Damian (3)			Chelsea	_____ Bentley, Gomes, Dos Santos	_____ finish above Tottenham	

C. Listening

Listen to the report and fill in the gaps with the appropriate word or phrase.

Damon: After finishing fourth last season, we’ll be looking to (1) _____ and push for the title. Realistically, with only Robbie Keane and Dossena looking good signings, I think we’ll be lucky to be in (2) _____ come February. The last four seasons has seen us start really slowly, dropping points before winter with draws against clubs from lower in the league. While, Benitez is great in Europe, he doesn’t seem to realise the (3) _____ of the less glamorous fixtures that a team needs to win to be the best in the league. Realistically I think Liverpool are going to finish third, but they will take (4) _____ off their big rivals this time round.

As I said, Keane and Dossena should be decent signings, but I’m looking for Plessis to start to establish himself in midfield as a back up for Alonso and Mascherano. From what I’ve seen so far, he’s comfortable on the ball and rarely (5) _____ possession. A welcome addition I think.

After a (6) _____ draw against Liege last night, it is possible that Liverpool could go out of the Champions league at the (7) _____ / _____. That would be a disaster, especially if Liverpool struggle in the league and finish outside the top four. The Champions League

has been our (8) _____ / _____ / _____ for the last four years, without it there will be no money and no new players and a spiral down the league could start.

Finishing fifth or sixth shouldn't happen but if a dark horse sneaks fourth Liverpool could be in trouble.

I reckon that dark horse will be Aston Villa.

ANSWERS

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The Premier League is back!

A. Main idea

Listen to the first part of the report and explain if these statements are true or false.

1. **T / F** Manchester United are once again most people’s favourites to win the Premier League title.
2. **T / E** According to the report, Liverpool and Arsenal will both struggle this season.
Not mentioned
3. **T / E** The speaker lists four teams that he thinks might have a chance of breaking into the top 4.
Portsmouth, Everton, Aston Villa, Man City, Spurs
4. **T / E** Everton are the current FA Cup holders.
Portsmouth are
5. **T / E** Derby are tipped to go down.
They went down last year.

B. Listening – note taking

Listen to the rest of the report and fill in the chart with appropriate information.

Speaker	Fan	Predicted Position	Title Winners	New Players to watch	Nightmare Scenario	Dark Horse
Damon (1)	Liverpool	3rd	Not mentioned	Keane, Dossena and Plessis	Be knocked out of the Champions league followed by spiral down the league	Aston Villa
David (2)	Arsenal	3 rd or 4th	Manchester United	Nasri	Not finishing in top 4 /going out of Champions League early. Finish below Spurs	Manchester City / Aston Villa
Damian (3)	Tottenham	5th	Chelsea	Modric, Bentley, Gomes, Dos Santos	Arsenal finish above Tottenham	Sunderland

C. Listening

Listen to the section on Liverpool and fill in the gaps with the correct word.

1. improve (get better)
2. Contention (have a chance)
3. Importance (significance)
4. points
5. Wastes (loses)
6. Tepid (uninspiring)
7. first hurdle (the first round)
8. Bread and butter (main)

Transcript

Introduction

Finally, after almost three months since Manchester United lifted the Premier and Champions League titles in May, club football has returned. Once again, Sir Alex Ferguson's team will be among the favourites to retain the title though a newly-appointed manager at Chelsea will probably disagree with that. What about Arsenal or Liverpool, can Wenger or Benitez bring some much sought-after silverware to The Emirates or Anfield. Or will those two struggle to even make the top four as dark horses such as Aston Villa, Manchester City, FA Cup holders Portsmouth, Everton or even Spurs challenge to make the breakthrough into the Champions League places?

And what about relegation? Which teams will go down? Newly-promoted sides, Hull, Stoke and West Brom will be hoping to avoid a similar fate that Derby went through last year - returning to the Championship after only one season, while teams such as Bolton, Middlesbrough, West Ham, Fulham and Sunderland may simply see mid-table as the height of their ambitions.

At this time of the year, every fan can dare to dream and so over the next couple of weeks languagecaster will be hearing the hopes, fears, opinions and predictions of Premier League fans and how they think their team will fare this season. This week we look at North London rivals Tottenham and Arsenal but first up here's Damon with his view of Liverpool's chances this year.

Liverpool

Damon: After finishing fourth last season, we'll be looking to improve and push for the title. Realistically, with only Robbie Keane and Dossena looking good signings, I think we'll be lucky to be in contention come February. The last four seasons has seen us start really slowly, dropping points before winter with draws against clubs from lower in the league. While, Benitez is great in Europe, he doesn't seem to realise the importance of the less glamorous fixtures that a team needs to win to be the best in the league. Realistically I think Liverpool are going to finish third, but they will take points off their big rivals this time round.

As I said, Keane and Dossena should be decent signings, but I'm looking for Plessis to start to establish himself in midfield as a back up for Alonso and Mascherano. From what I've seen so far, he's comfortable on the ball and rarely wastes possession. A welcome addition I think.

After a tepid draw against Liege last night, it is possible that Liverpool could go out of the Champions league at the first hurdle. That would be a disaster, especially if Liverpool struggle in the league and finish outside the top four. The Champions League has been our bread and butter for the last four years, without it there will be no money and no new players and a spiral down the league could start.

Finishing fifth or sixth shouldn't happen but if a dark horse sneaks fourth Liverpool could be in trouble. I reckon that dark horse will be Aston Villa.

Arsenal

Damian (DF): Yes, now we have another football fan who is going to give us his views on the Premier League this season. Would you please introduce yourself?

David (D): Yes, my name is David and I'm an Arsenal fan living in London.

DF: OK, well, welcome Dave obviously, apart from the Arsenal bit of course. Tell me this how do you reckon Arsenal's chances this year?

D: Yes, I'm hoping they'll be similar as they usually are so, that we should do reasonably well but I don't think we'll get to top this season, so similar to last season.

DF: Yeah, so, what do you think? 3rd or 4th?

D: Yeah, I hope, I hope yeah.

DF: And which team do you think will win the title?

D: Well, that's probably Manchester United I think. I don't want them to win the title but I think they will.

DF: OK, some of your players have left in the close season like Hleb and Silva and Lehmann, what about new players at Arsenal? Who should we look out for?

D: Yes, so there's a lot of talk about Nasri so I think that he's the one that sounds quite exciting and I am hoping that he proves to be and makes a real difference.

DF: What would be the nightmare scenario this season for Arsenal?

D: Well, I think either not finishing in the top four, that's a real nightmare and I dread that every season so that would be...that would be the nightmare scenario, I think overall. But then going out of the Champions League early and these kind of things - you want to stay in that as long as possible.

DF: Yes, so Champions League football is important for Arsenal? Dark horse in the Premier League, which team do you think might cause an upset this year and possibly break into the top four?

D: I mean, I might look at which teams have good managers, so I think Mark Hughes is quite good, so maybe Man City might surprise but they were pretty good last season but they might do bit better, maybe Aston Villa, I mean I think O'Neill's pretty good building on things.

DF: Surprisingly no mention for Tottenham then?

D: Well, yeah, that's a nightmare scenario as well Tottenham finish above Arsenal ... I don't want to think about that.

Tottenham

Damian: Cast your mind back to this time last year and remember the hype about Spurs and how we were going to break into the Premier League's top 4? We had finished 5th two years in a row, had a great manager and four top-class forwards. Nothing could go wrong but inevitably, because it is Spurs after all, it did. How things have changed since then. A new manager has taken over, there is only one recognised forward at the club (presuming Berbatov leaves for Old Trafford), seven of last year's first team squad have been sold while six new players have arrived.

Though sad to see many of those players depart, their replacements are already whetting the Spurs' fans appetites. Luka Modric is the heartbeat of a very good Croatian side, Giovanni Dos Santos is all pace and trickery with an eye for goal, David Bentley a winger that crosses, shoots and works hard, Heurelio Gomes a keeper that actually exudes confidence. In addition to this, Gareth Bale, Ledley King and Jonathan Woodgate are all fit, Darren Bent's confidence has returned meaning there is a sense that this could be Tottenham's year...

But hang on a minute. King and Woodgate are class but there is little chance they will play 40 games between them never mind 40 each. Modric and Santos are slight in build and already there are doubts being raised about their lack of physical presence, and of course, Brazilian goalkeepers do not have the best reputation in the world, while if a team is solely relying on Darren Bent to score goals then that team will probably not figure in the top four. So what kind of Tottenham will we get? The usual. We just don't know. Prediction? 5th. Nightmare scenario? A repeat of three years ago when Arsenal pipped us for the 4th spot on the last day. Painful memories indeed. Title winners? I love the fact that Ramos and keeper Gomes both think Spurs can win it but I am going for Chelsea. Dark horse? Sunderland. Another eventful year at White Hart Lane.