

The Premier League's Top 4

(March 18th 2009)

Pre-Listening / Background information

On languagecaster's main report this week we take a look at the 'Big 4' teams in the Premier League: Manchester United; Chelsea; Liverpool and Arsenal

A. Main Idea

Listen to the whole report and choose which of the following teams were mentioned. One has already been done for you.

Arsenal	X	Manchester City	
Aston Villa		Manchester United	
Birmingham City		Newcastle United	
Blackburn Rovers		Liverpool	
Chelsea		West Ham	
Cardiff City		Tottenham	
Derby County		West Brom	
Everton		Nottingham Forest	
Ipswich Town		Sheffield Wednesday	
Leeds United		Real Madrid	

B. Main Idea

Listen to the whole report again and put the teams above under the correct heading. A team may appear in more than one column.

A 'Big Four' Team	English title winners	Challenged for the title

C. Comprehension

Listen to the whole report and answer the following questions.

1. Which team dominated English football when Damian first started watching football?
2. What happened this week in the Premier League that allowed the 'Big Four' to appear in the first four positions?
3. What did Blackburn do in 1995?
4. Apart from not winning the title what have Liverpool not failed to do since the turn of the century?
5. Explain why these teams always dominate according to the report.

D. Listening - vocabulary

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

How has this happened?

The (1) _____ answer is that these teams have the best players and managers but to attract them you need money. Lots of money and (2) _____ for the 'Big Four' they have had more than anyone else. (3) _____, Liverpool, Arsenal and especially Manchester United have always been rich clubs that can (4) _____ large fan bases to support them economically, while Chelsea have a rich (5) _____ who has bank rolled their success. These four teams have qualified for the lucrative Champions League tournament on a (6) _____ and for the past five seasons no other team, apart from Everton, have done that. This, of course, means that they can (7) _____ far more money than any of the other Premier League teams so that they then can attract the best players and coaches and continue with their success.

Can any other team (8) _____?

Well, the hope this season was that Aston Villa might be able to challenge the top 4 hegemony ...

Premier League's 'Big Four'

(March 18th 2009)

ANSWERS

A. Main Idea

Listen to the whole report and choose which of the following teams were mentioned.

Arsenal	x	Manchester City	
Aston Villa	x	Manchester United	x
Birmingham City		Newcastle United	
Blackburn Rovers	x	Liverpool	x
Chelsea	x	West Ham	x
Cardiff City		Tottenham	x
Derby County		West Brom	
Everton	x	Nottingham Forest	x
Ipswich Town	x	Sheffield Wednesday	
Leeds United		Real Madrid	

B. Main Idea

Listen to the whole report again and put the teams above under the correct heading. A team may appear in more than one column.

A 'Big Four' Team	English title winners	Challenged for the title
Manchester United Chelsea Liverpool Arsenal	Manchester United Chelsea Arsenal Everton Nottingham Forest Aston Villa	West Ham Ipswich Tottenham Everton Aston Villa

C. Comprehension

Listen to the whole report and answer the following questions.

1. Which team dominated English football when Damian first started watching football?

Liverpool

2. What happened this week in the Premier League that allowed the 'Big Four' to appear in the first four positions?

Aston Villa lost and fell to 5th place

3. What did Blackburn do in 1995?

They won the Premier League title

4. Apart from not winning the title what have Liverpool not failed to do since the turn of the century?

Not failed to qualify for Champions League

5. Explain why these teams always dominate according to the report.

a. They have a big fan base which gives them lots of money

b. They can attract the best players

c. They qualify for the CL which gives them even more money

D. Listening - vocabulary

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

How has this happened?

The (1) **obvious** answer is that these teams have the best players and managers but to attract them you need money. Lots of money and (2) **luckily** for the 'Big Four' they have had more than anyone else. (3) **Traditionally**, Liverpool, Arsenal and especially Manchester United have always been rich clubs that can (4) **rely on** large fan bases to support them economically, while Chelsea have a rich (5) **benefactor** who has bank rolled their success. These four teams have qualified for the lucrative Champions League tournament on a (6) **regular basis** and for the past five seasons no other team, apart from Everton, have done that. This, of course, means that they can (7) **earn** far more money than any of the other Premier League teams so that they then can attract the best players and coaches and continue with their success.

Can any other team (8) **break through**?

Well, the hope this season was that Aston Villa might be able to challenge the top 4 hegemony ...

Transcript

The Premier League likes to see itself as the greatest show in the world, the best players, stadia, fans and of course having the most exciting football. But for many, the idea of a championship in which only 4 out of a total of 20 teams stand any chance of winning is, well,

rather boring. This week saw Aston Villa lose in the league and they fell to 5th place meaning that the table now reads: 1. Manchester United 2. Chelsea 3. Liverpool and 4. Arsenal. Welcome to the world of the Premier League's 'Big Four'.

Was it always like this?

Well, no. When I first started watching football, there was a top 1 and that was Liverpool. The Reds dominated the First Division from the mid-1970s until the end of the 1990s though it has to be said that teams such as Everton, Arsenal, Aston Villa and Nottingham Forest all won titles in that period as well, while teams such as Ipswich, Tottenham and West Ham provided strong challenges.

Now, since the formation of the Premier League in 1992, Manchester United have won 10 of the 16 titles up for grabs and have never been out of the top three. Arsenal and Chelsea have won 5 of the other titles between them with only Blackburn's win in 1995 'spoiling' the show. Liverpool have not won a title since 1990 however since the turn of the century they have yet to finish lower than 5th. This dominance has led these teams to be known as the 'Big Four'

How has this happened?

The obvious answer is that these teams have the best players and managers but to attract them you need money. Lots of money and luckily for the 'Big Four' they have had more than anyone else. Traditionally, Liverpool, Arsenal and especially Manchester United have always been rich clubs that can rely on large fan bases to support them economically, while Chelsea have a rich benefactor who has bank rolled their success. These four teams have qualified for the lucrative Champions League tournament on a regular basis and for the past five seasons no other team, apart from Everton, have done that. This, of course, means that they can earn far more money than any of the other Premier League teams so that they then can attract the best players and coaches and continue with their success.

Can any other team break through?

Well, the hope this season was that Aston Villa might be able to challenge the top 4 hegemony but it seems that like Tottenham in 2006 and Everton in 2005 they simply don't have the resources to do so. If the Premier League is to truly be as competitive as its marketing team suggests then the question of the 'Big Four' needs to be addressed.