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English Premiership Football 2006–2007 Preview - Chelsea's Hat Trick?

By Steven Cronin

Chelsea's latest excursion into the transfer market has left many fans thinking this season's title race is already a foregone conclusion.

On the face of it Chelsea appear to have signed two genuine world class stars in Michael Ballack and Andriy Shevchenko to add to their growing number of A list players.

Ballack has been the driving force for both Bayern Munich and the German national team for several years and has always resisted the temptation to move until now.

Ukrainian Shevchenko proved his worth in Italy with AC Milan after spending his early years learning his trade at Dynamo Kiev.

Indeed, following the decline of Brazilian superstar Ronaldo, Shevchenko has emerged as possibly the world's most feared striker.

But both new signings are approaching the autumn of their careers. They've been successful at previous clubs, gathering an impressive collection of medals between the pair of them. Whether the fire continues to burn only time will tell.

As one of the few home grown players, Frank Lampard will be hoping to put a mediocre World Cup behind him and find a return to his old Chelsea form.

Though Lampard has come in for some stinging criticism from the English press, you don't become a bad player overnight and Frank will be eager for a good start to the season.

The evergreen Claude Makelele flourished in the France midfield during the World Cup alongside Zinedine Zidane.

Makelele will again be hoping to provide the steel in the Chelsea engine room, allowing the more offensive players the opportunity to hurt the opposition.

We can only hope their nearest challengers put up a greater fight than last season when the title race was won at a canter.

All said and done, if Chelsea's star names play to anything like their potential, it's difficult to see any outcome other than a third consecutive title for the Londoners.

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Premiership Highs and Lows – Manchester United Football Club

By Chris Towland

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Most fans of English football and the Premiership in particular would agree that Manchester United have certainly had their share of 'Highs' in the twelve seasons since the Premiership began and what would be considered a 'Low' by Utd fans (such as finishing third behind Arsenal and Chelsea) would in fact be considered a significant 'High' by most other clubs!

Here are what I consider to be some of Manchester United's major highs and lows since the inaugural Premiership season kicked off in 1992:

***** Highs *****

Out of a total of just twelve seasons, Man. United have lifted the Premiership trophy no less than eight times and a particular high was taking the title in the very first Premiership season.

United have achieved the Premiership and F.A. Cup 'double' three times in 1994, 1996 and in 1999.

They have won more Premiership games, won more points and suffered less defeats than any other team in the league.

Manchester United have scored the greatest number of goals overall since the Premiership began and in fact also hold the record for the most goals scored in a single season: 97 scored in 1999–2000.

United also hold the record for the highest number of goals in a Premiership game which they achieved in March 1995 with a 9–0 victory against Ipswich a game where Andy Cole scored five of the goals.

***** Lows *****

One recent major low for Manchester United came at the end of the 2003–2004 season when they not

only finished outside of the top two (a full fifteen points behind the winners Arsenal) but also equaled their lowest ever points total for a season.

How many can forget Frenchman Eric Cantona's infamous flying kung fu attack on a fan at Crystal palace in 1995? His kick may have looked at home in a Bruce Lee film but it earned him an eight month suspension which many consider was a major factor in United losing the title that season to Blackburn Rovers.

In 2003 there were two major lows for Manchester United:

The first was David Beckham leaving to join Real Madrid. His £25 million transfer fee was good for the United coffers but not so good for the team as there was no suitable replacement waiting to step into

his shoes.

The second was defender Rio Ferdinand, the record £30 million signing from Leeds United, being banned for eight months for missing a routine drugs test.

For anyone interested in a very detailed, month by month view of Manchester United's twelve years in the Premiership, I fully recommend 'The Breedon Book of Premiership Records' by Breedon Books which is available from their website at:

<http://www.breedonbooks.co.uk/publications/1859834191.html>

Chris Towland

Chris is the webmaster of www.football-nut.co.uk where he challenges you to prove your football knowledge and win prizes in the free monthly football quiz and prize draw. The Football-Nut website also contains up-to-the-minute news for all of the major UK football clubs.



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