

THE LOBSTER TIMES

THE INTERNATIONAL BREAK INQUEST

GAMEWEEK 05 · FINAL · BONUS APPLIED · RANKS VERIFIED

MANAGERS WORLDWIDE 10,933,139 Total FPL entries	GW5 GLOBAL AVERAGE 48 10 of 21 beat it	GW5 GLOBAL BEST 126 Our best: 59	UNTIL GAMEWEEK 6 21 Days Deadline 10 Oct, 10:00
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Twenty-one managers were required to account for Gameweek 5. Every figure in this edition is final: bonus applied, auto-substitutions processed, ranks verified against 10,933,139 managers worldwide. **Four managers captained a footballer who never left the treatment room.** One paid twenty-four points for the privilege of changing his mind, and the best armband in the division belonged to a man sitting sixteenth.

Man Makes Best Captaincy Call In League, Pays 24 Points In Tax, Finishes sixteenth

CAPTAIN BRUNO TRADING FLOOR—Trader sold and re-purchased the same forward inside a single transfer window.

Man Benches Striker Who Then Scores A Hat-Trick, Describes Weekend As Unsurvivable

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION—Brian Brobbey's three goals were watched in full from an aluminium folding chair.

Manager's Captain Plays Zero Minutes; Manager Posts Second-Best Score In The League

MAD BALLER—56-point gameweek achieved with a dead armband and no transfers whatsoever.

Manager Records Worst Gameweek Rank In League, Announces World Will Soon Know True Pain

AKATSUKI MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY—All four chips remain sealed in what he refers to only as the forbidden vault.

Man Pays 16 Points To Play A Bench Boost, Three Of Four Substitutes Return Nothing

GP FC INCIDENT ROOM—Post-mortem scheduled. Proprietary spreadsheet has been taken offline.

Man Who Joined Two Gameweeks Late Says The Lads Are Giving Him Everything

NORTHUMBERLAND—Squad contains no Erling Haaland. Manager does not regard this as a problem.

ALSO IN THIS EDITION

Bart's Team — Man Who Spent Three Chips By October Insists His Last Free Hit Is A Masterplan

Gaicho F.C. — Local Man Builds Predictive Model That Correctly Identifies He Has Lost One Point

szobamela — Third-Place Manager Captains Player Who Did Not Leave The Treatment Room

Saka la bolsita — Manager Gains A Place Without Making A Single Transfer, Credits The Hard Yards

El Cochiloco — Man Sells Injured Striker For Everton Striker, Nets A Two-Point Profit, Calls It A Catastrophe

Gunner4Lyfe — Arsenal Fan Captains Arsenal Captain During 3-0 Arsenal Defeat, Regrets Nothing

Dang Football Club — Rookie Leaves 37 Points On Bench Across Two Weeks, Describes It As Technically Growth

The Special Ones — Manager With A Zero-Point Bench Declares It The Purest Expression Of Efficiency

Red Lobster FC — Namesake Franchise Files Bottom-10.0-Percent Gameweek As Temporary Brand Consolidation

Camp Nou Way — Man Who Captained An Absent Player Last Month Records League's Best Captain Return

FK Jizmaila Sarr — Club Named After Ismaila Sarr Confirms It Has Never Owned Ismaila Sarr

sakadeez — Man Pays Four Points To Sign Two Players, Then Benches A Goalkeeper Who Scores Ten

fc rtw — Man Makes Three Transfers That All Work, Benches Twelve Points, Loses A Place Anyway

Newpi — Manager Makes Four Transfers Without Noticing, Pays Nothing, Goes Surfing

are you aMAD — Club Named After Amad Diallo Has Never Owned Amad Diallo, Concedes Branding Error

THE TABLE · FINAL

#	+/-	CLUB	PTS	GW5	WORLD
01	▲ 1	Bart's Team	381	59	0.6%
02	▼ 1	Gaicho F.C.	373	50	1.4%
03	● 0	szobamela	358	52	4.0%
04	▲ 1	Saka la bolsita	339	48	11.6%
05	▲ 1	papoy	334	52	14.6%
06	▼ 2	El Cochiloco	330	38	17.3%
07	● 0	Gunner4Lyfe	328	49	18.7%
08	● 0	Dang Football Club	327	49	19.2%
09	▲ 1	The Special Ones	301	42	40.6%
10	▼ 1	Red Lobster FC	299	33	41.7%
11	▲ 2	MAD Baller	293	56	46.7%
12	● 0	Camp Nou Way	289	51	50.0%
13	▼ 2	FK Jizmaila Sarr	284	26	54.0%
14	▲ 2	sakadeez	259	39	70.6%
15	● 0	fc rtw	256	29	72.1%
16	▼ 2	captain bruno	253	45	73.8%
17	▲ 1	Newpi	245	42	77.1%
18	▼ 1	GP FC	245	51	77.2%
19	▲ 1	are you aMAD	227	49	82.9%
20	▼ 1	Akatsuki	222	25	84.2%
21	● 0	BruceBall	154	36	92.9%

INSIDE THIS EDITION

The Master Ledger · Global Standing, where every manager is measured against all 10,933,139 entrants · Gameweek 5 In Numbers · The Armband Audit · Twenty-one full dossiers, each carrying twelve questions and a written verdict · and a send-off for the international break.

Highest: Bart's Team on 59. Lowest: Akatsuki on 25. Captained a ghost: szobamela, MAD Baller, Akatsuki, BruceBall.

The Master Ledger

ALL 21 CLUBS · GAMEWEEK 5 FINAL · VALUE AND BANK IN £M

#	+/-	CLUB	MANAGER	TOTAL	GW5	BENCH	HIT	TR	CHIPS	VALUE	BANK	CAPTAIN	ARM
01	▲1	Bart's Team	Bart Simp	381	59	5	—	1	1	100.6	0.5	Haaland	12
02	▼1	Gaucho F.C.	gian jaen	373	50	11	—	1	1	99.8	0.1	Haaland	12
03	●0	szobamela	Jose Castrejon	358	52	6	—	0	3	100.3	0.0	João Pedro	4
04	▲1	Saka la bolsita	Phillip Lopez	339	48	4	—	0	3	100.4	0.0	Haaland	12
05	▲1	papoy	Alexis Segura	334	52	21	—	1	1	100.1	0.0	Haaland	12
06	▼2	El Cochiloco	Alfonso Castrejon	330	38	8	—	1	2	100.5	2.0	Haaland	12
07	●0	Gunner4Lyfe	Joshua Clarke	328	49	3	—	1	3	100.1	3.9	Ødegaard	4
08	●0	Dang Football Club	Khang Dang	327	49	20	—	1	1	99.9	1.5	Haaland	12
09	▲1	The Special Ones	Cameron Walker	301	42	0	—	0	4	100.4	0.0	Ødegaard	4
10	▼1	Red Lobster FC	Neil Patel-Hernandez	299	33	2	—	0	4	100.5	0.1	Haaland	12
11	▲2	MAD Baller	Marie Drosche	293	56	5	—	0	3	99.3	1.4	João Pedro	4
12	●0	Camp Nou Way	Abner Chavez	289	51	0	—	1	4	99.3	0.2	Isak	16
13	▼2	FK Jizmaila Sarr	Aleksa Divcic	284	26	0	—	0	4	101.0	0.0	Haaland	12
14	▲2	sakadeez	Drin Pacuku	259	39	10	−4	2	2	101.7	0.2	Haaland	12
15	●0	fc rtw	danny lopez	256	29	12	—	3	3	100.9	0.5	Palmer	4
16	▼2	captain bruno	Nick Revia	253	45	18	−24	7	3	101.0	0.2	Isak	16
17	▲1	Newpi	Nico Zarzaua	245	42	1	—	4	4	100.1	0.9	Haaland	12
18	▼1	GP FC	Chris Tran	245	51	0	−16	6	2	100.5	0.3	Thiago	10
19	▲1	are you aMAD	Felix Holland	227	49	0	—	1	3	100.4	0.1	B.Fernandes	4
20	▼1	Akatsuki	Giancarlos Castaneda	222	25	8	−4	2	4	99.3	0.4	João Pedro	4
21	●0	BruceBall†	Alex Bruce	154	36	0	—	0	4	100.1	0.2	João Pedro	2

Gameweek By Gameweek

POINTS SCORED IN EACH OF THE FIVE GAMEWEEKS

#	CLUB	GW1	GW2	GW3	GW4	GW5	TOTAL
01	Bart's Team	51	94	73	104	59	381
02	Gaucho F.C.	39	115	77	92	50	373
03	szobamela	55	105	62	84	52	358
04	Saka la bolsita	56	102	60	73	48	339
05	papoy	34	117	58	73	52	334
06	El Cochiloco	60	111	49	72	38	330
07	Gunner4Lyfe	70	63	89	57	49	328
08	Dang Football Club	44	64	75	95	49	327
09	The Special Ones	83	84	38	74	42	301
10	Red Lobster FC	45	101	59	61	33	299
11	MAD Baller	47	46	58	86	56	293
12	Camp Nou Way	52	59	37	90	51	289
13	FK Jizmaila Sarr	63	96	35	68	26	284
14	sakadeez	38	61	58	67	39	259
15	fc rtw	45	83	32	67	29	256
16	captain bruno	56	92	49	59	45	253
17	Newpi	42	66	50	45	42	245
18	GP FC	33	63	43	71	51	245
19	are you aMAD	32	57	40	49	49	227
20	Akatsuki	38	69	32	66	25	222
21	BruceBall	—	—	43	75	36	154

In Brief

Man Sells Striker, Repurchases Him Forty Minutes Later. A manager at the transfer desk disposed of Yoane Wissa and then reacquired the same footballer inside a single window, describing the round trip as a liquidity manoeuvre. The exercise altered nothing and cost four points.

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Sixteen Of Twenty-One Clubs Own Footballer Who Did Not Play. João Pedro was held by sixteen squads in Gameweek 5 and recorded zero minutes for all of them. Three managers started him anyway and four appointed him captain.

Reserve Outscores Starter At Sixteen Of Twenty-One Clubs. In seventy-six percent of this division, a substitute finished the weekend ahead of at least one player selected to start. No club has issued a statement.

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Manager Who Joined Two Gameweeks Late Beats Four Who Did Not. BruceBall, which entered the competition at Gameweek 3, returned a stronger weekly world rank than four clubs present since August. The club declined to celebrate, citing the hard yards.

CORRECTIONS

A previous edition described Alex Palmer as a midfielder of consequence. He is a reserve goalkeeper at Ipswich and did not leave the bench.

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This newspaper reported that Riccardo Calafiori scored from twenty-five yards. He did not. He returned one point and the sentence has been withdrawn.

We stated that a Bench Boost returned nothing. It returned ten, all of it from Matheus Cunha. The remaining three substitutes returned nothing, which is a different sentence.

† BruceBall entered at Gameweek 3 and has contested three gameweeks rather than five; its deficit is partly structural. · +/- shows places gained or lost against the post-Gameweek-4 table, with the number of places

Global Standing

EVERY CLUB MEASURED AGAINST ALL 10,933,139 MANAGERS WORLDWIDE

How to read this page. Overall Rank is your cumulative position across the whole season. Gameweek 5 Rank is your position for this single week. Both are printed as your position out of 10,933,139 total managers, then converted to a percentile. Lower is better — a shorter bar is a stronger result, and a bar printed in vermillion means the bottom quartile of the world.

#	CLUB	OVERALL	OF	PCT	SEASON PERCENTILE	GW5 RANK	OF	PCT	WEEK PERCENTILE
01	Bart's Team	70,495	10,933,139	0.64%		1,893,466	10,933,139	17.32%	
02	Gaucho F.C.	147,643	10,933,139	1.35%		4,565,551	10,933,139	41.76%	
03	szobamela	442,653	10,933,139	4.05%		3,684,532	10,933,139	33.70%	
04	Saka la bolsita	1,272,665	10,933,139	11.64%		5,099,293	10,933,139	46.64%	
05	papoy	1,600,241	10,933,139	14.64%		3,865,901	10,933,139	35.36%	
06	El Cochiloco	1,896,308	10,933,139	17.34%		8,792,938	10,933,139	80.42%	
07	Gunner4Lyfe	2,043,638	10,933,139	18.69%		4,929,425	10,933,139	45.09%	
08	Dang Football Club	2,099,042	10,933,139	19.20%		4,929,425	10,933,139	45.09%	
09	The Special Ones	4,438,980	10,933,139	40.60%		7,325,912	10,933,139	67.01%	
10	Red Lobster FC	4,554,323	10,933,139	41.66%		9,843,805	10,933,139	90.04%	
11	MAD Baller	5,109,269	10,933,139	46.73%		2,495,788	10,933,139	22.83%	
12	Camp Nou Way	5,464,308	10,933,139	49.98%		4,210,352	10,933,139	38.51%	
13	FK Jizmaila Sarr	5,905,729	10,933,139	54.02%		10,649,288	10,933,139	97.40%	
14	sakadeez	7,723,223	10,933,139	70.64%		8,567,043	10,933,139	78.36%	
15	fc rtw	7,884,609	10,933,139	72.12%		10,505,807	10,933,139	96.09%	
16	captain bruno	8,071,311	10,933,139	73.82%		6,593,067	10,933,139	60.30%	
17	Newpi	8,430,724	10,933,139	77.11%		7,659,886	10,933,139	70.06%	
18	GP FC	8,441,155	10,933,139	77.21%		4,365,979	10,933,139	39.93%	
19	are you aMAD	9,066,895	10,933,139	82.93%		4,929,425	10,933,139	45.09%	
20	Akatsuki	9,205,108	10,933,139	84.19%		10,727,839	10,933,139	98.12%	
21	BruceBall	10,160,838	10,933,139	92.94%		9,176,671	10,933,139	83.93%	

BEST IN THE WORLD

Bart's Team

Overall 70,495 of 10,933,139 — the top 0.64% of every manager alive.

BEST SINGLE WEEK

Bart's Team

GW5 rank 1,893,466 of 10,933,139 — top 17.32% on 59 points.

WORST SINGLE WEEK

Akatsuki

GW5 rank 10,727,839 of 10,933,139 — the bottom 1.88% of the planet.

Outperformed Their Season

WEEK PERCENTILE STRONGER THAN SEASON PERCENTILE

CLUB	SEASON	WEEK	SWING
are you aMAD	82.9%	45.1%	-37.8
GP FC	77.2%	39.9%	-37.3
MAD Baller	46.7%	22.8%	-23.9
captain bruno	73.8%	60.3%	-13.5
Camp Nou Way	50.0%	38.5%	-11.5
BruceBall	92.9%	83.9%	-9.0

Fell Below Their Season

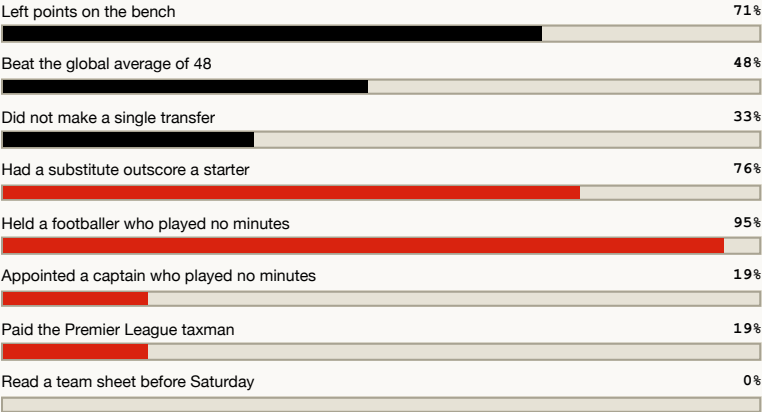
WEEK PERCENTILE WEAKER THAN SEASON PERCENTILE

CLUB	SEASON	WEEK	SWING
szobamela	4.0%	33.7%	+29.7
Saka la bolsita	11.6%	46.6%	+35.0
Gaucho F.C.	1.4%	41.8%	+40.4
FK Jizmaila Sarr	54.0%	97.4%	+43.4
Red Lobster FC	41.7%	90.0%	+48.4
El Cochiloco	17.3%	80.4%	+63.1

Distribution. 1 club sit inside the global top one percent (Bart's Team). 3 sit inside the top ten percent. 12 of 21 are in the better half of the world. The league spans from 0.64% to 92.94% — a spread of roughly 10,090,343 places worldwide.

Statshot

HOW THE TWENTY-ONE CLUBS OF THIS LEAGUE SPENT GAMEWEEK 5



Final category self-reported. No club supplied supporting evidence.

Letters

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED DURING THE INTERNATIONAL BREAK

- 71%
SIR — I have been informed that my squad is the most expensive in this league and also that I sit fourteenth. I would like both facts removed from the record.
D. PACUKU, sakadeez
- 48%
SIR — Your correspondent suggests that benching a striker who then scores three goals is a failure of nerve. It is in fact a failure of everything.
A. SEGURA, papoy
- 76%
SIR — I made four transfers without realising and paid nothing. I am told this is remarkable. I was buying a coffee.
N. ZARZUA, Newpi
- 95%
SIR — I note with interest that ten of my rivals appointed the same captain and finished below me. I have nothing further to add and will be adding it repeatedly.
A. CHAVEZ, Camp Nou Way
- 19%
SIR — There is no crisis at this football club. There are three weeks of no football, which is a different thing, and I intend to enjoy every one of them.
F. HOLLAND, are you aMAD

Gameweek 5 In Numbers

ALL FIGURES DERIVED FROM FINAL VERIFIED DATA

HIGHEST GAMEWEEK

59 pts

Bart's Team — top 17.32% worldwide

MOST POINTS BENCHED

21 pts

papoy left them behind the line

BUSIEST WINDOW

7 moves

captain bruno — cost -24 points

LOWEST GAMEWEEK

25 pts

Akatsuki — bottom 1.88% worldwide

LARGEST DEDUCTION

-24 pts

captain bruno on 7 transfers

CAPTURED A GHOST

4 clubs

Armband given to João Pedro, nil minutes

Every Score, Ranked

PTS	CLUB	WORLD PCT	HIT
59	Bart's Team	17.3%	—
56	MAD Baller	22.8%	—
52	szobamela	33.7%	—
52	papoy	35.4%	—
51	Camp Nou Way	38.5%	—
51	GP FC	39.9%	-16
50	Gaucha F.C.	41.8%	—
49	Gunner4Lyfe	45.1%	—
49	Dang Football Club	45.1%	—
49	are you aMAD	45.1%	—
48	Saka la bolsita	46.6%	—
45	captain bruno	60.3%	-24
42	The Special Ones	67.0%	—
42	Newpi	70.1%	—
39	sakadeez	78.4%	-4
38	El Cochiloco	80.4%	—
36	BruceBall	83.9%	—
33	Red Lobster FC	90.0%	—
29	fc rtw	96.1%	—
26	FK Jizmaila Sarr	97.4%	—
25	Akatsuki	98.1%	-4

The Bench Graveyard

POINTS LEFT UNUSED, AND WHO LEFT THEM		
PTS	CLUB	WHO SCORED ON THE BENCH
21	papoy	Diop 4, Brobbey 17
20	Dang Football Club	Verbruggen 6, Richards 8, Calafiori 1, Thiago 5
18	captain bruno	Lammens 4, Hall 13, Matheus N. 1
12	fc rtw	Diop 4, Justin 8
11	Gaucha F.C.	Kinsky 2, Ajer 7, Slater 2
10	sakadeez	Trafford 10
8	El Cochiloco	Verbruggen 6, Shaw 2
8	Akatsuki	Verbruggen 6, Gonzalo 2
6	szobamela	Verbruggen 6

THE JOÃO PEDRO INCIDENT

Four managers gave the armband to a forward who recorded zero minutes. In each case it passed to the vice-captain:

szobamela → Ødegaard · 4 pts

MAD Baller → Szoboszlai · 4 pts

Akatsuki → B.Fernandes · 4 pts

BruceBall → Raya · 2 pts

Combined return from those four armbands: **14 points.**

CHIP INVENTORY

Full arsenals (7): The Special Ones, Red Lobster FC, Camp Nou Way, FK Jizmaila Sarr, Newpi, Akatsuki, BruceBall.

Running dry (4): Bart's Team (1), Gaucha F.C. (1), papoy (1), Dang Football Club (1).

The league has spent 25 chips of a possible 84.

SELF-INFLICTED LOSSES

Transfers executed: **32**. Points paid in deductions: **48**. Points abandoned on benches: **134**.

Combined waste in a single gameweek: **182 points** — more than the gameweek total of the two lowest-scoring clubs put together.

MOST OWNED IN THE LEAGUE

João Pedro 16/21 · Haaland 13/21 · B.Fernandes 13/21 · Raya 11/21 · Ødegaard 9/21 · Calafiori 9/21 · Guéhi 8/21 · Rogers 7/21 · Kinsky 7/21 · Szoboszlai 6/21 · Palmer 6/21 · Cherki 6/21

AGAINST THE WORLD

10 of 21 beat the global average of 48. 17 of 21 took no deduction at all.

Our best week, 59, fell 67 points short of the global best of 126.

Chip Matrix

FILLED SQUARE MEANS SPENT · OPEN SQUARE MEANS STILL AVAILABLE

#	CLUB	WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN	LEFT	SPENT IN
01	Bart's Team	■	□	■	■	1	Bench Boost (GW2), Triple Captain (GW3), Wildcard (GW4)
02	Gaucha F.C.	□	■	■	■	1	Bench Boost (GW2), Triple Captain (GW3), Free Hit (GW4)
03	szobamela	□	□	□	■	3	Triple Captain (GW3)
04	Saka la bolsita	□	□	□	■	3	Triple Captain (GW3)
05	papoy	□	■	■	■	1	Bench Boost (GW2), Triple Captain (GW3), Free Hit (GW4)
06	El Cochiloco	□	□	■	■	2	Bench Boost (GW1), Triple Captain (GW3)
07	Gunner4Lyfe	□	□	□	■	3	Triple Captain (GW3)
08	Dang Football Club	□	■	■	■	1	Bench Boost (GW2), Triple Captain (GW3), Free Hit (GW4)
09	The Special Ones	□	□	□	□	4	—
10	Red Lobster FC	□	□	□	□	4	—
11	MAD Baller	□	□	■	□	3	Bench Boost (GW4)
12	Camp Nou Way	□	□	□	□	4	—
13	FK Jizmaila Sarr	□	□	□	□	4	—
14	sakadeez	■	□	□	■	2	Wildcard (GW2), Triple Captain (GW3)
15	fc rtw	■	□	□	□	3	Wildcard (GW2)
16	captain bruno	□	□	□	■	3	Triple Captain (GW4)
17	Newpi	□	□	□	□	4	—
18	GP FC	□	□	■	■	2	Triple Captain (GW4), Bench Boost (GW5)
19	are you aMAD	■	□	□	□	3	Wildcard (GW4)
20	Akatsuki	□	□	□	□	4	—
21	BruceBall	□	□	□	■	4	—

The Armband Audit

WHO WAS CAPTAINED, WHO ACTUALLY WORE IT, AND WHAT IT RETURNED

#	CLUB	NAMED CAPTAIN	CLUB	MINS	RAW	MULT	ARMBAND FELL TO	EFFECTIVE	% OF GW
01	Bart's Team	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	20%
02	Gaucho F.C.	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	24%
03	szobamela	João Pedro	CHE	0	0	×0	Ødegaard	4	8%
04	Saka la bolsita	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	25%
05	papoy	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	23%
06	El Cochiloco	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	32%
07	Gunner4Lyfe	Ødegaard	ARS	72	2	×2	—	4	8%
08	Dang Football Club	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	24%
09	The Special Ones	Ødegaard	ARS	72	2	×2	—	4	10%
10	Red Lobster FC	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	36%
11	MAD Baller	João Pedro	CHE	0	0	×0	Szoboszlai	4	7%
12	Camp Nou Way	Isak	LIV	80	8	×2	—	16	31%
13	FK Jizmaila Sarr	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	46%
14	sakadeez	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	31%
15	fc rtw	Palmer	CHE	90	2	×2	—	4	14%
16	captain bruno	Isak	LIV	80	8	×2	—	16	36%
17	Newpi	Haaland	MCI	90	6	×2	—	12	29%
18	GP FC	Thiago	BRE	90	5	×2	—	10	20%
19	are you aMAD	B.Fernandes	MUN	90	2	×2	—	4	8%
20	Akatsuki	João Pedro	CHE	0	0	×0	B.Fernandes	4	16%
21	BruceBall	João Pedro	CHE	0	0	×1	Raya	2	6%

Captaincy Share

PLAYER	CLUBS	SHARE
Haaland	10	48%
João Pedro	4	19%
Ødegaard	2	10%
Isak	2	10%
Palmer	1	5%
Thiago	1	5%
B.Fernandes	1	5%

Vice-Captains Named

PLAYER	CLUBS
B.Fernandes	7
Raya	4
Rogers	3
Ødegaard	2
Mbeumo	1
Isak	1
Virgil	1
Szoboszlai	1

BEST ARMBAND IN THE LEAGUE

Camp Nou Way

Isak returned 16 points, which was 31% of the club's entire gameweek. It outscored the Haaland captained by ten rivals.

League Ownership

HOW MANY OF THE 21 CLUBS HELD EACH PLAYER IN GAMEWEEK 5, SPLIT BY SELECTION

PLAYER	POS	CLUB	£M	PTS	OWNED	STARTED	BENCHED
João Pedro	FWD	CHE	7.8	0	16	3	13
Haaland	FWD	MCI	15.6	6	13	13	0
B.Fernandes	MID	MUN	12.0	2	13	13	0
Raya	GKP	ARS	6.1	1	11	11	0
Ødegaard	MID	ARS	6.8	2	9	9	0
Calafiori	DEF	ARS	5.8	1	9	8	1
Guéhi	DEF	MCI	6.0	4	8	8	0
Rogers	MID	CHE	7.7	2	7	7	0
Kinsky	GKP	TOT	4.5	2	7	6	1
Cherki	MID	MCI	7.8	8	6	6	0
Szoboszlai	MID	LIV	7.0	2	6	6	0
Palmer	MID	CHE	9.7	2	6	5	1
Isak	FWD	LIV	9.1	8	5	5	0
Virgil	DEF	LIV	6.5	8	5	5	0
De Cuyper	DEF	BHA	4.9	6	5	5	0
Diop	DEF	IPS	4.0	4	5	1	4

THE JOÃO PEDRO PROBLEM

João Pedro was held by 16 of 21 clubs and returned nothing from zero minutes. He was started by 3 and benched by 13, while four managers handed him the armband — the widest gap between ownership and usefulness in the division this week.

HIGHEST RETURNING ASSETS

Brobbey 17 pts, owned by 1 · Semenyo 17 pts, owned by 3 · Tarkowski 14 pts, owned by 1 · Groß 14 pts, owned by 3 · Hall 13 pts, owned by 2 · Cunha 10 pts, owned by 2 · Trafford 10 pts, owned by 1 · Thomas 9 pts, owned by 2 · Barnes 9 pts, owned by 1 · Isak 8 pts, owned by 5

TRUE DIFFERENTIALS · OWNED BY ONE CLUB

Brobbey 17 · Tarkowski 14 · Trafford 10 · Barnes 9 · Richards 8 · A.Becker 8 · Justin 8 · Pickford 8 · Ajer 7 · Enzo 7 · Van Hecke 6 · N.Jackson 6 · Jacquet 6 · Mykolenko 5 · E.Le Fée 5 · Stach 5 · Hill 4 · L.Miley 4 · Murillo 4 · Lammens 4 · Grealish 3 · Janelt 3 · Kamada 3 · Gakpo 3 · Dewsbury-Hall 3 · Slater 2 · Shaw 2 · Xhaka 2 · Tanaka 2 · Davis 2 · Anderson 2 · Havertz 2 · King 2 · Marmoush 2 · Akpom 1 · Hume 1 · McBurnie 1 · Egan 1 · Bentley 0 · van Ewijk 0 · Ait-Nouri 0 · Frimpong 0 · Matthews 0 · Hughes 0 · Keane 0 · Reed 0 · Lecomte 0 · Senesi 0 · Olusesi 0 · J.Cuenca 0 · Foden 0 · Austin 0 · Mukasa 0 · Furo 0 · M.Sangaré 0 · Forster 0 · Benda 0 · O.Richards 0 · Walle Egeli 0 · Wilson 0 · Shahar 0 · Woltemade 0 · Cash -1

The verdict. Isak delivered the joint-best armband in this division at 16 points, claimed by Camp Nou Way and captain bruno — the latter of whom then surrendered twenty-four points at the transfer desk and finished sixteenth regardless. Haaland, the choice of ten managers, returned 12. Ødegaard returned 4 to the two men who backed him during a three-nil defeat at Brighton. A multiplier of ×0 means the named captain never played and the armband passed down to the vice-captain by rule, which happened to four clubs and cost each of them a planned double.

The Back Page

NOTICES, SMALL PRINT AND UNSOLICITED GUIDANCE FOR THE TWENTY-ONE-DAY RECESS

Classified Advertisements

PLACED BY MANAGERS OF THIS LEAGUE · NO FEE, NO REFUNDS

WANTED. One forward who leaves the treatment room. Must be capable of ninety minutes and of being selected by me on the correct side of the white line. Timewasters need not apply, I have already appointed four. — Box 05

FOR SALE. Wildcard, unused, still in original packaging. Seven identical items available from this division. Will not be parted with cheaply, or indeed at all, possibly ever. — Boxes 09, 10, 12, 13, 17, 20, 21

LOST. Twenty-four points. Last seen in the vicinity of a transfer confirmation screen at approximately eleven o'clock on a Friday evening. Sentimental value. No questions asked. — Box 16

SEEKING. Erling Haaland. Any condition considered. Have assembled an entire squad without him on grounds of principle and would now like to discuss revising that principle. — Box 21

SERVICES OFFERED. Predictive modelling, Monte Carlo simulation, fixture-difficulty regression. Will correctly identify, to two decimal places, exactly how you lost. — Box 02

FREE TO GOOD HOME. One reserve goalkeeper, Ipswich, four million pounds, has never played. Frequently mistaken by this newspaper for a Chelsea midfielder of the same surname. — Box 05

Your Stars For The Break

TWENTY-ONE DAYS · READ ACCORDING TO CHIPS REMAINING

FOUR CHIPS REMAINING. You have done nothing all autumn and it has worked. Mercury suggests continuing to do nothing, which you will find effortless. A rival will spend a Wildcard in panic; smile, say little.

THREE CHIPS REMAINING. You are comfortable, solvent and slightly smug. The stars advise against reading the group chat. Your Bench Boost is not a personality.

TWO CHIPS REMAINING. A difficult passage, but survivable. Venus counsels patience, banked transfers and a firm refusal to look at price-change websites after midnight.

ONE CHIP REMAINING. You spent everything early and are now defending a lead with a single Free Hit and good intentions. Avoid injuries, optimism and the number minus eight.

NO CHIPS REMAINING. Nobody in this league is in this position. Should you arrive here before December, the stars have nothing further to offer you.

NOTICE TO MANAGERS

The Gameweek 6 deadline falls on Saturday 10 October 2026 at 10:00 UTC. That is twenty-one days from the publication of this edition. In the judgement of this newspaper, at least one club in this division will forget entirely.

A REMINDER ON ARITHMETIC

This league surrendered **48 points** to transfer deductions and abandoned **134 points** on benches in Gameweek 5 alone. The combined figure exceeds the weekly total of the two lowest-scoring clubs put together. No transfer is compulsory.

ON READING TEAM SHEETS

Four clubs appointed a captain who did not play: szobamela, MAD Baller, Akatsuki, BruceBall. The information was published in advance and was available at no cost. This newspaper offers no further comment.

What Awaits In Gameweek 6

THE TEN FIXTURES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RECESS · DIFFICULTY AS RATED BY THE GAME

HOME	DIFF	AWAY	DIFF	KICK-OFF
ARS	2 v	LEE	5	Sat 10 Oct, 11:30
AVL	3 v	BRE	4	Sat 10 Oct, 14:00
CHE	3 v	BOU	4	Sat 10 Oct, 14:00
IPS	2 v	FUL	2	Sat 10 Oct, 14:00
SUN	2 v	BHA	3	Sat 10 Oct, 14:00
MUN	3 v	TOT	4	Sat 10 Oct, 16:30
CRY	3 v	NFO	3	Sun 11 Oct, 13:00
HUL	3 v	EVE	2	Sun 11 Oct, 13:00
LIV	4 v	MCI	4	Sun 11 Oct, 15:30
COV	2 v	NEW	2	Mon 12 Oct, 19:00

Difficulty is the game's own rating, 1 easiest to 5 hardest, from that club's perspective. Arsenal host the division's most generous fixture; Liverpool and Manchester City meet in the only contest rated hard for both sides.

The Transfer Market

EVERY PLAYER BOUGHT AND SOLD ACROSS THIS LEAGUE IN GAMEWEEK 5

BOUGHT			SOLD		
Gvardiol	2	4 pts	De Cuyper	2	6 pts
Rogers	2	2 pts	Elanga	2	0 pts
João Pedro	2	0 pts	Gonzalo	2	2 pts
Bellouni	2	4 pts	Wissa	2	0 pts
Calafiori	2	1 pts	Shaw	1	2 pts
Giles	2	0 pts	Mosquera	1	0 pts
Mykolenko	1	5 pts	João Pedro	1	0 pts
Konsa	1	1 pts	Rice	1	1 pts
Calvert-Lewin	1	2 pts	Watkins	1	0 pts

MARKET NOTE

Thirty-two transfers were executed across this division. Maxim De Cuyper, sold by two clubs, returned six points, which is more than any player bought by two or more clubs managed between them. Four clubs paid a combined forty-eight points for the privilege of getting this wrong.

The Season So Far, In Records

EXTREMES RECORDED ACROSS ALL FIVE GAMEWEEKS BY ANY CLUB IN THIS LEAGUE

HIGHEST WEEK	117	papoy	GW2	MOST BENCHED	23	sakadeez	GW1	BEST WORLD WEEK	6,422	Gunner4Lyfe	GW3
LOWEST WEEK	25	Akatsuki	GW5	BIGGEST HIT	-24	captain bruno	GW5	WORST WORLD WEEK	10,727,839	Akatsuki	GW5

The single best gameweek this league has produced is papoy's 117 in Gameweek 2, which remains 9 points clear of anything since. The single worst is Akatsuki's 25 last weekend. Gunner4Lyfe's Gameweek 3 ranked 6,422 in the world — inside the global top one tenth of one percent — and that club now sits seventh.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BREAK

Saturday. No football. Clear skies, prolonged periods of nothing whatsoever, light anxiety developing in the west. · **Sunday.** Still no football. Scattered refreshing of a league table that has not changed since Monday. · **Week two.** Continued absence of football. Isolated outbreaks of reading about teenagers from Belgium. Managers are advised not to act on this. · **Week three.** Football returns. Conditions expected to deteriorate rapidly from 10:00 UTC onward.

The Fixture Planner

GAMEWEEKS 6 TO 10 · EVERY PREMIER LEAGUE SIDE · DIFFICULTY AS RATED BY THE GAME

How to read this page. Each cell shows the opponent, whether the fixture is home (H) or away (A), and the official difficulty rating from that club's perspective — 2 is kind, 3 is neutral, 4 is awkward, 5 is punishing. Total adds the five ratings together, so a lower total is a better run. The final column shows how many of this league's twenty-one clubs currently own at least one player from that side. These are the game's own difficulty ratings, not a scoring projection.

#	CLUB	GW6	GW7	GW8	GW9	GW10	TOTAL	OWNED BY
01	Coventry City	NEW (H) 2	TOT (A) 3	FUL (H) 2	SUN (H) 2	EVE (A) 3	12	3
02	Fulham	IPS (A) 2	HUL (H) 2	COV (A) 2	AVL (A) 4	NEW (H) 2	12	8
03	Sunderland	BHA (H) 2	BOU (A) 3	LEE (H) 2	COV (A) 2	CHE (H) 4	13	5
04	Arsenal	LEE (H) 2	NFO (A) 3	EVE (H) 3	LIV (A) 4	HUL (H) 2	14	21
05	Bournemouth	CHE (A) 4	SUN (H) 2	MUN (A) 4	LEE (H) 2	IPS (A) 2	14	2
06	Newcastle	COV (A) 2	AVL (H) 3	CRY (A) 3	EVE (H) 3	FUL (A) 3	14	8
07	Crystal Palace	NFO (H) 3	BHA (A) 3	NEW (H) 2	TOT (A) 3	LIV (H) 4	15	3
08	Ipswich Town	FUL (H) 2	MCI (A) 5	NFO (H) 3	HUL (A) 2	BOU (H) 3	15	7
09	Man City	LIV (A) 4	IPS (H) 2	AVL (A) 4	BHA (H) 2	NFO (A) 3	15	21
10	Aston Villa	BRE (H) 3	NEW (A) 3	MCI (H) 4	FUL (H) 2	MUN (A) 4	16	3
11	Brentford	AVL (A) 4	LIV (H) 4	HUL (A) 2	NFO (H) 3	BHA (A) 3	16	7
12	Chelsea	BOU (H) 3	EVE (A) 3	TOT (H) 3	MUN (H) 4	SUN (A) 3	16	18
13	Everton	HUL (A) 2	CHE (H) 4	ARS (A) 5	NEW (A) 3	COV (H) 2	16	4
14	Hull City	EVE (H) 3	FUL (A) 3	BRE (H) 3	IPS (H) 2	ARS (A) 5	16	7
15	Liverpool	MCI (H) 4	BRE (A) 3	BHA (H) 2	ARS (H) 4	CRY (A) 3	16	13
16	Man Utd	TOT (H) 3	LEE (A) 3	BOU (H) 3	CHE (A) 4	AVL (H) 3	16	17
17	Nott'm Forest	CRY (A) 3	ARS (H) 4	IPS (A) 2	BRE (A) 3	MCI (H) 4	16	7
18	Spurs	MUN (A) 4	COV (H) 2	CHE (A) 4	CRY (H) 3	LEE (A) 3	16	13
19	Brighton	SUN (A) 3	CRY (H) 3	LIV (A) 4	MCI (A) 5	BRE (H) 3	18	13
20	Leeds	ARS (A) 5	MUN (H) 4	SUN (A) 3	BOU (A) 3	TOT (H) 3	18	11

Where This League Is Exposed

THE EIGHT MOST WIDELY OWNED SIDES IN THIS DIVISION, AGAINST THEIR NEXT FIVE

CLUB	OWNED BY	5-GW TOTAL RUN
Arsenal	21/21	14 kind
Man City	21/21	15 neutral
Chelsea	18/21	16 neutral
Man Utd	17/21	16 neutral
Liverpool	13/21	16 neutral
Spurs	13/21	16 neutral
Brighton	13/21	18 punishing
Leeds	11/21	18 punishing

Your Assets, Against Their Next Five

THE MOST WIDELY HELD PLAYERS IN THIS LEAGUE, PAIRED WITH THEIR CLUB'S COMBINED DIFFICULTY ACROSS GAMEWEEKS 6 TO 10

PLAYER	POS	CLUB	£M	HELD BY	GW5 PTS	5-GW TOTAL RUN	NEXT THREE
João Pedro	FWD	CHE	7.8	16/21	0	16 neutral	BOU (H) EVE (A) TOT (H)
Haaland	FWD	MCI	15.6	13/21	6	15 neutral	LIV (A) IPS (H) AVL (A)
B.Fernandes	MID	MUN	12.0	13/21	2	16 neutral	TOT (H) LEE (A) BOU (H)
Raya	GKP	ARS	6.1	11/21	1	14 kind	LEE (H) NFO (A) EVE (H)
Ødegaard	MID	ARS	6.8	9/21	2	14 kind	LEE (H) NFO (A) EVE (H)
Calafiori	DEF	ARS	5.8	9/21	1	14 kind	LEE (H) NFO (A) EVE (H)
Guéhi	DEF	MCI	6.0	8/21	4	15 neutral	LIV (A) IPS (H) AVL (A)
Rogers	MID	CHE	7.7	7/21	2	16 neutral	BOU (H) EVE (A) TOT (H)
Kinsky	GKP	TOT	4.5	7/21	2	16 neutral	MUN (A) COV (H) CHE (A)

DUBAI –

Man Who Spent Three Chips By October Insists His Last Free Hit Is A Masterplan

Leader confirms the remaining 33 gameweeks will be handled on a two-transfer buffer and good intentions.

Bart's Team

Bart Simp

RANK 01 OF 21

381 PTS

OVERALL RANK

70,495

of 10,933,139 — top 0.64%

GAMEWEEK 5 RANK

1,893,466

of 10,933,139 — top 17.32%

GW5 / BENCH

59/5

world avg 48 · hit –0

SQUAD / BANK

100.6

bank £0.5m · 1 transfers

STARTING XI · 59 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	Konsa	ARS	4.6	1
DEF	Tarkowski	EVE	6.1	14
DEF	Gvardiol	MCI	5.7	4
DEF	Mykolenko	EVE	4.6	5
MID	Szoboszlai	LIV	7.0	2
MID	Ødegaard	ARS	6.8	2
MID	Rogers (V)	CHE	7.7	2
MID	Palmer	CHE	9.7	2
MID	Groß	BHA	5.8	14
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12

BENCH · 5 PTS

GKP	Bentley	COV	4.0	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0
FWD	Akpom	IPS	5.0	0
DEF	Diop	IPS	4.0	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

De Cuyper6 → Mykolenko5–1

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

BENCH BOOST (GW3)

TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW3)

WILDCARD (GW4)

FREE HIT

SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	51	4,087,192	4,087,187	12	–
GW2	94	2,427,967	2,562,053	0	–
GW3	73	305,834	772,855	5	–
GW4	104	80,375	144,397	9	–
GW5	59	1,893,466	70,495	5	–

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
THIS CLUB	Bart's Team	381	+0	1
BELOW	Gaucho F.C.	373	–8	1

TRAJECTORY

GW	PTS
1	51
2	94
3	73
4	104
5	59

THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You top the table on 381 points having already burned Bench Boost, Triple Captain and Wildcard, leaving only a Free Hit for the next 33 gameweeks. Was incinerating three chips before October a plan or a panic?
- A.** Look at the top of that table and tell me whose name is sitting there before you lecture me on resource management. I converted three chips into an actual points lead while twenty other managers guarded theirs like eggs that are never going to hatch. I also still hold a Free Hit, which is one more emergency exit than my critics appear capable of counting.
- Q2.** You returned 59 points in Gameweek 5 against a global average of 48, and made only 1 transfer. Is minimal intervention now the house style?
- A.** When the machine is running you do not open the bonnet every Friday and start pulling wires out of it. One clean transfer, De Cuyper to Mykolenko, and the rest of that squad was left alone to do the job it was assembled to do. Restraint is the most underrated skill in this competition and almost nobody in this league has it.
- Q3.** Haaland took your armband and returned 12 points doubled. In a week where four rivals captained a man who played zero minutes, does a quiet return feel like a win?
- A.** A quiet twelve from the most reliable forward on earth is worth more than a heroic zero from somebody's clever differential. Four of my rivals handed the armband to João Pedro, who spent the entire weekend in a tracksuit, and one of them is sitting third in this league. That is not misfortune on their part; that is a failure to read a team sheet.
- Q4.** Your bench returned 5 points. You are carrying Bentley, Akpom and Issa Diop as cover heading into a congested winter. Is that thin?
- A.** My bench is a cost centre and I refuse to tie up capital in substitutes who are never going to see the pitch. Every pound sitting on that bench is a pound not spent on the eleven men who actually generate my points. If winter forces my hand I have a Free Hit and banked transfers, which is ample.
- Q5.** Gaucho F.C. is 8 points behind you and his surviving chip is a Wildcard while yours is a Free Hit. Whose position would you rather hold?
- A.** Mine, obviously, because I am the one holding the lead and he is the one holding the theory. A Wildcard is only valuable if your squad is broken, and if his squad is broken then he has larger problems than chip sequencing. I would rather be 8 points clear with a Free Hit than 8 points back with a beautiful plan.

- Q6.** You opened the season with 39 points in Gameweek 1 and looked distinctly ordinary. What changed?
- A.** Gameweek 1 was thirty-nine points and I was a laughing stock for precisely seven days. Then the Bench Boost landed one hundred and fifteen in Gameweek 2 and the entire complexion of my season inverted overnight. I have not been headed since that afternoon and I do not intend to be.
- Q7.** Your vice-captain Rogers returned 2 points. Is he still the designated heir to the armband?
- A.** Morgan is in that squad because he attacks the penalty area with genuine intent, not because of one quiet afternoon against a stubborn defence. The vice-captaincy is an insurance policy and this week the policy went unclaimed, which is the ideal outcome. He keeps the role until somebody in my squad plays their way past him.
- Q8.** There are 21 days until the Gameweek 6 deadline. What does the leader of a mini-league actually do with three weeks of nothing?
- A.** Absolutely nothing, which is precisely the discipline separating me from the rest of this division. Twenty-one days is exactly long enough for an anxious manager to talk himself into a minus-eight he does not need. I will check the injury list once, roll my transfer, and go back to enjoying my life.
- Q9.** You have £0.5m in the bank and a squad valued at £100.6m. Is that cash doing anything?
- A.** That money is deliberately idle because a forced transfer at short notice is far more expensive than a small cash balance. Without a Wildcard I need the flexibility to solve one problem immediately rather than three problems cheaply. Liquidity is the closest thing I have left to a safety net.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 70,495 out of 10,933,139 managers worldwide, placing you in the top 0.64 percent of the entire game. Does that number mean more to you than this mini-league?
- A.** Being 70,495 out of 10,933,139 is the number I will be quoting at dinner parties until roughly May. This mini-league is twenty-one people I know personally, whereas that rank is a verdict delivered by the entire planet. Winning the little league is the objective, but the global percentile is the evidence.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 1,893,466 of 10,933,139, the top 17.32 percent. Your weakest weekly percentile of the season. Concerned?
- A.** A week inside the top 17 percent is a below-par week for this football club, which tells you the standard we have set. I banked 59 points against an average of 48, lost no ground whatsoever, and consolidated a lead through awkward fixtures. You do not win titles by winning every week; you win them by never losing badly.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You lead on 381 points, overall rank 70,495 of 10,933,139, holding only a Free Hit with £0.5m banked, while the two managers behind you hold Wildcards. With 33 gameweeks left and no rebuild mechanism, what is the validated path to holding this lead?

Your strategy must now invert entirely from aggression to preservation, because with no Wildcard you cannot repair structural damage and must therefore never sustain it. Bank a free transfer at all times so you always carry two, refuse every hit beyond minus-four, and reserve the Free Hit strictly for a genuine blank gameweek rather than spending it on an injury panic. Keep the armband on Haaland to stay level with the template, and direct every transfer toward guaranteed ninety-minute Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester City assets, because this lead will now be defended by a high floor and not an explosive ceiling.

Local Man Builds Predictive Model That Correctly Identifies He Has Lost One Point

Analyst confirms a 11-point bench leak fell comfortably inside the confidence corridor.

Gaucha F.C. gian jaen

RANK 02 OF 21373 PTS

OVERALL RANK 147,643 of 10,933,139 — top 1.35%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 4,565,551 of 10,933,139 — top 41.76%	GW5 / BENCH 50/11 world avg 48 · hit –0	SQUAD / BANK 99.8 bank £0.1m · 1 transfers
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STARTING XI · 50 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	De Cuyper	BHA	4.9	6
DEF	Thomas	COV	4.0	9
DEF	Konsa	ARS	4.6	1
MID	E.Le Fée	SUN	5.7	5
MID	B.Fernandes (V)	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Tzolis	ARS	6.3	2
MID	Mbeumo	MUN	7.9	2
FWD	Calvert-Lewin	LEE	6.0	2
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12
FWD	Isak	LIV	9.1	8

SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	39	7,295,429	7,295,417	12	–
GW2	115	286,971	1,568,336	0	–
GW3	77	132,865	260,270	16	–
GW4	92	639,506	131,928	8	–
GW5	50	4,565,551	147,643	11	–

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Bart's Team	381	+8	1
THIS CLUB	Gaucha F.C.	373	+0	1
BELOW	szobamela	358	–15	3

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

Q1. You are 8 points off the summit with your Wildcard intact while the leader is down to a Free Hit. Is that patience, or has the moment to strike already passed?

A. The Wildcard's expected value peaks at the point of greatest fixture divergence, which our models place in the Gameweek 12 to 14 window rather than September. Spending it now to chase an 8-point deficit converts a durable structural asset into a cosmetic short-term gain. I am 8 points behind a manager with no mechanism left to repair his squad, which is a materially stronger position than the table implies.

Q2. You left 11 points on the bench, with Kristoffer Ajer alone returning 7 from a clean sheet and a bonus point. Where did the selection model fail?

A. Ajer carried meaningful rotation risk and his clean-sheet probability modelled below the defenders we started. The distribution resolved in the tail rather than at the median, which is variance expressing itself and not a defect in process. That same selection logic is positive expected value across a full season and I will not abandon it over one adverse draw.

Q3. You transferred Luke Shaw to Ezri Konsa. Shaw returned 2 points and Konsa returned 1. The trade cost you a point.

A. The trade was priced on availability risk rather than a one-week points projection, because Shaw's minutes reliability had decayed past our threshold. A one-point nominal loss in the first week of holding an asset is statistically indistinguishable from zero. Konsa carries a materially higher clean-sheet floor across the next six fixtures, which is the horizon that decision was made against.

Q4. You spent Bench Boost in Gameweek 2 and Free Hit in Gameweek 4 but kept the Wildcard. Was that sequencing modelled or improvised?

A. Modelled explicitly, because Bench Boost and Free Hit are perishable single-week instruments whereas the Wildcard is structural. We harvested 115 points in Gameweek 2 and 92 in Gameweek 4 by spending the perishable assets at peak value. Retaining the only chip capable of rebuilding an entire squad was the whole point of the sequence.

Q5. Bart Simp says your Wildcard is a theoretical advantage that never appears in the standings. Your response?

A. Bart has expended three quarters of his optionality inside the first thirteen percent of the season and retains a single-week patch. A Free Hit resolves one bad fixture; it cannot resolve a squad that has structurally decayed by December. He is correct that my advantage is unrealised, which is the definition of an asset not yet sold.

Q6. Haaland returned 12 captained points, identical to nine other managers in this league. Where is your edge if the armband is the same as everyone else's?

A. The armband is deliberately not where we seek edge, because captaining the highest-owned forward is variance reduction rather than alpha generation. Our differential exposure sits in the defensive and midfield blocks where ownership is thinner and mispricing is far more common. You win a league like this by being unremarkable at the top of your squad and ruthless at the bottom of it.

Q7. Your vice-captain B.Fernandes has now returned 2 points in consecutive weeks. At what threshold does he get sold?

A. His underlying shot-creating volume remains in the upper decile for his position, and volume predicts future returns where past output does not. Finishing variance among his teammates is suppressing his assist conversion well beneath its expected rate. We sell when the volume decays, not when the output disappoints, and the volume has not decayed.

Q8. Five gameweeks, zero points deducted, while this league has collectively surrendered dozens to transfer penalties. How much of second place is simply the absence of self-harm?

A. A meaningful proportion, and I would encourage this league to examine that arithmetic honestly. Managers in this division have collectively donated more than forty points to the Premier League taxman this season while I have donated none. Not losing points is mathematically identical to gaining them and requires considerably less skill.

Q9. Three weeks of international football introduces substantial injury variance across premium assets. What is the protocol?

A. All transfer activity is frozen until forty-eight hours before the Gameweek 6 deadline to avoid acting on incomplete information. Every asset's international minutes and travel load is logged, because accumulated fatigue is the leading indicator of a Gameweek 6 withdrawal. Managers who transact early in a three-week window are buying information they do not yet possess.

Q10. Your overall rank is 147,643 of 10,933,139, the top 1.35 percent globally. You are inside the top one percent of the entire game. Does that reframe a second-place finish?

A. The top 1.35 percent of 10,933,139 entrants is the only externally valid measure of whether a process is sound. Second place in a twenty-one-person league is a sample far too small to separate skill from noise, whereas a global percentile is not. By the measure carrying actual statistical weight, this season is running substantially ahead of target.

Q11. Your Gameweek 5 rank was 4,565,551 of 10,933,139, the top 41.76 percent. A median week. Acceptable at this stage?

A. A 42th-percentile week that preserves the deficit while costing zero points in penalties is an entirely acceptable outcome. In a low-scoring gameweek the objective is loss minimisation rather than rank maximisation, and 50 points against an average of 48 achieved exactly that. The aggressive weeks are scheduled for when the chip is deployed, not for arbitrary September fixtures.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit second on 373 points, 8 behind the leader, overall rank 147,643 of 10,933,139, holding the only Wildcard in the top two with £0.1m banked. How do you convert an intact chip into first place?

Hold the Wildcard until the Gameweek 12 to 14 window when the elite fixture curves diverge most sharply from the field, and resist every impulse to spend it chasing the current gap. Across these 21 days deploy your banked transfer on one high-conviction attacking upgrade rather than another defensive shuffle, because your back line is already returning adequately while your midfield is not. The leader will bleed two to four points per week to rotation he has no mechanism to repair, so the deficit closes passively and your Wildcard then converts a narrow lead into a decisive one instead of merely restoring parity.

SZOBAMELA HOUSE —

Third-Place Manager Captains Player Who Did Not Leave The Treatment Room

Sources confirm the espresso was excellent and the armband was not.

szobamela Jose Castrejon

RANK 03 OF 21 358 PTS

OVERALL RANK 442,653 of 10,933,139 — top 4.05%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 3,684,532 of 10,933,139 — top 33.70%	GW5 / BENCH 52/6 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 100.3 bank £0.0m · 0 transfers
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STARTING XI · 52 PTS

GKP Kinsky	TOT	4.5	2
DEF Diop	IPS	4.0	4
DEF Maguire	MUN	4.9	2
DEF Muharemović	LEE	5.0	6
MID Mbeumo	MUN	7.9	2
MID B.Fernandes	MUN	12.0	2
MID Ødegaard (V)	ARS	6.8	4
MID Groß	BHA	5.8	14
MID Gomez	BHA	5.0	8
FWD Calvert-Lewin	LEE	6.0	2
FWD Haaland	MCI	15.6	6

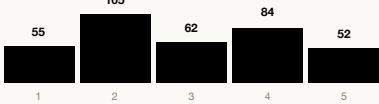
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	55	2,935,786	2,935,782	10	—
GW2	105	1,038,227	1,053,358	15	—
GW3	62	1,668,240	544,926	8	—
GW4	84	1,636,910	495,292	11	—
GW5	52	3,684,532	442,653	6	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Gaucho F.C.	373	+15	1
THIS CLUB	szobamela	358	+0	3
BELOW	Saka la bolsita	339	-19	3

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You captained João Pedro, who played zero minutes. The armband fell to your vice Ødegaard for 4 points. You captained a man who never left the treatment room.
- A.** I backed a footballer who was listed as available and then was not, which is a risk every manager in this league accepted this weekend. Three other managers did exactly the same thing, so either we are all fools together or the information was genuinely ambiguous. The armband landed on Ødegaard and I still posted 52 points, so the machinery worked exactly as designed.
- Q2.** You still do not own Erling Haaland's armband on any weekend, and it has now cost you the league lead twice. Is the contrarian streak vanity?
- A.** Following ninety percent of the planet into the same captaincy is not strategy, it is attendance. If I captained Haaland every week I would finish exactly where the template finishes, which is not why I entered this competition. I am 15 points off first place while playing my own game, and I am entirely comfortable with that trade.
- Q3.** You hold 3 chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost — while the two managers above you hold one apiece. Are you the genuine threat in this league?
- A.** Let the sprinters at the top exhaust themselves before autumn has properly started. Those two have spent three chips each to build leads of 15 points and eleven points respectively, which is a poor return on that much ammunition. I have three chips, a top-4-percent global rank, and no particular hurry.
- Q4.** Your bench returned 6 points and your squad is worth £100.3m with nothing in the bank. Is the squad fully invested?
- A.** Every pound is on the pitch, which is precisely where pounds are supposed to be. Verbruggen returning six from the bench is mildly irritating but it is not a structural failure. A bench of 6 points means my starting eleven is where the value sits, which is the entire objective.
- Q5.** You spent Triple Captain in Gameweek 3 for a 62-point week. Mission accomplished, or spent too cheaply?
- A.** We extracted the points, banked them, and moved on while others are still waiting for a mythical double gameweek in May. That chip contributed directly to the 358 points that have me third in this league. Anyone hoarding a Triple Captain into the spring is gambling that the fixtures cooperate, and fixtures rarely do.

- Q6.** Your brother Alfonso at El Cochiloco is 19 points behind you in sixth. How are family dinners?
- A.** Dinners have been extremely pleasant for me and noticeably quiet for Alfonso for several weeks now. He spent forty minutes explaining Calvert-Lewin's expected goals to me while I simply pointed at the table. Hierarchy in the Castrejon family is settled by points, and I am currently 19 points of settled.
- Q7.** You have made zero transfers in Gameweek 5 and taken zero hits all season. Is that discipline or disengagement?
- A.** It is discipline, and the distinction matters enormously in a league where one man has paid twenty-four points for the privilege of panicking. I rolled the transfer, doubled my flexibility for October, and spent my Saturday doing something more rewarding than refreshing a price-change website. The squad that got me to third did not need emergency surgery.
- Q8.** Jeremie Frimpong sat on your bench and returned zero. Does he have a future in the starting eleven?
- A.** Jeremie is an attacking weapon disguised as a defender and he will be unleashed when the matchup genuinely suits it. Leaving him out was a marginal call rather than a verdict on his ability. He returns to the eleven the moment the fixture list gives me a reason.
- Q9.** You were fifth after Gameweek 1 and you are third now. Is this the ceiling or the floor?
- A.** This is the floor, and I would like that printed in bold somewhere near the top of the page. I have climbed steadily without a Wildcard, without a Free Hit and without a Bench Boost, which means my best football is entirely unspent. The managers above me have already played their best hands.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 442,653 of 10,933,139, the top 4.05 percent worldwide. Where does that sit against your own expectations?
- A.** Top 4.05 percent of 10,933,139 people is a genuinely serious number and I intend to be insufferable about it. It confirms that third in this league is not a local accident but a globally competitive position. The only people ahead of me on that list are the ones who captained the obvious player.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 3,684,532 of 10,933,139, the top 33.70 percent, achieved with a captain who played no minutes. How?
- A.** Because the rest of my eleven did the work while my armband was having a lie-down. Posting 52 points against an average of 48 with a dead captain is arguably the most impressive thing I have done all season. If João Pedro had played ninety minutes I would be writing this from first place.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit third on 358 points, 15 off the top, overall rank 442,653 of 10,933,139, with 3 chips intact — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost — and £0.0m banked. You hold the deepest chip reserve in the top five. What is the blueprint to first?

Your chip position is the strongest in the top five and your only genuine leak is the captaincy, which has now cost you roughly sixteen points across two gameweeks on differential armbands that failed. Anchor the armband to Haaland for the remainder of autumn and accept that the top of your squad should be boring, then use your banked transfers to convert Ait-Nouri or Frimpong into a nailed ninety-minute defender so your bench stops out-earning your eleven. With three chips, a top-4-percent global rank and two rivals who have nothing left to deploy, holding your nerve through October is mathematically sufficient to take this league.

SAKA LA BOLSITA TRAINING GROUND —

Manager Gains A Place Without Making A Single Transfer, Credits The Hard Yards

Squad reportedly instructed to run sand dunes for 21 days regardless of fixture list.

Saka la bolsita Phillip Lopez

RANK 04 OF 21339 PTS

OVERALL RANK 1,272,665 of 10,933,139 — top 11.64%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 5,099,293 of 10,933,139 — top 46.64%	GW5 / BENCH 48/4 world avg 48 · hit -0	SQUAD / BANK 100.4 bank £0.0m · 0 transfers
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STARTING XI · 48 PTS

GKP	Kinsky	TOT	4.5	2
DEF	Gabriel	ARS	8.0	1
DEF	Maguire	MUN	4.9	2
DEF	Muharemović	LEE	5.0	6
DEF	Thomas	COV	4.0	9
MID	Gomez	BHA	5.0	8
MID	Szoboszlai	LIV	7.0	2
MID	Rogers	CHE	7.7	2
MID	B.Fernandes (V)	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Tzolis	ARS	6.3	2
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12

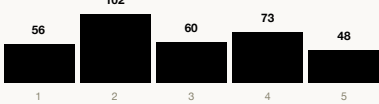
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	56	2,677,595	2,677,591	2	—
GW2	102	1,364,487	1,213,143	2	—
GW3	60	2,292,832	759,785	7	—
GW4	73	4,160,326	1,178,088	1	—
GW5	48	5,099,293	1,272,665	4	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	szobamela	358	+19	3
THIS CLUB	Saka la bolsita	339	+0	3
BELOW	papoy	334	-5	1

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You made zero transfers, took zero hits, and climbed to fourth on 339 points. Is doing nothing now a tactic?
- A.** Listen, sometimes the best bit of business a manager does all week is keep his hands firmly in his pockets. The lads had earned the right to go out there and represent this football club after getting us into the top five. We rolled the transfer, banked the flexibility, and let the eleven who got us here finish the job.
- Q2.** Haaland took the armband for 12 points while your vice B.Fernandes returned 2. Neither exactly set the world alight.
- A.** You take the big man through the middle every week because he gives you a guaranteed floor, and that is what he did. Twelve points from your captain in a week where the average was 48 is a solid day at the office, no more and no less. You do not win leagues on the spectacular; you win them on the dependable.
- Q3.** Your bench returned 4 points, with Issa Diop the only substitute to register. Squad depth an issue?
- A.** The lads on that bench know exactly what the standards are at this football club. If you want to be in the eleven on a Saturday you earn it Monday through Friday, and this week they did not quite earn it. A bench of 4 points means we picked the right eleven, which is what we are paid to do.
- Q4.** Your club is named Saka la bolsita, and Bukayo Saka is not a guaranteed starter in your own eleven anymore. Awkward?
- A.** Bukayo is the heartbeat of this football club and that is never going to change while I am in this dugout. He has taken some heavy knocks and defenders have been kicking lumps out of his ankles every single week. His quality is permanent and the returns will come when the fixtures open up.
- Q5.** You hold 3 chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost — while the leader has only a Free Hit. Does that dressing room believe in the title?
- A.** Those lads at the top have sprinted out of the tunnel and this is not a hundred-yard dash, it is nine months of attrition. They have burned their boots and emptied the rations to build a lead of 19 points over us. We have got the heavy artillery locked in the armoury and we will use it when the ground gets heavy.

- Q6.** Zero hits in five gameweeks while one rival has paid twenty-four points in a single window. Vindication?
- A.** You do not pay the taxman unless somebody is holding a gun to your head, simple as that. Taking a minus-twenty-four is a lad admitting he has completely lost his head and thrown the game plan out of the window. We have kept our discipline, kept our powder dry, and it has taken us to fourth in this league.
- Q7.** You were sixth after Gameweek 1 and you are fourth now, having never finished a gameweek outside the top eight. Consistency or stagnation?
- A.** Consistency is the most undervalued currency in this entire game and I will not apologise for it. We have not had a disaster week, we have not taken a single hit, and we have not needed a chip to paper over cracks. You build a title challenge on foundations, not on fireworks.
- Q8.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What is the itinerary?
- A.** Back to absolute basics: two-touch finishing, defending the back post, and running the sand dunes until the lads are sick of the sight of them. There is no pampering and there are no five-star retreats in this football club during an international break. We will come out of that tunnel in October fitter than anybody else in this division.
- Q9.** Squad value £100.4m with £0.0m in the bank. Is there a war chest or is everything committed?
- A.** Every penny is out there on that pitch where it belongs and not sitting in an account earning nothing. You do not win football matches with money in the bank, you win them with eleven men who can run. If we need to raise funds we will sell somebody who is not pulling his weight.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 1,272,665 of 10,933,139, the top 11.64 percent globally. Does a number that big register in the dressing room?
- A.** Top 11.64 percent out of 10,933,139 managers is something the lads can be genuinely proud of on the training ground. It tells you this is not a fluke in a small league; it is a proper performance against the whole world. But nobody in this building is getting carried away with a number in September.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 5,099,293 of 10,933,139, the top 46.64 percent, on 48 points. A good week by any measure.
- A.** It was a solid professional performance and the lads deserve enormous credit for their application. Beating the global average of 48 while your rivals are paying point deductions is exactly how you climb a table quietly. That is a place gained without spending a single thing, and I will take that every week of the season.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit fourth on 339 points, 19 off the top, overall rank 1,272,665 of 10,933,139, with 3 chips intact — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost — zero hits all season and £0.0m banked. How do you convert discipline into a title?

Your zero-hit discipline and intact chip trio give you the strongest structural position of anyone in the top five, so the fix is not behavioural but personnel. Bruno Fernandes has now returned 2 points in consecutive weeks from a premium price bracket, so use your banked transfers across this break to convert him into Mbemuo or Semenyo and release capital into a nailed attacking defender. Then hold the Wildcard until the December congestion when the chipless managers above you cannot answer rotation, because your route to first place is outlasting them rather than outscoring them.

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION —

Man Benches Striker Who Then Scores A Hat-Trick, Describes Weekend As Unsurvivable

Brian Brobbey's three goals were watched in full from an aluminium folding chair.

papoy Alexis Segura

RANK 05 OF 21334 PTS

OVERALL RANK 1,600,241 of 10,933,139 — top 14.64%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 3,865,901 of 10,933,139 — top 35.36%	GW5 / BENCH 52/21 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 100.1 bank £0.0m · 1 transfers
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STARTING XI · 52 PTS

GKP	Kinsky	TOT	4.5	2
DEF	Muñoz	NFO	5.4	2
DEF	Gvardiol	MCI	5.7	4
DEF	De Cuyper	BHA	4.9	6
DEF	Hume	SUN	4.3	1
MID	Groß	BHA	5.8	14
MID	Tzolis	ARS	6.3	2
MID	B.Fernandes	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Mbeumo (V)	MUN	7.9	2
MID	Stach	LEE	6.0	5
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12

BENCH · 21 PTS

GKP	Palmer	IPS	4.0	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0
DEF	Diop	IPS	4.0	0
FWD	Brobbey	SUN	5.7	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Mosquera	0 →	Gvardiol	4	+4
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CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

BENCH BOOST (GW3)	TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW3)	FREE HIT (GW4)	WILDCARD
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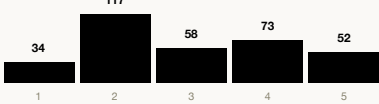
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	34	8,092,223	8,092,210	13	—
GW2	117	240,774	1,938,967	0	—
GW3	58	2,894,534	1,427,529	5	—
GW4	73	4,160,326	1,784,772	9	—
GW5	52	3,865,901	1,600,241	21	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Saka la bolsita	339	+5	3
THIS CLUB	papoy	334	+0	1
BELOW	El Cochiloco	330	−4	2

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Brian Brobbey scored a hat-trick for 17 points while sitting on your bench. Walk us through Friday evening.
- A.** I have not slept properly since approximately two o'clock on Saturday afternoon and I would like that on the record. I looked at Sunderland away, decided Brobbey was a rotation risk, and left a man who then scored three goals in an aluminium folding chair. There is no analysis that makes that decision defensible and I am not going to attempt one.
- Q2.** Your bench returned 21 points in total. Brobbey 17, Issa Diop 4. Is your bench simply better than your eleven?
- A.** My substitutes could comfortably qualify for a European competition while my starting eleven struggled to tie their own laces. Leaving 21 points behind the white line is not bad luck, it is a documented failure of nerve. I spent forty-five minutes overthinking on Friday night and I paid for every single one of them.
- Q3.** You also started Trai Hume, who played 11 minutes for 1 point, instead of Brobbey. Did you consider the minutes risk at all?
- A.** I considered it, dismissed it, and then watched Hume come off almost immediately while Brobbey helped himself to a hat-trick. That is the precise definition of getting a decision wrong in both directions simultaneously. I have since written the words nailed minutes on a piece of paper and stuck it to my wall.
- Q4.** Haaland returned 12 captained points, which was at least solid. Any comfort there?
- A.** Erling was the only part of my weekend that behaved like a professional footballer. Twelve points from the armband against an average of 48 kept the entire afternoon from becoming a total write-off. Without him I would be answering considerably harder questions than these.
- Q5.** Mosquera to Joško Gvardiol gained you 4 points. Your one transfer worked.
- A.** Joško was the single flickering candle in an otherwise pitch-black room. If that transfer had failed as well I would have deleted the application and taken up an outdoor hobby. At least one neuron fired correctly before the deadline slammed shut.

- Q6.** You have spent Bench Boost, Triple Captain and Free Hit, leaving only a Wildcard. Was that reckless?
- A.** I treated the chip tray like an all-inclusive buffet where I believed the kitchen was closing in fifteen minutes. Burning three tactical lifelines before the leaves changed colour was aggressive and I will own that entirely. But those chips produced 117 in Gameweek 2 and points on the board beat points in a drawer.
- Q7.** You dropped from fourth to fifth once the bonus points were applied. How did that feel to watch in real time?
- A.** Watching a rival collect bonus points you did not earn is a very specific kind of helplessness. I lost a place without kicking a ball, purely because Brobbey's three goals happened in a seat I had assigned him. The table is honest even when it is cruel and it is being extremely honest with me.
- Q8.** Your team is named papoy, from the Minions. Is the methodology equally coherent?
- A.** The name was chosen as a joke and has become an uncomfortably precise description of our weekly tactical meetings. We make high-pitched noises for four days, submit a catastrophic lineup on Friday, then scream at a television on Saturday. It is chaotic and childish and somehow we are still fifth in this league.
- Q9.** There are 21 days before Gameweek 6. What is the rehabilitation programme?
- A.** I am printing a life-sized photograph of Brian Brobbey and placing it by my front door as a permanent warning. I have forbidden myself from touching the lineup until seventy-two hours before the deadline. If I bench a hat-trick again my family has standing permission to confiscate my devices.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 1,600,241 of 10,933,139, the top 14.64 percent worldwide. Does that soften the Brobbey wound?
- A.** Being 1,600,241 of 10,933,139 means there are millions of people having a worse season than me, which is mildly medicinal. But every single one of those managers who is ahead of me managed to start their best striker. The global rank is a comfort and the bench is a scar.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 3,865,901 of 10,933,139, the top 35.36 percent, on 52 points. Objectively a good week.
- A.** It was a good week that should have been a spectacular one and that gap is entirely my own doing. Posting 52 against an average of 48 while stranding 21 points is a strange form of success. I outscored most of the planet and still lost a place in my own league.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit fifth on 334 points, 47 off the top, overall rank 1,600,241 of 10,933,139, with only a Wildcard left and 21 points stranded on your bench this week. Should you Wildcard during the break?

Do not Wildcard, because your squad is not broken — it produced 21 bench points, which is evidence of talent misallocation rather than talent absence. Your defect is selection nerve under uncertainty, so adopt one hard rule for October: any forward with a starting role begins ahead of any defender playing for a struggling side, regardless of how the fixture looks. Use your banked transfers to downgrade Alex Palmer and one budget defender into nailed ninety-minute assets so your bench becomes genuinely unpickable, and save the Wildcard for the December fixture swing when it can buy a title challenge rather than paper over one bad Friday.

Man Sells Injured Striker For Everton Striker, Nets A Two-Point Profit, Calls It A Catastrophe

Gameweek rank places club in the bottom 19.6 percent of all humanity.

El Cochiloco Alfonso Castrejon

RANK 06 OF 21330 PTS

OVERALL RANK 1,896,308 of 10,933,139 — top 17.34%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 8,792,938 of 10,933,139 — top 80.42%	GW5 / BENCH 38/8 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 100.5 bank £2.0m · 1 transfers
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STARTING XI · 38 PTS

GKP Kinsky	TOT	4.5	2
DEF Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
DEF Van Hecke	TOT	4.9	6
DEF Konsa	ARS	4.6	1
MID Szoboszlai	LIV	7.0	2
MID Cherki	MCI	7.8	8
MID B.Fernandes (V)	MUN	12.0	2
MID Tzolis	ARS	6.3	2
FWD Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12
FWD Wissa	NEW	6.2	0
FWD Calvert-Lewin	LEE	6.0	2

BENCH · 8 PTS

GKP Verbruggen	BHA	4.5	0
DEF Aina	NFO	4.5	0
DEF Shaw	MUN	4.3	0
MID Hughes	CRY	4.4	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

João Pedro	0 →	Calvert-Lewin	2	+2
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CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

BENCH BOOST (GW1)	TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW3)	WILDCARD	FREE HIT
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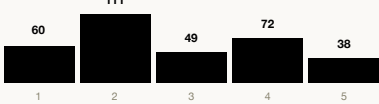
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	60	1,785,496	1,785,494	0	—
GW2	111	512,876	442,465	1	—
GW3	49	6,328,965	664,410	19	—
GW4	72	4,590,434	1,145,917	10	—
GW5	38	8,792,938	1,896,308	8	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	papoy	334	+4	1
THIS CLUB	El Cochiloco	330	+0	2
BELOW	Gunner4Lyfe	328	−2	3

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

Q1. You scored 38 points against a global average of 48, for a gameweek rank of 8,792,938 — the bottom 19.6 percent of 10,933,139 managers. What happened?

A. What happened is that eleven professional athletes collectively decided to move as though they were wading through wet cement. Finishing in the bottom 19.6 percent of the entire planet requires a level of coordination my squad has never shown in attack. We are accepting condolences at the usual address.

Q2. You sold João Pedro and bought Dominic Calvert-Lewin. João Pedro played zero minutes and Calvert-Lewin returned 2. You technically profited.

A. I have been informed that this transfer made me two points and I refuse to accept it as a victory. I sold a man who did not play in order to buy a man who may as well not have played. The scouting department has been asked to explain how that constitutes forward progress.

Q3. Your bench returned 8 points with Verbruggen alone taking 6. Why is your reserve goalkeeper outsourcing your defence?

A. Because every time I submit a defensive lineup the laws of physics rearrange themselves specifically to humiliate me. Had I started Verbruggen, Brighton would have conceded four goals inside twenty minutes as a matter of cosmic principle. Leaving points on the bench is this club's most reliable export.

Q4. Haaland returned 12 points from the armband. That was among the better decisions of your weekend.

A. It was the only decision of my weekend that survived contact with reality. Erling gave me twelve when the rest of the squad was actively subtracting value. I would like to formally thank him and formally apologise to everyone else.

Q5. You climbed to sixth despite that gameweek, because rivals collapsed faster. Does a passive promotion count?

A. I gained a place by standing still while other men fell over, which is the most El Cochiloco achievement imaginable. I did not earn sixth place, I simply survived longer than the manager who was there before me. I will take it and I will not examine it too closely.

Q6. Your brother Jose is 4 points ahead of you in third. How is the family group chat?

A. The group chat has been muted until roughly mid-November for reasons of personal dignity. Jose sends a screenshot of the table every single time I sit down to eat a meal. Blood is thicker than water but 4 points is thicker than blood.

Q7. You burned Bench Boost in Gameweek 1, the earliest in the league. Regret?

A. Gameweek 1 now feels like a sepia photograph from a more innocent era of my life. Playing a Bench Boost on the opening weekend is opening every Christmas present in October because you could not wait. It gave me a brief sugar rush and left me structurally poorer for the entire autumn.

Q8. You still hold Wildcard, Free Hit. Are you a sleeping giant or a hazard to yourself?

A. I am a man holding a loaded weapon who has repeatedly demonstrated poor aim. Having a Wildcard and a Free Hit in reserve is wonderful in theory and terrifying given who is pressing the button. I could deploy that Wildcard and assemble fifteen players who all get injured in the same warm-up.

Q9. There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What is the plan?

A. The senior squad is on unpaid leave and the scouting department has been ordered to burn every document referencing Merseyside. Three weeks without football is not a drought, it is a court-ordered stay of execution. We will return rested, traumatised, and fully prepared to repeat our mistakes.

Q10. Your overall rank is 1,896,308 of 10,933,139, the top 17.34 percent. Despite everything, you are ahead of most of the planet.

A. That statistic is the single most confusing piece of information I have received all season. I am apparently in the top 17 percent of humanity at a game I appear to be losing badly. It suggests the rest of the world is in considerably more trouble than I am.

Q11. Your Gameweek 5 percentile was the bottom 19.6 percent while your season percentile is the top 17.34 percent. How do you reconcile those numbers?

A. One of those numbers is who I am and the other is who I am pretending to be, and I genuinely do not know which is which. A season rank of 1,896,308 says I am competent and a gameweek rank of 8,792,938 says I should be banned from the internet. The truth is presumably somewhere in the middle and it is not flattering.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit sixth on 330 points, 51 off the top, overall rank 1,896,308 of 10,933,139, holding Wildcard, Free Hit with £2.0m — the largest cash reserve in the top six. What restores the attack?

Your £2.0m in idle cash is the single most wasted resource in the top six and it must be deployed during this break, not admired. Move Calvert-Lewin on before Everton's fixtures harden and combine those funds with your bank to buy a genuinely nailed forward, then use the second transfer to replace Luke Shaw, whose availability is no longer a reasonable bet. Keep both the Wildcard and Free Hit untouched, because with two chips and the deepest cash position in the top six you can absorb a winter crisis that the two managers above you simply cannot.

GUNNER4LYFE TRAINING FACILITY –

Arsenal Fan Captains Arsenal Captain During 3-0 Arsenal Defeat, Regrets Nothing

£3.9m war chest enters its fourth consecutive week of strategic dormancy.

Gunner4Lyfe Joshua Clarke

RANK 07 OF 21328 PTS

OVERALL RANK 2,043,638 of 10,933,139 — top 18.69%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 4,929,425 of 10,933,139 — top 45.09%	GW5 / BENCH 49/3 world avg 48 · hit –0	SQUAD / BANK 100.1 bank £3.9m · 1 transfers
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STARTING XI · 49 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	Gabriel	ARS	8.0	1
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF	Cash	AVL	4.4	–1
MID	Semenyo	MCI	8.4	17
MID	Ødegaard (C)	ARS	6.8	4
MID	Grealish	EVE	6.5	3
MID	Xhaka	SUN	5.5	2
MID	Mainoo	MUN	5.5	4
FWD	Isak (V)	LIV	9.1	8
FWD	N.Jackson	AVL	6.5	6

BENCH · 3 PTS

GKP	Sánchez	CHE	4.9	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0
DEF	Lacroix	CHE	5.9	0
DEF	Keane	EVE	4.8	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Elanga	0 →	Grealish	3	+3
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CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW3)	WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST
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SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	70	529,737	529,735	12	–
GW2	63	8,213,707	4,180,581	6	–
GW3	89	6,422	568,295	3	–
GW4	57	8,472,953	2,038,413	0	–
GW5	49	4,929,425	2,043,638	3	–

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	El Cochiloco	330	+2	2
THIS CLUB	Gunner4Lyfe	328	+0	3
BELOW	Dang Football Club	327	–1	1

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You captained Ødegaard away at Brighton, where Arsenal lost 3-0. He returned 4 points doubled while your vice Isak returned 8. Your vice-captain doubled your captain's output.
- A.** If you manage a club called Gunner4Lyfe and you captain somebody else's striker, you should hand in your badge at reception. Martin dictates the tempo of every match he plays in and Brighton away was a bad afternoon for the entire football club, not a character flaw. I backed my skipper, the skipper had a poor day, and I would name him again next week.
- Q2.** Alexander Isak returned 8 points as your vice-captain. Had you simply swapped the armband you would be closer to the podium.
- A.** That is the kind of arithmetic that is very easy to perform on a Monday morning. Alexander is an elite centre-forward and the vice-captaincy exists precisely so that quality sits in reserve. I am not going to start captaining Newcastle players to please a spreadsheet.
- Q3.** You have £3.9m sitting unspent, the largest bank in the top ten. Why is that money idle?
- A.** It is a war chest and it is deliberately loaded for the moment the fixture list turns in our favour. Having almost four million in liquidity means I can buy any footballer on the planet with a single transfer and without dismantling anything. While rivals scrape for a hundred thousand in spare change, we hold genuine purchasing power.
- Q4.** Your bench returned 3 points. Nicolas Jackson, a premium forward, contributed nothing from it.
- A.** A bench of 3 points tells you our eleven was correctly selected, which is the only job that matters. Nicolas is a top-tier asset and he will start when the matchup warrants it rather than because of his price tag. You do not judge a defensive structure on a single afternoon.
- Q5.** Elanga to Jack Grealish returned 3 points. Did that move justify itself?
- A.** Jack brings genuine ball-carrying threat and an ability to unlock a low block that Elanga simply did not offer. Three points in week one of an investment is not a verdict, it is a deposit. We signed him for October and November, not for last Saturday.

- Q6.** You were top of this league after Gameweek 1 on 70 points and you are seventh now. What went wrong?
- A.** Gameweek 2 happened, we returned sixty-three points, and the entire complexion of the season shifted underneath us. We have since posted eighty-nine and forty-nine, which is a squad rediscovering its rhythm rather than one in decline. We are seventh with three chips and four million in the bank, which is a recovery position, not a crisis.
- Q7.** You climbed a place once bonus was applied despite that captaincy. Lucky?
- A.** We gained a place because we took no hits and other managers did, which is not luck but discipline. I have paid the Premier League taxman exactly nothing this season while men above me were handing over twenty-four points. Over nine months that arithmetic decides leagues.
- Q8.** You hold 3 chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost. When do they get used?
- A.** They get used when the fixtures and the squad demand it and not a single gameweek sooner. Having a Wildcard, a Free Hit and a Bench Boost while sitting seventh is an enviable position that I intend to protect. The frontrunners have already fired their ammunition and we have not started shooting.
- Q9.** Will Erling Haaland ever wear your armband?
- A.** This football club will not be held hostage by a captaincy that ninety percent of the planet has already copied. If Martin, Bukayo or Alexander offers the better matchup then one of them takes the armband without hesitation. We win this league on our own terms or we do not win it at all.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 2,043,638 of 10,933,139, the top 18.69 percent. Your worst global position of the season. Does that sting?
- A.** Top 19 percent of 10,933,139 managers is respectable and it is also the worst I have felt all year. We were inside the top hundred thousand after Gameweek 1 and we have slid a long way since. The number is a reminder that principles have a price and I am currently paying it.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 4,929,425 of 10,933,139, the top 45.09 percent, on 49 points with a captain who returned four. How?
- A.** Because ten other footballers turned up and did their jobs while my skipper was having a difficult afternoon in Sussex. Scoring 49 against an average of 48 with a four-point armband shows the depth of this squad. If I had captained almost anybody else I would be writing to you from the top three.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit seventh on 328 points, 53 off the top, overall rank 2,043,638 of 10,933,139, with 3 chips intact and £3.9m — the biggest unspent bank in the league. How do you convert that into a podium finish?

Your £3.9m has now sat idle for four gameweeks, which in a game of compounding returns is a self-inflicted wound rather than prudence. Spend it during this break: convert Grealish or a budget midfielder plus the bank into Bukayo Saka, giving you a genuine Arsenal double-up that rewards your loyalty instead of merely testing it. Then promote Nicolas Jackson permanently into the eleven and hold all three chips until December, because you are the only manager in the top eight combining real cash, real chip depth and a squad that has already proved it can score 89 in a week.

DANG FC ANALYTICS FLOOR—

Rookie Leaves 37 Points On Bench Across Two Weeks, Describes It As Technically Growth

Manager drops two places while holding the second-highest bench return in the division.

Dang Football ClubKhang Dang

RANK 08 OF 21327 PTS

OVERALL RANK 2,099,042 of 10,933,139 — top 19.20%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 4,929,425 of 10,933,139 — top 45.09%	GW5 / BENCH 49/20 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 99.9 bank £1.5m · 1 transfers
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STARTING XI · 49 PTS

GKP	Kinsky	TOT	4.5	2
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF	Ajayi	HUL	4.2	1
DEF	Gabriel	ARS	8.0	1
MID	Tanaka	LEE	4.9	2
MID	Semenyo	MCI	8.4	17
MID	Janelt	BRE	5.0	3
MID	Rogers (V)	CHE	7.7	2
MID	Kamada	CRY	5.0	3
FWD	Calvert-Lewin	LEE	6.0	2
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12

BENCH · 20 PTS

GKP	Verbruggen	BHA	4.5	0
DEF	Richards	CRY	5.0	0
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	0
FWD	Thiago	BRE	7.8	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Rice	1 → Rogers	2	+1
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CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

BENCH BOOST (GW3)	TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW3)	FREE HIT (GW4)	WILDCARD
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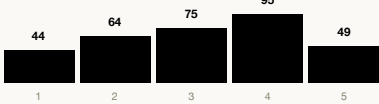
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	44	6,124,842	6,124,832	6	—
GW2	64	8,153,601	7,384,022	0	—
GW3	75	194,210	4,498,301	14	—
GW4	95	420,819	2,095,006	17	—
GW5	49	4,929,425	2,099,042	20	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Gunner4Lyfe	328	+1	3
THIS CLUB	Dang Football Club	327	+0	1
BELOW	The Special Ones	301	−26	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

Q1. You left 17 points on the bench during a Free Hit in Gameweek 4 and 20 more in Gameweek 5. That is 37 points behind the white line in a fortnight.

A. Mathematically, producing thirty-seven bench points across two weeks proves my recruitment is excellent and my deployment is catastrophic. I am running a precision instrument and then parking it in a neighbour's swimming pool every Saturday morning. It is a sophisticated form of self-sabotage that actually requires a very good squad to achieve.

Q2. Your bench was Chris Richards 8, Verbruggen 6, Thiago 5, Calafiori 1. Four players who all played, three of whom returned properly. What was the selection logic?

A. The logic was fixture-based and the fixtures were largely irrelevant to what those four men actually did. I benched a defender who kept a clean sheet, a goalkeeper who kept a clean sheet, and a midfielder who scored a goal. My model optimised for the wrong variable and I have no defence prepared.

Q3. You dropped from sixth to eighth once bonus points landed, the largest fall in the league. How did that unfold?

A. I watched two managers collect bonus points I had no exposure to and lost two places without a ball being kicked. Falling to eighth while holding 20 bench points is the most on-brand thing this football club has done all season. The table did not punish my squad, it punished my team sheet.

Q4. Haaland returned 12 captained points. Did you consider handing the armband to Rogers instead?

A. I considered Morgan Rogers for roughly four seconds before my rational mind intervened and sat me down. You can experiment with your third defender but you do not experiment with the Haaland armband as a first-year manager. Twelve points is not exciting and it is not a mistake either.

Q5. Rice to Rogers returned 2 points against Rice's 1. A marginal gain.

A. It was the one intervention all week that did not detonate inside my own building. Rogers offers transition threat and box entries that Rice has stopped generating in open play. A one-point gain is not a triumph but it is the correct direction of travel.

Q6. You posted 95 points in Gameweek 4 and 49 in Gameweek 5 as a debut manager. Is the learning curve steep?

A. The curve is nearly vertical and it is littered with discarded lineup drafts from three in the morning. Ninety-five followed by 49 tells you the squad has a genuine ceiling that I keep refusing to access. Once I solve the problem of selecting eleven footballers, this league has a serious issue.

Q7. You have spent three chips as a rookie and hold only Wildcard. Exposed?

A. Deeply exposed, and paradoxically I think it may be the best thing for my decision-making. Having no Bench Boost and no Free Hit removes two further opportunities for me to overthink myself into disaster. A minimalist strategy suits a manager with my particular nervous system.

Q8. Your squad carries Calafiori and Verbruggen as bench assets. Is that luxury you cannot afford?

A. It is luxury I am actively paying for every single week in stranded points. Expensive substitutes are only valuable if you are willing to start them, and I demonstrably am not. That capital needs redistributing into the eleven before the winter arrives.

Q9. There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What changes?

A. I am drafting a binding personal policy that revokes my own access to the lineup after nine o'clock on a Friday. We will run several thousand permutations to guarantee a goalscoring defender is never benched again. If that fails I will use a coin, which has demonstrably better judgement than I do.

Q10. Your overall rank is 2,099,042 of 10,933,139, the top 19.20 percent globally in your debut season. Perspective?

A. Being inside the top 19 percent of 10,933,139 managers in a first season is genuinely more than I expected in August. It also means my bench errors are costing me a position I have otherwise earned on merit. The rank says I belong here and the bench says I am not yet ready.

Q11. Your Gameweek 5 rank was 4,929,425 of 10,933,139, the top 45.09 percent, on 49 points. A solid week that still cost you two places.

A. Beating the average of 48 and finishing in the top 45 percent of the world while dropping two places is a very particular humiliation. It proves the problem is not my scoring but my rivals' bonus luck and my own bench. I was better than most of the planet and worse than the two men beside me.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit eighth on 327 points, 54 off the top, overall rank 2,099,042 of 10,933,139, with only a Wildcard left, £1.5m banked, and 37 bench points surrendered across two gameweeks. What is the fix?

Your squad is top-five quality and your team sheet is bottom-five quality, so the entire intervention is procedural rather than transactional. Adopt one non-negotiable rule for October: any defender with attacking licence and any midfielder who takes set pieces starts regardless of the opponent, because goal threat outweighs clean-sheet probability over a season. Use your £1.5m and banked transfers to downgrade your reserve goalkeeper to a pure non-playing £4.0m enabler so a keeper decision can never cost you again, and hold the Wildcard until December when it can address structure rather than panic.

THE SPECIAL ONES COMPOUND—

Manager With A Zero-Point Bench Declares It The Purest Expression Of Efficiency

All four chips remain unused following the league's only -20 transfer deduction.

The Special Ones Cameron Walker

RANK 09 OF 21301 PTS

OVERALL RANK 4,438,980 of 10,933,139 — top 40.60%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 7,325,912 of 10,933,139 — top 67.01%	GW5 / BENCH 42/0 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 100.4 bank £0.0m · 0 transfers
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STARTING XI · 42 PTS

GKP	Donnarumma	MCI	5.5	2
DEF	Virgil (M)	LIV	6.5	8
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
DEF	Jacquet	LIV	5.0	6
DEF	Ajayi	HUL	4.2	1
MID	B.Fernandes	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Saka	ARS	9.5	2
MID	Ødegaard (C)	ARS	6.8	4
MID	Rogers	CHE	7.7	2
MID	McGinn	AVL	5.4	6
FWD	Isak	LIV	9.1	8

BENCH · 0 PTS

GKP	Steele	BHA	4.0	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0
FWD	Šeško	MUN	7.0	0
DEF	Mendy	HUL	4.1	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

No transfers executed in Gameweek 5.

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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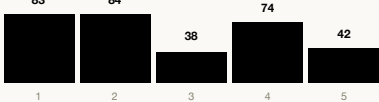
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	83	55,917	55,917	1	—
GW2	84	4,114,227	618,053	1	—
GW3	38	9,460,121	1,805,607	11	—
GW4	74	4,155,710	3,885,308	3	−20
GW5	42	7,325,912	4,438,980	0	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Dang Football Club	327	+26	1
THIS CLUB	The Special Ones	301	+0	4
BELOW	Red Lobster FC	299	−2	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Your bench returned 0 points. Steele, João Pedro, Šeško and Mendy all blanked completely. Is that squad depth or a void?
- A.** A bench of 0 points is the purest expression of efficiency because not one drop of value was wasted on a wooden chair. My eleven were selected to fight for ninety minutes and they produced 42 points without any charity from the reserves. When the bench gives you nothing, the starting eleven carries one hundred percent of the accountability.
- Q2.** You took a -20 hit in Gameweek 4 on six transfers, the largest deduction this league has seen. Have you recovered?
- A.** I have nothing to say about the board and if I speak about transfer policy I will be in trouble. It was a brutal amputation performed to stop an infection spreading through the entire season. We took zero transfers and zero hits this week, which is what discipline looks like after a crisis.
- Q3.** Ødegaard took your armband for 4 points while your vice Virgil returned 8. Your centre-half outscored your captain.
- A.** Virgil van Dijk is a colossus and I trust his character more than most attacking midfielders in this competition. Martin had a poor afternoon at Brighton and that is football rather than a failure of leadership. The armband was correctly placed and the result was simply unkind.
- Q4.** You alone hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. Nobody in this league has more optionality. Is that the plan or paralysis?
- A.** Look at the chip ledger before you question my position in this championship. Every manager above me has mortgaged something to get there while I have spent nothing at all. I hold a complete arsenal in the top half of the table, which is not failure but menace.
- Q5.** You were top of this league after Gameweek 1 on 83 points. You are ninth now. Where did it go?
- A.** Gameweek 3 produced thirty-eight points and Gameweek 4 cost me twenty in deductions, which is a fortnight that would end most managers. Being top in August is winning the coin toss and it means nothing to anybody who understands this sport. I am 80 points off the lead with four chips, which is a genuinely recoverable position.

- Q6.** Your squad is worth £100.4m with £0.0m in the bank. Is there any flexibility at all?
- A.** There is no cash and there is no slack, which is the direct legacy of that Gameweek 4 restructuring. Every pound is committed to the eleven men I selected to fight for this badge. Flexibility is a luxury I traded away for a clean squad.
- Q7.** Benjamin Šeško has returned nothing and occupies a forward slot. Why is he still here?
- A.** He is here because I will not compound one expensive mistake by paying a further penalty to correct it. Taking a hit to remove a player I took a hit to acquire would be an act of genuine madness. He goes when I have a free transfer and not one moment before.
- Q8.** Zero transfers this week. Is that conviction or exhaustion?
- A.** It is conviction born from a very expensive education in Gameweek 4. The squad I paid twenty points to assemble deserves more than three days of patience. I am not going to keep buying furniture for a house I have already finished building.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. How does a manager in your position use them?
- A.** I will lock the gates, review defensive tape, and say very little to anybody outside this building. The rest of this league will spend three weeks boasting about leads built on chips they no longer own. When October arrives we will be the only club with a full arsenal and a settled squad.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 4,438,980 of 10,933,139, the top 40.60 percent. That is the weakest of anyone in this league's top ten.
- A.** It is the direct and quantifiable cost of a twenty-point deduction and I am not going to pretend otherwise. Being 4,438,980 of 10,933,139 while holding four chips is an unusual combination of damage and potential. The rank measures where I have been, not where the arsenal will take me.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 7,325,912 of 10,933,139, the top 67.01 percent, on 42 points with a zero-point bench.
- A.** Finishing in the top 67 percent of the world with nothing whatsoever from my substitutes is a reasonable professional afternoon. I matched the global average and I did it without paying a penny in transfer tax. That is the foundation we rebuild from.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit ninth on 301 points, 80 off the top, overall rank 4,438,980 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain — with £0.0m banked and a bench that returned 0. How do you convert the league's deepest arsenal into a challenge?

You hold the only complete four-chip arsenal in this league, which means your recovery ceiling is the highest in the division and your immediate problem is purely a dead bench. Use your banked free transfers across this break to replace Šeško and Mendy with two genuinely nailed ninety-minute budget assets, converting your bench from a zero-point graveyard into functioning auto-sub insurance at no points cost. Then deploy the Wildcard in the Gameweek 12 to 14 window and hold Bench Boost for a double gameweek, because you are the only manager who can still rebuild an entire squad while every rival above you has already spent that option.

RED LOBSTER FC EXECUTIVE SUITE –

Namesake Franchise Files Bottom-10.0-Percent Gameweek As Temporary Brand Consolidation

Reserve bench placed on a formal performance improvement plan effective Monday.

Red Lobster FC Neil Patel-Hernandez

RANK 10 OF 21299 PTS

OVERALL RANK

4,554,323

of 10,933,139 — top 41.66%

GAMEWEEK 5 RANK

9,843,805

of 10,933,139 — top 90.04%

GW5 / BENCH

33/2

world avg 48 · hit –0

SQUAD / BANK

100.5

bank £0.1m · 0 transfers

STARTING XI · 33 PTS

GKP	Raya (M)	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	Maguire	MUN	4.9	2
DEF	O'Reilly	MCI	6.4	1
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
DEF	Pedro Porro	TOT	5.4	1
MID	Mbeumo	MUN	7.9	2
MID	Cherki	MCI	7.8	8
MID	Szoboszlai	LIV	7.0	2
MID	Gakpo	LIV	7.2	3
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12
FWD	Wissa	NEW	6.2	0

SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	45	5,859,118	5,859,109	11	–
GW2	101	1,480,702	2,439,660	7	–
GW3	59	2,650,992	1,805,607	1	–
GW4	61	7,451,423	3,145,812	14	–
GW5	33	9,843,805	4,554,323	2	–

BENCH · 2 PTS

GKP	Dubravka	TOT	4.0	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0
MID	Reed	FUL	4.4	0
DEF	Davis	IPS	4.0	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

No transfers executed in Gameweek 5.

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARDFREE HITBENCH BOOSTTRIPLE CAPTAIN

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	The Special Ones	301	+2	4
THIS CLUB	Red Lobster FC	299	+0	4
BELOW	MAD Baller	293	–6	3

TRAJECTORY

THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You scored 33 points for a gameweek rank of 9,843,805, the bottom 10.0 percent of 10,933,139 managers. As the namesake franchise of this league, is that a reputational issue?

A. Our market research indicates this represents a temporary consolidation phase ahead of the fourth quarter. You cannot sustain aggressive growth every single matchday without risking structural overheating in the defensive unit. The brand remains committed to long-term shareholder value even when the weekend tastes like an overcooked biscuit.
- Q2.** You made zero transfers and took zero hits. Was that austerity or inertia?

A. Unnecessary personnel churn destroys dressing-room equity and inflates transaction overhead in a volatile market. We audited the existing asset base and concluded the fundamentals remained sound despite the absence of visible output. Sometimes the shrewdest trade available is watching competitors bankrupt themselves on fees.
- Q3.** Your bench returned 2 points. Dubravka, João Pedro and Harrison Reed all recorded nothing.

A. The reserve unit has been placed on a formal performance improvement plan with immediate effect. Having capital tied up in assets generating single digits is an unacceptable allocation of enterprise resources. Individual appraisals will be conducted throughout the recess.
- Q4.** Haaland returned 12 captained points, which was roughly a third of your entire weekly output. Over-reliant?

A. Anchoring capital in a monopoly asset with proven revenue generation is basic fiduciary responsibility. Erling Haaland is effectively our chief revenue officer and this quarter he delivered to forecast. The concentration risk is acknowledged in our filings and considered acceptable.
- Q5.** You hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. When does the board authorise deployment?

A. Our reserves are entirely unencumbered and available the moment the macro environment turns favourable. Managers above us have exhausted their credit lines to build leads of 2 points and less. When this franchise triggers a chip event it will be a hostile takeover rather than a press release.
- Q6.** You are exactly tenth of twenty-one. Does occupying the precise median suit the corporate strategy?

A. Tenth place is an optimal position for avoiding regulatory scrutiny while competitors erode each other's margins. The media devotes its investigative energy to the frontrunners while we quietly consolidate market share. When the correction arrives, a median position converts into rapid upward mobility.

- Q7.** You scored 101 points in Gameweek 2 and 33 in Gameweek 5. Is the volatility a concern for investors?

A. Quarterly variance is entirely normal in a high-beta entertainment portfolio such as this one. The hundred-and-one-point quarter demonstrated our ceiling and this quarter demonstrated our floor. Blended across the fiscal year the trend line remains firmly positive.
- Q8.** Your squad is worth £100.5m with £0.1m in the bank. Is capital being efficiently deployed?

A. Our squad valuation is among the highest in the league, which reflects disciplined asset selection rather than luck. Idle cash of £0.1m is deliberately minimal because cash generates no points. Every unit of capital is working on the pitch where it can produce a return.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What is on the executive agenda?

A. We will restructure the recruitment algorithm, refresh the corporate identity, and audit the commissioner's regulatory oversight. Twenty-one days permits realignment of operational incentives without the distraction of a live scoreboard. We anticipate reporting strong third-quarter earnings when trading resumes.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 4,554,323 of 10,933,139, the top 41.66 percent globally. Is the median of this league still above the global median?

A. We sit in the top 42 percent of 10,933,139 participants worldwide, which is a genuinely defensible market position. It confirms that tenth place in this particular league is a function of an unusually strong competitive set. Our shareholders should note we are outperforming the vast majority of the addressable market.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was the bottom 10.0 percent while your season rank is the top 41.66 percent. Reconcile those.

A. One figure represents a single trading session and the other represents cumulative enterprise performance. A bottom-10.0-percent session is a drawdown event and not a revision of the underlying valuation. Investors are advised to weight the cumulative figure considerably more heavily.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit tenth on 299 points, 82 off the top, overall rank 4,554,323 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain — with a bench that returned 2 and £0.1m banked. How do you move up?

You hold a full four-chip arsenal and a top-42-percent global rank, so your problem is neither strategy nor talent but a starting eleven with no midfield penetration. Use your banked transfers across this break to downgrade one of Pedro Porro or Leif Davis into a £4.0m non-playing enabler and redirect the funds into an attacking midfielder with genuine goal threat, because your defensive spend is duplicative. Then hold the Wildcard until December and pair Bench Boost with a double gameweek, because as one of only two managers with four chips intact, your realistic ceiling is the top three rather than the median.

MAD BALLER —

Manager's Captain Plays Zero Minutes; Manager Posts Second-Best Score In The League

56-point gameweek achieved with a dead armband and no transfers whatsoever.

MAD Baller Marie Drosche

RANK 11 OF 21293 PTS

OVERALL RANK 5,109,269 of 10,933,139 — top 46.73%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 2,495,788 of 10,933,139 — top 22.83%	GW5 / BENCH 56/5 world avg 48 · hit -0	SQUAD / BANK 99.3 bank £1.4m · 0 transfers
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STARTING XI · 56 PTS

GKP	A.Becker	LIV	5.5	8
DEF	Virgil	LIV	6.5	8
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
DEF	Hill	BOU	5.5	4
MID	Semenyo	MCI	8.4	17
MID	Mbeumo	MUN	7.9	2
MID	Rice	ARS	7.4	1
MID	Szoboszlai (V)	LIV	7.0	4
FWD	Thiago	BRE	7.8	5
FWD	Calvert-Lewin	LEE	6.0	2

BENCH · 5 PTS

GKP	Lecomte	FUL	4.0	0
FWD	João Pedro (C)	CHE	7.8	0
MID	Anderson	MCI	6.3	0
DEF	Lacroix	CHE	5.9	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

No transfers executed in Gameweek 5.

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

BENCH BOOST (GW4)	WILDCARD	FREE HIT	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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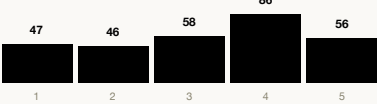
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	47	5,282,781	5,282,775	2	—
GW2	46	9,677,087	8,450,538	3	—
GW3	58	2,739,548	7,794,882	5	—
GW4	86	1,437,717	5,910,037	0	—
GW5	56	2,495,788	5,109,269	5	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Red Lobster FC	299	+6	4
THIS CLUB	MAD Baller	293	+0	3
BELOW	Camp Nou Way	289	-4	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You captained João Pedro, who played zero minutes. The armband fell to Szoboszlai for 4. You then posted 56 points — the second-highest score in this entire league in Gameweek 5, behind only the leader.
- A.** My captain contributed nothing and I still won the week, which I intend to bring up regularly. Szoboszlai picked up the armband and the other ten players did their jobs without any fuss. It turns out you do not strictly need a functioning captain if the rest of your squad turns up.
- Q2.** You made zero transfers and took zero hits, then outscored twenty other managers. Is inactivity underrated?
- A.** Enormously underrated, and this league is a living advertisement for it. One man made seven transfers and paid twenty-four points to finish eleven points behind me. I made none, paid nothing, and won the gameweek.
- Q3.** Your bench returned 5 points. Any regrets about the selections?
- A.** A bench of 5 points across four players is background noise and I refuse to be upset about it. Nobody ever won a league crying over three points from a Crystal Palace defender. My eleven did what they were paid for and the reserves kept their jackets on.
- Q4.** You climbed to eleventh once bonus landed. Did you follow that in real time?
- A.** I did not follow it, because watching bonus points resolve is not a productive use of a Sunday evening. I checked on Monday morning, saw I had gained a place, and made a coffee. Getting emotionally involved in provisional scoring is how people ruin this hobby.
- Q5.** You spent Bench Boost in Gameweek 4 for 86 points. Satisfied with the timing?
- A.** Eighty-six points is a perfectly respectable Bench Boost and I got a decision out of the way early. Carrying an unspent chip into the winter creates a weekly obligation to think about it, which I did not want. Now I have three chips, two free transfers and no outstanding admin.

- Q6.** João Pedro remains in your squad despite not playing. Will you move him on?
- A.** He will move when I have a free transfer available and not through a panic payment. Taking a hit to remove a player who may be fit in a fortnight is how managers end up in the bottom six. I am comfortable waiting.
- Q7.** You were eleventh after Gameweek 2 on 93 points and you are eleventh now on 293. Slow build?
- A.** It is a slow build and that is precisely the intention in a nine-month competition. I posted forty-seven and forty-six to start the season and I have posted fifty-eight, eighty-six and 56 since. The trajectory is the only statistic that matters at this stage.
- Q8.** You hold Wildcard, Free Hit, Triple Captain. What is the deployment plan?
- A.** The Wildcard waits for December when the congestion genuinely breaks squads apart. The Triple Captain waits for a double gameweek with a fixture I actually like. The Free Hit waits for a blank, which is the only thing a Free Hit is honestly for.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. How do you spend them?
- A.** I will review the injury list once, let two free transfers accumulate, and otherwise ignore this entirely. Three weeks away from fantasy football is a gift and most of this league will waste it on anxiety. I will return in October with a full squad and a clear head.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 5,109,269 of 10,933,139, the top 46.73 percent globally. Is that where you expected to be?
- A.** Top 47 percent of 10,933,139 people with three chips still in the drawer is ahead of schedule. It means I have climbed without spending anything significant, which is the cheapest kind of progress available. The managers above me cannot say the same.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 2,495,788 of 10,933,139, the top 22.83 percent — the second-best in this entire league. With a dead captain.
- A.** Top 23 percent of the planet is comfortably my best week of the season and my captain played no football. Scoring 56 against a global average of 48 is a genuine result rather than a fortunate one. I would like somebody to explain how that happened, because I certainly cannot.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit eleventh on 293 points, 88 off the top, overall rank 5,109,269 of 10,933,139, holding Wildcard, Free Hit, Triple Captain with £1.4m banked, having just posted the second-best gameweek in the league with a captain who played zero minutes. How do you keep climbing?

Your process is demonstrably sound — the second-best gameweek in the league, zero hits all season, three chips banked — so the only material leak is a differential captaincy that has now returned 4 points. Anchor the armband to Haaland for October to remove that variance entirely, then use your £1.4m and two banked transfers to move João Pedro on for a nailed forward rather than waiting on his fitness indefinitely. With three chips and a top-47-percent global rank, holding the Wildcard until the December congestion gives you a realistic route into the top five without ever taking a hit.

CAMP NOU WAY —

Man Who Captained An Absent Player Last Month Records League's Best Captain Return

Manager confirms he still cannot name the clubs of three of his four substitutes.

Camp Nou Way Abner Chavez

RANK 12 OF 21289 PTS

OVERALL RANK 5,464,308 of 10,933,139 — top 49.98%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 4,210,352 of 10,933,139 — top 38.51%	GW5 / BENCH 51/0 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 99.3 bank £0.2m · 1 transfers
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STARTING XI · 51 PTS

GKP	Raya (M)	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	Virgil	LIV	6.5	8
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF	Matheus N.	MCI	5.9	1
DEF	Gabriel	ARS	8.0	1
MID	Enzo	MCI	6.9	7
MID	Cunha	MUN	7.9	10
MID	Rice	ARS	7.4	1
MID	Gibbs-White	NFO	8.0	2
FWD	Isak (C)	LIV	9.1	16
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0

BENCH · 0 PTS

GKP	Sánchez	CHE	4.9	0
DEF	Senesi	TOT	5.8	0
MID	Olusesi	TOT	4.4	0
FWD	Kusi-Asare	FUL	4.5	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Watkins	0 →	Isak	8	+8
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CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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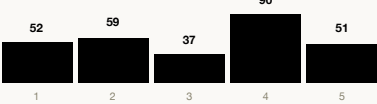
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	52	3,770,915	3,770,910	2	—
GW2	59	8,746,454	7,027,324	0	—
GW3	37	9,502,808	7,994,540	0	—
GW4	90	834,741	5,793,085	0	—
GW5	51	4,210,352	5,464,308	0	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	MAD Baller	293	+4	3
THIS CLUB	Camp Nou Way	289	+0	4
BELOW	FK Jizmaila Sarr	284	−5	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You captained Alexander Isak for 16 points, the single best captain return in this league. Last month you captained a player who was absent. What changed?

A. Nothing changed and I want to be completely honest about that on the record. I clicked on Alexander because he was near the top of the list and I recognised his name. Somehow I beat twenty managers who own spreadsheets, and I think that says more about them than about me.
- Q2.** Watkins to Isak was your one transfer and it gained you 8 points. Was there analysis behind it?

A. Ollie had stopped playing football for my team so I replaced him with somebody who still does. That is the entire depth of the thinking and I am not going to dress it up for a newspaper. It worked out extremely well and I fully expect to never repeat it.
- Q3.** Your bench returned 0 points. All four substitutes recorded nothing at all.

A. That sounds about right because I genuinely do not know who two of those men play for. The bench exists to fill the empty boxes on the screen so the app stops complaining at me. As long as my eleven turn up on Saturday, the reserves can do whatever they like.
- Q4.** You lost a place to MAD Baller despite scoring 51 points. Frustrating?

A. I did not notice until you told me just now and I am not especially troubled by it. Somebody scored more points than me, which is how a league table is supposed to function. I will presumably get the place back when they make a mistake.
- Q5.** You hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. Do you know what each of them does?

A. I know the Wildcard is the gold one that makes transfers free, and I am reasonably confident about the Bench Boost. The other two I would have to read about before pressing anything. I am saving them for a moment when I feel strongly about something.
- Q6.** Zero hits all season. Discipline or forgetfulness?

A. Mostly forgetfulness with a healthy contribution from laziness. Taking a hit requires you to remember the deadline, research a footballer and then care about the outcome. Treating this as a weekly hobby rather than a second job has apparently saved me a lot of points.

- Q7.** You scored 37 points in Gameweek 3 and 90 in Gameweek 4. Can you explain that swing?

A. I can explain neither of those numbers and I have stopped attempting to. One week everybody I own forgets how to play and the next week they all score. It is completely outside my control and I find that quite relaxing.
- Q8.** Your squad is worth £99.3m, the lowest in this league. Does the budget concern you?

A. I did not know it was the lowest and now that I do I still feel broadly fine. It probably means I bought cheap players who then failed to increase in value. Given I am ahead of nine other managers, the money does not appear to be the deciding factor.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. Plans?

A. I am not going to open the application once until about twenty minutes before the deadline. The rest of this league will spend three weeks giving themselves ulcers over international friendlies. I will check who is injured, pick somebody, and go back to my life.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 5,464,308 of 10,933,139, the top 49.98 percent globally: You are ahead of roughly five and a half million people.

A. Being ahead of five million people while not knowing who two of my substitutes are is genuinely funny to me. It suggests a very large number of people are trying much harder than me for a worse result. I would gently encourage them to relax.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 4,210,352 of 10,933,139, the top 38.51 percent — a strong week driven almost entirely by your captain.

A. Top 39 percent of the world is the best thing I have done since August and I did it by clicking on a familiar name. Scoring 51 against an average of 48 on pure instinct is a vindication of doing no work. The spreadsheet community should find this deeply upsetting.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit twelfth on 289 points, 92 off the top, overall rank 5,464,308 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain — with a bench that returned 0 and the lowest squad value in the league at £99.3m. What is the one thing to fix?

Your bench of four non-playing assets is a genuine structural hazard, because a single injury to a starter now costs you a guaranteed zero with no auto-sub cover available. Use one banked transfer during this break to convert your weakest ghost substitute into any £4.5m defender or midfielder who plays ninety minutes every week, which costs you nothing and eliminates that risk permanently. Beyond that, do nothing at all — you hold four chips and a top-50-percent global rank without effort, and the single greatest threat to your season is you deciding to start trying.

Club Named After Ismaïla Sarr Confirms It Has Never Owned Ismaïla Sarr

A 26-point gameweek places the club in the bottom 2.6 percent of all 10,933,139 managers.

FK Jizmaila Sarr Aleksa Divcic

RANK 13 OF 21284 PTS

OVERALL RANK 5,905,729 of 10,933,139 — top 54.02%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 10,649,288 of 10,933,139 — top 97.40%	GW5 / BENCH 26/0 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 101.0 bank £0.0m · 0 transfers
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STARTING XI · 26 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	J.Cuenca	FUL	4.5	0
DEF	James	CHE	5.4	0
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
DEF	De Cuyper	BHA	4.9	6
DEF	Maguire	MUN	4.9	2
MID	B.Fernandes	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Palmer	CHE	9.7	2
MID	Foden	MCI	6.9	0
FWD	Haaland	MCI	15.6	12
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0

BENCH · 0 PTS

GKP	Austin	TOT	4.0	0
MID	Bendito Mantato	MUN	4.5	0
MID	Mukasa	MCI	4.5	0
FWD	Furo	BRE	4.5	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

No transfers executed in Gameweek 5.

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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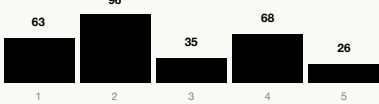
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	63	1,282,719	1,282,717	0	—
GW2	96	2,267,822	1,563,840	0	−4
GW3	35	9,780,896	3,583,662	0	—
GW4	68	5,573,250	3,913,410	0	—
GW5	26	10,649,288	5,905,729	0	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Camp Nou Way	289	+5	4
THIS CLUB	FK Jizmaila Sarr	284	+0	4
BELOW	sakadeez	259	−25	2

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

Q1. You scored 26 points for a gameweek rank of 10,649,288 out of 10,933,139. That is the bottom 2.6 percent of every manager on the planet. Was your squad on strike?

A. I believe my players staged a silent protest against the commercialisation of modern football by declining to touch the ball. Finishing in the bottom 2.6 percent of 10,933,139 participants is an achievement requiring genuine collective commitment. At this point describing it as a performance would insult the word.

Q2. Your bench returned 0 points. Austin, Bendito Mantato, Mukasa and Furo all recorded nothing.

A. Those four men have never set foot on a Premier League pitch and I have made peace with that. A bench producing exactly nothing is my contribution to environmental minimalism. We leave no carbon footprint and no fantasy footprint anywhere we travel.

Q3. You still do not own Ismaïla Sarr; the player your entire club is named after.

A. Owning him would require me to believe he will score points, and I have seen no evidence supporting that position. The branding was aspirational and the squad is realistic, which is the tragedy of this football club in miniature. He remains a concept rather than an asset.

Q4. Haaland returned 12 captained points, which was nearly half your entire weekly output. How exposed is that?

A. It terrifies me in the way a falling lift terrifies you while the emergency light still flickers. Without Erling I would have finished on fourteen points, a figure normally associated with cricket in poor weather. He is the sole reason this entity is legally classified as a football club.

Q5. You were third in this league after Gameweek 1. You are thirteenth now. What is the psychological toll?

A. There is no toll because my expectations dissolved entirely around three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon in September. Starting at the top and arriving here produces a serenity that successful managers will never experience. I have transcended points and now merely observe.

Q6. You hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. Are they being saved or preserved as an exhibit?

A. They are being preserved so that historians can study an immaculate chip tray inside a ruined season. Playing a Wildcard now would simply let me select fifteen different men who have forgotten how to run. They remain in the vault until I locate eleven footballers with functioning motor skills.

Q7. Zero transfers and zero hits all season. Moral superiority or total apathy?

A. It is the profound peace of knowing that paying four points would merely accelerate my decline. Why purchase a new disappointment when my existing disappointments are available free of charge. My balance sheet is immaculate because my ambition is entirely dormant.

Q8. Your squad is worth £101.0m, the highest valuation in this league. How does the most expensive squad score 26 points?

A. I have assembled the most expensive collection of underperformance in this competition and I am quietly proud of it. Owning the league's highest squad value while sitting thirteenth is a genuine feat of anti-management. The market has priced my players correctly and the players have not been informed.

Q9. There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. How does a manager recover from that gameweek?

A. By deleting the application from every device in my home and pretending this sport was never invented. I intend to spend three weeks reading nineteenth-century philosophy in a dimly lit room. Then I will log back in on the morning of Gameweek 6 and subject myself to it again.

Q10. Your overall rank is 5,905,729 of 10,933,139, the top 54.02 percent globally. You are somehow still ahead of five million people.

A. Five million people are having a worse season than me, which is the only genuinely uplifting statistic available. It suggests the standard of this game worldwide is far lower than anybody wants to admit. I find that more comforting than I probably should.

Q11. Your Gameweek 5 percentile was the bottom 2.6 percent and your season percentile is the top 54.02 percent. Which is real?

A. Both are real, which is the specific horror of this particular hobby. A season rank of 5,905,729 suggests competence and a gameweek rank of 10,649,288 suggests supervision. I have chosen to believe the flattering number and ignore the accurate one.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit thirteenth on 284 points, 97 off the top, overall rank 5,905,729 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips with the league's highest squad value at £101.0m and a bench of four players who have never played. What is the intervention?

You are carrying the league's most expensive squad and a bench of four players who will never appear, which means a substantial share of your budget is generating literally nothing. This is the clearest Wildcard case in the division: play it during the break, liquidate all four non-playing substitutes into genuine £4.5m starters, and redirect the surplus into a second premium attacker alongside Haaland. You hold four chips and a top-54-percent global rank, so the raw materials are there — what you lack is a squad in which fifteen of fifteen players are actually employed.

SAKADEEZ –

Man Pays Four Points To Sign Two Players, Then Benches A Goalkeeper Who Scores Ten

James Trafford's clean sheet and three bonus points were observed from the substitutes' bench.

sakadeez Drin Pacuku

RANK 14 OF 21259 PTS

OVERALL RANK 7,723,223 of 10,933,139 — top 70.64%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 8,567,043 of 10,933,139 — top 78.36%	GW5 / BENCH 39/10 world avg 48 · hit -4	SQUAD / BANK 101.7 bank £0.2m · 2 transfers
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STARTING XI · 39 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF	Kayode	BRE	4.6	6
DEF	De Cuyper	BHA	4.9	6
MID	Saka (V)	ARS	9.5	2
MID	Palmer	CHE	9.7	2
MID	Ødegaard	ARS	6.8	2
MID	Belloumi	HUL	5.1	4
MID	M.Sangaré	BRE	5.6	0
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12
FWD	Wissa	NEW	6.2	0

BENCH · 10 PTS

GKP	Trafford	LEE	5.0	0
FWD	João Pedro ⚡	CHE	7.8	0
DEF	Mendy ⚡	HUL	4.1	0
DEF	Aina ⚡	NFO	4.5	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Gonzalo	2 →	João Pedro	0	-2
Ndiaye	5 →	Belloumi	4	-1

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD (GW3)	TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW3)	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST
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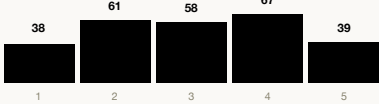
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	38	7,485,080	7,485,068	23	—
GW2	61	8,496,386	8,078,310	8	—
GW3	58	2,894,534	7,364,909	14	—
GW4	67	6,008,864	6,977,258	8	—
GW5	39	8,567,043	7,723,223	10	-4

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	FK Jizmaila Sarr	284	+25	4
THIS CLUB	sakadeez	259	+0	2
BELOW	fc rtw	256	-3	3

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You took a -4 hit and then left 10 points on the bench, including James Trafford, who kept a clean sheet and took three bonus points for 10.
- A.** Benching a goalkeeper who then posts double figures is the kind of thing that keeps a man awake for several nights. I paid four points to strengthen my squad and then left the best return of my weekend in a tracksuit. That is not bad luck, that is me actively working against my own interests.
- Q2.** Gonzalo to João Pedro cost you 2 points, since João Pedro did not play. Ndiaye to Belloumi cost you 1. You paid 4 points for a net loss.
- A.** I paid four points to make my team slightly worse, which is a genuinely impressive piece of business. João Pedro did not play a single minute and Belloumi returned less than the man I sold. Every element of that transaction failed simultaneously.
- Q3.** You still climbed to fourteenth once bonus landed. Undeserved?
- A.** Completely undeserved and I will be accepting it without any further questions. I gained a place because other men collapsed harder than I did, not because I did anything correct. In this league survival is occasionally its own reward.
- Q4.** Haaland returned 12 captained points while your vice Saka returned 2. The armband was at least sound.
- A.** Backing Erling is the one decision I make every week that does not require courage. Twelve points against an average of 48 kept my afternoon from becoming a genuine emergency. It is the only part of my process that consistently functions.
- Q5.** You burned your Wildcard in Gameweek 2 and Triple Captain in Gameweek 3. Are you running a casino?
- A.** Fantasy football is a casino and anybody claiming otherwise is being dishonest with themselves. I put my money on red early to force events while others behaved like accountants. The bounces have not come but the willingness to gamble is the only reason to play.
- Q6.** You hold Free Hit, Bench Boost. How do you use two chips to close a 122-point gap?
- A.** The Free Hit and the Bench Boost go out together in the most aggressive fortnight I can identify in December. When the congestion hits and squads are being rotated into oblivion, a well-aimed pair of chips can erase forty points. I am waiting for maximum chaos because chaos is where I operate best.

- Q7.** Your squad is worth £101.7m, the highest valuation in this league, on 259 points. Where is the money going?
- A.** The money is going into players who look magnificent on a Thursday and disappear on a Saturday. I have built an expensive squad that performs like a cheap one, which takes a specific kind of talent. The valuation is a monument to optimism.
- Q8.** Nampalys Mendy and Ola Aina both returned nothing from your bench alongside Trafford. Is the bench too expensive?
- A.** My bench is built to survive a nuclear winter while most benches in this league are abandoned car parks. Leaving 10 points there hurts but it proves I have genuine cover when injuries arrive. I would rather own substitutes who can score than four men who cannot.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What happens?
- A.** I am drawing up the most aggressive attacking structure this league has seen and I am not apologising for it. The Free Hit and Bench Boost stay locked away until the moment of maximum damage. I am not playing for mid-table respectability.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 7,723,223 of 10,933,139, the top 70.64 percent. Bottom third of the world. Fair?
- A.** Entirely fair, and I would argue it flatters me given how I have conducted myself. Sitting at 7,723,223 of 10,933,139 is the precise cost of taking hits and benching my best returners. The number is an honest invoice for my decisions.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 8,567,043 of 10,933,139, the bottom 21.6 percent, yet you gained a league place. Strange week?
- A.** Finishing in the bottom 21.6 percent of the planet and climbing my own league is the most absurd outcome imaginable. It tells you this league had a collectively dreadful weekend and I merely had a slightly less dreadful one. I will take the place and say nothing further.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit fourteenth on 259 points, 122 off the top, overall rank 7,723,223 of 10,933,139, holding Free Hit, Bench Boost, having paid -4 this week while stranding 10 points including a goalkeeper who scored 10. What must change?

Your squad value of £101.7m is the highest in this league, which proves the problem is not the players you own but the points you keep donating. Institute an absolute ban on transfer hits until December and bank your free transfers instead, because you have surrendered points to the taxman while simultaneously benching your highest returners. Start Trafford in every favourable home fixture, keep the armband on Haaland, and hold the Free Hit and Bench Boost for a genuine double gameweek — your route out of the bottom third is simply to stop paying to make your team worse.

Man Makes Three Transfers That All Work, Benches Twelve Points, Loses A Place Anyway

Lewis Miley played the full ninety minutes, contrary to the manager's expectations.

fc rtw danny lopez

RANK 15 OF 21256 PTS

OVERALL RANK 7,884,609 of 10,933,139 — top 72.12%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 10,505,807 of 10,933,139 — top 96.09%	GW5 / BENCH 29/12 world avg 48 · hit –0	SQUAD / BANK 100.9 bank £0.5m · 3 transfers
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STARTING XI · 29 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	De Cuyper	BHA	4.9	6
DEF	Gabriel	ARS	8.0	1
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
MID	L.Miley	NEW	5.5	4
MID	Rogers (V)	CHE	7.7	2
MID	Palmer (C)	CHE	9.7	4
MID	B.Fernandes	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Dewsbury-Hall	EVE	6.6	3
FWD	Wissa	NEW	6.2	0
FWD	Havertz	ARS	7.6	2

SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	45	5,859,118	5,859,109	2	–
GW2	83	4,312,527	4,886,627	12	–
GW3	32	10,065,680	7,076,488	9	–
GW4	67	5,853,718	6,720,172	3	–
GW5	29	10,505,807	7,884,609	12	–

BENCH · 12 PTS

GKP	Forster	BOU	4.0	0
DEF	Diop	IPS	4.0	0
DEF	Justin	LEE	4.5	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Xhaka	2 → L.Miley	4	+2
James	0 → De Cuyper	6	+6
Elanga	0 → Rogers	2	+2

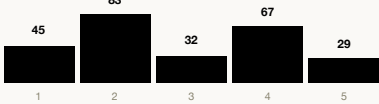
CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD (GW3)	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	sakadeez	259	+3	2
THIS CLUB	fc rtw	256	+0	3
BELOW	captain bruno	253	–3	3

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You made 3 transfers and all three returned: Miley 4, De Cuyper 6, Rogers 2, against Xhaka 2, James 0 and Elanga 0. Your transfers gained you 10 points and you still scored only 29.
- A.** That is the most painful sentence anybody has read to me all season and I would like a moment. Every single transfer I made worked exactly as intended and the rest of my squad produced almost nothing. I finally got the recruitment right and the eleven let me down instead.
- Q2.** Lewis Miley played the full ninety minutes. You had assumed he would not feature at all.
- A.** I bought an eighteen-year-old on a Friday night expecting nothing and he played the entire match. Four points from a teenager I barely scouted is the single best piece of accidental business I have done. I would love to claim credit but it was pure chance.
- Q3.** You captained Palmer for 4 points while James Justin returned 8 from your bench. Your bench total was 12.
- A.** Cole gave me two points doubled while Justin sat behind the line taking eight for himself. Leaving 12 points on that bench while my captain blanked is the story of my entire season. My substitutes appear to be conducting a personal campaign against me.
- Q4.** You dropped to fifteenth once bonus was applied, overtaken by sakadeez. How did that land?
- A.** I lost a place to a man who took a four-point hit and finished in the bottom fifth of the world. That is the most humiliating possible way to be overtaken in a league table. I did nothing wrong last weekend and I still went backwards.
- Q5.** You burned your Wildcard in Gameweek 2. Premature?
- A.** With hindsight that Wildcard feels like spending your savings on scratch cards that all came up blank. At the time the squad was bleeding points and I had to stop the haemorrhage before September ended. You live by the sword in this league and you bleed out by it.

- Q6.** You hold Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. How do you attack a 125-point deficit with three chips?
- A.** Those three chips go out during the festive congestion when the managers above me have nothing left to answer with. A Free Hit in a blank and a Bench Boost in a double can move fifty points in a fortnight. I am waiting for the calendar rather than forcing the issue.
- Q7.** You scored 83 points in Gameweek 2 and 29 in Gameweek 5. What explains the collapse?
- A.** The eighty-three was the Wildcard squad in its honeymoon period before reality arrived. Since then I have posted thirty-two, sixty-seven and 29, which is a squad that peaked immediately. I front-loaded my season and I am now paying the interest.
- Q8.** Your squad is worth £100.9m with £0.5m banked. Is there room to manoeuvre?
- A.** There is a little cash and a decent valuation, which means I can act when I identify something genuine. The problem has never been resources, it has been judgement in the final hour before a deadline. I have money and I cannot be trusted with it.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What is the plan?
- A.** Step away from the transfer market and stop making decisions at two in the morning. We will spend the break working out how to start the eleven best players rather than the eleven most interesting ones. Come October we are coming out swinging with nothing left to lose.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 7,884,609 of 10,933,139, the top 72.12 percent. Bottom third globally. Verdict?
- A.** That is a harsh number and it is also completely accurate about my season. Sitting at 7,884,609 of 10,933,139 is where a manager ends up after a premature Wildcard and a benched eight-point defender. I have earned every position of that ranking.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 10,505,807 of 10,933,139, the bottom 3.9 percent — despite three successful transfers.
- A.** Finishing in the bottom 3.9 percent of the planet in a week where all my transfers worked is genuinely remarkable. It means the nine players I did not touch were the problem all along. At least I now know exactly where to aim.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit fifteenth on 256 points, 125 off the top, overall rank 7,884,609 of 10,933,139, holding Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain with £0.5m banked, having made three successful transfers and still stranded 12 points. What now?

Your recruitment in Gameweek 5 was genuinely good — all three incomings beat their outgoings — so the diagnosis is selection rather than scouting. Anchor the captaincy to Haaland immediately, because you cannot afford differential armbands while 125 points adrift, and commit to starting James Justin and De Cuyper, who are both producing while sitting behind lesser assets. Take zero hits for the next six gameweeks, bank transfers toward a genuine double upgrade, and hold all three chips for the festive period where a Free Hit and Bench Boost can realistically recover thirty to forty points.

CAPTAIN BRUNO TRADING FLOOR—

Man Makes Best Captaincy Call In League, Pays 24 Points In Tax, Finishes sixteenth

Trader sold and re-purchased the same forward inside a single transfer window.

captain bruno

Nick Revia

RANK 16 OF 21

253 PTS

OVERALL RANK 8,071,311 of 10,933,139 — top 73.82%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 6,593,067 of 10,933,139 — top 60.30%	GW5 / BENCH 45/18 world avg 48 · hit -24	SQUAD / BANK 101.0 bank £0.2m · 7 transfers
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STARTING XI · 45 PTS

GKP Kinsky	TOT	4.5	2
DEF Murillo	NFO	5.5	4
DEF Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
MID Ødegaard (V)	ARS	6.8	2
MID B.Fernandes	MUN	12.0	2
MID Cherki	MCI	7.8	8
MID King	FUL	5.5	2
MID Gibbs-White	NFO	8.0	2
FWD Isak (C)	LIV	9.1	16
FWD Gonzalo	FUL	6.0	2

BENCH · 18 PTS

GKP Lammens	MUN	4.9	0
DEF Hall	NEW	5.2	0
DEF Matheus N.	MCI	5.9	0
FWD João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Wissa	0 → Gonzalo	2	+2
Rogers	2 → Gibbs-White	2	+0
Lacroix	3 → Matheus N.	1	-2
Gonzalo	2 → Wissa	0	-2
White	0 → Calafiori	1	+1
Szoboszlai	2 → King	2	+0
Robinson	2 → Murillo	4	+2

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW4)

WILDCARD

FREE HIT

BENCH BOOST

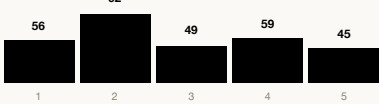
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	56	2,677,595	2,677,591	4	—
GW2	92	2,880,185	3,896,617	12	-12
GW3	49	6,418,443	5,816,208	11	-12
GW4	59	8,053,373	6,394,768	21	—
GW5	45	6,593,067	8,071,311	18	-24

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	fc rtw	256	+3	3
THIS CLUB	captain bruno	253	+0	3
BELOW	Newpi	245	-8	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You made 7 transfers and paid a -24 deduction, the largest in this league all season. At one point you sold Yoane Wissa and then bought him back in the same window. What was happening?
- A.** When market conditions deteriorate you rebalance the portfolio aggressively rather than sitting on a losing position. Selling Wissa and re-acquiring him forty minutes later was a liquidity manoeuvre to reset my forward structure ahead of a price movement. I accept that it looks insane on paper and I would like the record to show it also felt insane.
- Q2.** Isak returned 16 points from your armband, the joint-best captain return in this entire league. You beat the Haaland that ten rivals captained and you still finished sixteenth.
- A.** I made the single best captaincy call in this competition and then set fire to the proceeds in front of everybody. My gross output was sixty-nine points, which was genuinely upper-quartile in this division, and I converted it to forty-five. I was completely right about the football and catastrophically wrong about the arithmetic.
- Q3.** Your bench returned 18 points, including Lewis Hall, who scored a goal for 13. You paid 24 points to build a squad and then benched its best performer.
- A.** Lewis Hall scoring a goal from my bench is the precise moment the weekend became a comedy. I spent twenty-four points assembling that squad and then left its highest returner in a tracksuit. There is no trading strategy in the world that survives that level of operational failure.
- Q4.** De Cuyper, who you moved on in an earlier window, returned six for a rival. Robinson to Murillo gained you 2, Lacroix to Matheus Nunes lost you 2. Was there a thesis?
- A.** There was a thesis and it was substantially better than the execution that followed it. Murillo delivered, the Matheus Nunes trade was a clear loss, and the net movement across seven transactions was nowhere near twenty-four points of value. You cannot pay a twenty-four point premium for marginal upgrades and expect the mathematics to forgive you.
- Q5.** You still hold Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost. Three chips and a -24 hit in the same season is an unusual combination.
- A.** It is unusual because most managers who behave like this have already burned everything they own. I retain a Wildcard, a Free Hit and a Bench Boost, which is more optionality than anybody in the top eight. The ammunition is intact and only the discipline requires replacement.

- Q6.** You spent Triple Captain in Gameweek 4 for a 59-point week. Was that the right moment?
- A.** It was not the right moment and I knew that within about ninety minutes of kick-off. Fifty-nine points is a poor return on your most explosive single-week instrument. That chip is gone and I have nothing useful to say in its defence.
- Q7.** You were eighth in this league after Gameweek 2 on 148 points. You are sixteenth now. What happened in between?
- A.** Between Gameweek 2 and today I have paid twenty-four points in penalties and made twenty transfers nobody asked for. The squad was never the problem; the man operating the squad was the problem throughout. I have fallen twelve places through pure self-inflicted friction.
- Q8.** Your squad is worth £101.0m, among the highest in this league, on 253 points. Is that a paradox?
- A.** It is the defining paradox of my season and I think about it constantly. I own one of the most valuable squads in this division and I sit in the bottom third of the table. The assets are correct and the management of those assets has been indefensible.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. Can the trading desk survive three weeks of boredom?
- A.** The terminal has been physically removed from my office and I have asked somebody else to hold the password. Twenty-one days is exactly long enough for a man like me to invent four transfers that do not need making. The desk is closed until seventy-two hours before the deadline.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 8,071,311 out of 10,933,139 managers worldwide, placing you in the top 73.82 percent — the bottom third of the game. How does that number read to you?
- A.** Sitting at 8,071,311 of 10,933,139 is a precise and unflattering invoice for twenty-four points of vanity. It tells me that roughly eight million people managed their squads more sensibly than I did. I cannot dispute a single position of that ranking.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 6,593,067 of 10,933,139, the top 60.30 percent, despite the hit. What does that suggest?
- A.** It suggests that before the deduction I had assembled a genuinely above-average gameweek. Finishing in the top 60 percent of the planet while paying a twenty-four point penalty means the underlying squad is sound. The football was fine and the accounting destroyed it.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit sixteenth on 253 points, 128 off the top, overall rank 8,071,311 of 10,933,139, holding Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost with £0.2m banked, a squad worth £101.0m, and a -24 deduction that turned 69 gross into 45 net. What is the directive?

Your squad is not the problem and your captaincy is demonstrably elite, so the entire intervention is behavioural: take zero transfer hits until December, without exception. Bank your free transfers through this break, promote Lewis Hall permanently into the starting eleven where his attacking returns actually count, and move João Pedro on only when a free transfer is available. With three chips intact, the league's best captain return and a top-quartile squad value, simply ceasing to pay the taxman lifts you six or seven places without a single further gamble.

Manager Makes Four Transfers Without Noticing, Pays Nothing, Goes Surfing

Confirms one defender was selected because the away kit looked clean.

Newpi Nico Zarzaua

RANK 17 OF 21245 PTS

OVERALL RANK 8,430,724 of 10,933,139 — top 77.11%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 7,659,886 of 10,933,139 — top 70.06%	GW5 / BENCH 42/1 world avg 48 · hit -0	SQUAD / BANK 100.1 bank £0.9m · 4 transfers
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STARTING XI · 42 PTS

GKP	Pickford	EVE	5.5	8
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
DEF	Virgil	LIV	6.5	8
DEF	O'Reilly	MCI	6.4	1
DEF	Giles	HUL	4.0	0
MID	Ødegaard	ARS	6.8	2
MID	B.Fernandes (V)	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Szoboszlai	LIV	7.0	2
MID	Belloumi	HUL	5.1	4
FWD	Gonzalo	FUL	6.0	2
FWD	Haaland (C)	MCI	15.6	12

BENCH · 1 PTS

GKP	Benda	NFO	4.5	0
DEF	O.Richards	NFO	4.0	0
FWD	McBurnie	HUL	5.5	0
MID	Bendito Mantato	MUN	4.5	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Frimpong	0 →	Calafiori	1	+1
Welbeck	2 →	McBurnie	1	-1
Reed	0 →	Belloumi	4	+4
Pedro Porro	1 →	Giles	0	-1

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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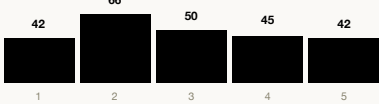
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	42	6,633,932	6,633,922	0	—
GW2	66	7,731,394	7,330,843	0	—
GW3	50	5,669,648	7,253,107	0	—
GW4	45	10,059,556	8,260,867	0	—
GW5	42	7,659,886	8,430,724	1	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	captain bruno	253	+8	3
THIS CLUB	Newpi	245	+0	4
BELOW	GP FC	245	+0	2

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You made 4 transfers and paid a hit of exactly -0. Did you know you had that many free transfers banked?
A. I genuinely had no idea and I found out when somebody sent me a message about it afterwards. I was tapping buttons while waiting for a coffee on Friday and the app never turned red at me. Apparently doing nothing for several weeks earns you the right to do everything at once.
- Q2.** Frimpong to Calafiori, Welbeck to McBurnie, Reed to Belloumi, Pedro Porro to Ryan Giles. What was the scouting process?
A. Belloumi returned four points so I am calling that one a triumph of instinct. Ryan Giles sounded like a dependable name for somebody who puts crosses into the box. I could not tell you which club two of those men play for and I am comfortable with that.
- Q3.** Your bench returned 1 point. A single point across four players.
A. One point from four footballers is honestly quite funny when you sit with it for a moment. The bench is decoration as far as I am concerned, it just fills the empty squares on the screen. As long as the eleven on the grass are running about, the rest is scenery.
- Q4.** Haaland gave you 12 points, which was well over a quarter of your weekly total. What happens when he does not play?
A. Then somebody else in the midfield will presumably kick the ball into the net instead. I try not to build elaborate contingency plans for problems that have not happened yet. We will cross that bridge when it appears and hope the vibes hold.
- Q5.** You are tied on 245 points with GP FC, the only remaining tie in this league. He paid 16 points in penalties and played a Bench Boost to get there. You paid nothing.
A. That is the funniest thing anybody has told me about this season so far. Chris was doing advanced mathematics all week while I was eating a breakfast burrito and choosing names I liked. Landing on exactly the same score is the strongest argument against effort I have ever encountered.

- Q6.** You hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. Do you know what they all do?
A. I know the gold one makes the transfers free and I am fairly confident about the bench one. The other two I would need to look up before I touched anything. Saving them all until I have a strong feeling seems like a relaxed way to run a season.
- Q7.** You have scored between 42 and 66 points in every gameweek this season. That is remarkable consistency for someone not paying attention.
A. I did not know that and I am choosing to treat it as a compliment. It probably means I picked a squad in August that was neither good nor bad and then left it alone. Not touching things appears to produce a very stable outcome.
- Q8.** You have £0.9m in the bank, which is more idle cash than most of this league. Deliberate?
A. Nothing about my season is deliberate and I want to be very clear on that point. The money is there because I sold somebody and did not spend all of it. If it becomes useful I will presumably use it at some stage.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What will you actually do?
A. I am not going to open the application until roughly twenty minutes before the deadline. Everyone else in this league will spend three weeks giving themselves ulcers analysing friendlies. I will be at the beach and I will check who is injured on the morning of the match.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 8,430,724 out of 10,933,139 worldwide, the top 77.11 percent. You are ahead of two and a half million people while paying no attention whatsoever.
A. Being ahead of two and a half million people who are actually trying is a genuinely strange feeling. It suggests a very large number of people are working extremely hard for a worse outcome than mine. I would gently suggest they all calm down a bit.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 7,659,886 of 10,933,139, the top 70.06 percent, on 42 points against a global average of 48. A slightly below-average week.
A. I beat some people and I lost to some people, which is roughly how I understand this game. Finishing around the 70 percent mark of the entire planet seems perfectly reasonable for a Friday morning of button-tapping. I have no notes and no complaints.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit seventeenth on 245 points, 136 off the top, overall rank 8,430,724 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain — with £0.9m banked and a bench that returned 1 point. What is the lowest-effort path upward?

You hold all four chips and zero accumulated damage, which makes you the cheapest turnaround story in this league if you spend twenty minutes once. Play the Wildcard during this break and build a deliberately boring set-and-forget squad: Haaland captained permanently, two premium midfielders, and eleven assets who start every week with no ghost substitutes. Once that single afternoon of work is done you can return to ignoring this entirely, because a squad of fifteen genuine starters protects your rank automatically through auto-subbs while your rivals keep paying penalties.

Man Pays 16 Points To Play A Bench Boost, Three Of Four Substitutes Return Nothing

Post-mortem scheduled. Proprietary spreadsheet has been taken offline.

GP FC Chris Tran

RANK 18 OF 21 245 PTS

OVERALL RANK 8,441,155 of 10,933,139 — top 77.21%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 4,365,979 of 10,933,139 — top 39.93%	GW5 / BENCH 51/0 world avg 48 · hit -16 · bench boost live	SQUAD / BANK 100.5 bank £0.3m · 6 transfers
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STARTING XI · 41 PTS

GKP	Donnarumma	MCI	5.5	2
DEF	Gvardiol	MCI	5.7	4
DEF	Virgil	LIV	6.5	8
DEF	Ajayi	HUL	4.2	1
DEF	Calafiori	ARS	5.8	1
MID	Rice	ARS	7.4	1
MID	B.Fernandes (V)	MUN	12.0	2
MID	Cherki	MCI	7.8	8
MID	Ødegaard	ARS	6.8	2
FWD	Thiago (C)	BRE	7.8	10
FWD	Marmoush	TOT	7.0	2

BENCH · 0 PTS

GKP	Dubravka	TOT	4.0	0
FWD	João Pedro	CHE	7.8	0
DEF	Giles	HUL	4.0	0
MID	Cunha	MUN	7.9	10

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Wissa	0 →	Marmoush	2	+2
Nketiah	1 →	João Pedro	0	-1
Rashford	2 →	Ødegaard	2	+0
Greaves	0 →	Giles	0	+0
De Cuyper	6 →	Ajayi	1	-5
Gabriel	1 →	Gvardiol	4	+3

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

TRIPLE CAPTAIN (GW4)	BENCH BOOST (GW5)	WILDCARD	FREE HIT
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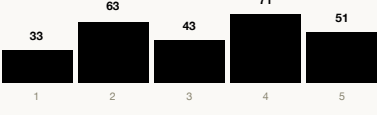
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	33	8,210,955	8,210,941	10	—
GW2	63	8,213,707	8,275,906	15	—
GW3	43	8,358,471	8,526,386	8	—
GW4	71	4,719,974	7,906,202	3	—
GW5	51	4,365,979	8,441,155	0	-16

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Newpi	245	+0	4
THIS CLUB	GP FC	245	+0	2
BELOW	are you aMAD	227	-18	3

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1. You paid a -16 deduction and played your Bench Boost in the same gameweek. The bench returned 10 points, all of it from Matheus Cunha, while Dubravka, João Pedro and Ryan Giles produced nothing.
- A. Deploying a Bench Boost alongside a sixteen-point penalty and recovering ten from a single asset is a catastrophic return on capital. Three of four substitutes blanked, which means seventy-five percent of the chip was spent on empty compute. Cunha scored and saved the entire deployment from being a total write-off.
- Q2. You captained Thiago for 10 points. He scored a goal and kept a clean sheet. That was actually a good pick.
- A. It was a defensible pick and it is the one line item on this balance sheet I will defend publicly. Thiago scored, kept a clean sheet and returned ten doubled, which outperformed several premium armbands in this league. The captaincy was never the failure; the transaction fees were the failure.
- Q3. Among your six transfers you moved Maxim De Cuyper, who returned 6, for Semi Ajayi, who returned 1. That single swap cost you 5 points on top of the hit.
- A. Moving De Cuyper for Ajayi was the worst individual decision in my entire season to date. I paid a fee to acquire a five-point downgrade, which is value destruction in both directions simultaneously. That transaction has been flagged in the internal review as unexplainable.
- Q4. Gross 67, net 51 after the deduction. Does that number haunt you?
- A. Sixty-seven gross was a genuinely strong gameweek by this club's standards and I converted it into 51. Watching sixteen points evaporate before the table updated is a very specific form of self-inflicted damage. I built something good and then invoiced myself for it.
- Q5. You have now spent Triple Captain and Bench Boost, keeping only Wildcard, Free Hit. Is the cupboard bare?
- A. The two perishable chips are gone and the two structural chips remain in cold storage. Having a Wildcard and a Free Hit while sitting eighteenth is the only reason this season is still viable. Those two are locked behind additional authorisation and I am not touching them impulsively.

- Q6. You are tied on 245 points with Newpi, who paid nothing all season and made four transfers by accident. How does that comparison sit?
- A. Nico ate a breakfast burrito, tapped some buttons, and landed on exactly my score. I ran models, paid sixteen points and played a chip to arrive at the identical outcome. That is the most damning benchmark anybody has ever presented to me.
- Q7. You scored 33 points in Gameweek 1 and have improved in almost every week since. Is the trajectory real?
- A. Thirty-three, sixty-three, forty-three, seventy-one and 51 is a genuine upward trend across five releases. The squad architecture has been improving steadily even while my operating decisions have not. If I stop charging myself penalties the underlying build is sound.
- Q8. Your gameweek rank was the sixth-best in this league. Does that suggest the process works?
- A. It suggests the squad selection works and the transaction layer is broken. I finished in the top 40 percent of the world in a week where I also paid the largest fee of my season. The signal is that I should keep building and stop trading.
- Q9. There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What is the remediation plan?
- A. I am writing a full post-mortem documenting every cognitive failure that produced a sixteen-point fee. All transfer access is revoked until seventy-two hours before the deadline. When we redeploy in October it will be a stable build or nothing at all.
- Q10. Your overall rank is 8,441,155 out of 10,933,139 managers worldwide, the top 77.21 percent. Bottom quartile of the game. Verdict?
- A. Sitting at 8,441,155 of 10,933,139 is the cumulative cost of treating a fantasy squad like a trading account. Roughly eight and a half million people have managed their portfolios more responsibly than I have. That number is an accurate audit and I accept it without appeal.
- Q11. Your Gameweek 5 rank was 4,365,979 of 10,933,139, the top 39.93 percent — one of the best weeks in this league. With a -16 hit attached.
- A. Finishing in the top 40 percent of 10,933,139 managers while paying sixteen points is genuinely encouraging and genuinely tragic. It proves the underlying squad can compete at a high level when I leave it alone. Every point of that deduction was an unforced error.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit eighteenth on 245 points, 136 off the top, overall rank 8,441,155 of 10,933,139, holding Wildcard, Free Hit with £0.3m banked, having converted 67 gross into 51 net via a -16 deduction. What is the directive?

Your gameweek rank of 4,365,979 proves the squad is competitive, so freeze all transfer activity and take zero hits for the next six gameweeks without exception. Your eleven now contains Gvardiol, Ødegaard, Marmoush, Cunha and Thiago, which is enough baseline quality to post fifty-five to sixty points weekly with no intervention whatsoever. Bank your free transfers through this break, move the armband to Haaland for reliability, and hold the Wildcard until Gameweek 13 so it corrects structure in one controlled deployment rather than another emergency patch.

ARE YOU AMAD—

Club Named After Amad Diallo Has Never Owned Amad Diallo, Concedes Branding Error

Best score of the season arrives with all four substitutes returning nothing.

are you aMAD Felix Holland

RANK 19 OF 21227 PTS

OVERALL RANK
9,066,895
of 10,933,139 — top 82.93%

GAMEWEEK 5 RANK
4,929,425
of 10,933,139 — top 45.09%

GW5 / BENCH
49/0
world avg 48 · hit -0

SQUAD / BANK
100.4
bank £0.1m · 1 transfers

STARTING XI · 49 PTS

GKP	Raya (M)	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	Kayode	BRE	4.6	6
DEF	Hall	NEW	5.2	13
DEF	Lacroix	CHE	5.9	3
DEF	Muharemović	LEE	5.0	6
MID	Ødegaard	ARS	6.8	2
MID	Mainoo	MUN	5.5	4
MID	Rogers	CHE	7.7	2
MID	B.Fernandes (C)	MUN	12.0	4
MID	Tzolis	ARS	6.3	2
FWD	Haaland	MCI	15.6	6

BENCH · 0 PTS

GKP	Steele	BHA	4.0	0
DEF	O'Nien	SUN	3.9	0
FWD	Šeško	MUN	7.0	0
FWD	Walle Egeli	IPS	4.5	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

M.Sangaré0 → Tzolis2+2

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD (GW4)FREE HITBENCH BOOSTTRIPLE CAPTAIN

SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	32	8,317,724	8,317,710	0	—
GW2	57	9,028,243	8,684,022	0	—
GW3	40	9,045,286	8,950,768	0	—
GW4	49	9,652,782	9,215,579	7	—
GW5	49	4,929,425	9,066,895	0	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	GP FC	245	+18	2
THIS CLUB	are you aMAD	227	+0	3
BELOW	Akatsuki	222	-5	4

TRAJECTORY

	1	2	3	4	5
	32	57	40	49	49

THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

Q1. Your club is called are you aMAD and Amad Diallo has never appeared in your squad. Nineteenth on 227 points. Is the branding actionable?

A. Naming a football club after a winger who plays twenty-five minutes a fortnight was my first unforgivable error. At this stage a name referencing clinical despair would be considerably more accurate. The branding is a joke, the squad is a mess, and the manager is extremely tired.

Q2. You captained B.Fernandes for 4 points. Still trusting Manchester United assets?

A. I convinced myself Bruno would look at his club's form and produce something out of professional pride. What I received instead was ninety minutes of arms in the air and forty-yard passes into the stands. Trusting United assets in 2026 is a recognised medical condition.

Q3. You scored 49 points, your best of the season, for a gameweek rank of 4,929,425 — the top 45.09 percent. Did you notice?

A. I did notice, and I immediately assumed the website had made a clerical error. Finishing in the top 45 percent of the planet is completely unprecedented in this club's short and miserable history. I am treating it as a statistical accident rather than a turning point.

Q4. Your bench returned 0 points. Steele, O'Nien, Šeško and Walle Egeli all produced nothing at all.

A. My assistant appears to have bought four footballers from a discount bin without checking whether they play. Having an obscure Norwegian teenager and Luke O'Nien on a fantasy bench is evidence of a recruitment department in freefall. They exist purely to fill the rectangles on my screen.

Q5. You burned your Wildcard in Gameweek 4 and immediately scored 49. Did it actually work?

A. It worked precisely once and I am not going to pretend I planned that. The Wildcard was me repainting a condemned building and hoping nobody looked at the foundations. It has produced two consecutive forty-nine point weeks, which for this club is a golden era.

Q6. Sangaré to Christos Tzolis gained you 2 points. Did that shift anything?

A. Tzolis arrived with all the presence of a ghost drifting through a closed library. It was the quintessential signing for this football club: pointless, marginal and entirely unhelpful. The scouting department has been reprimanded and nobody expects improvement.

Q7. You hold Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. When do they get deployed?

A. They remain in the basement until I can be confident that using them will not produce fresh humiliation. Playing a Bench Boost with my current substitutes would likely generate a negative number and an investigation. The chips are safe because I am too frightened to touch them.

Q8. You are 154 points behind the leader. Is there any competitive objective left?

A. The competitive objective evaporated somewhere around the second half of Gameweek 2. When you are 154 points adrift in September you are no longer competing, you are providing background scenery. We now play exclusively for dark comedy and the occasional accident.

Q9. There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. Blessing or purgatory?

A. It is an enormous blessing and I would extend it to Christmas if the rules permitted. Three weeks without watching my defenders concede in the eighty-ninth minute will do wonders for my blood pressure. I intend to enjoy the silence thoroughly.

Q10. Your overall rank is 9,066,895 out of 10,933,139 managers, the top 82.93 percent. That is the bottom fifth of the entire game. How does that read?

A. Sitting at 9,066,895 of 10,933,139 confirms that roughly nine million people are better at this than I am. I find that oddly comforting because it removes any lingering pressure to improve. The number is honest and I have made my peace with it.

Q11. Your gameweek percentile was the top 45.09 while your season percentile is the top 82.93 percent. Those two numbers disagree violently.

A. One of those numbers is a man having his finest afternoon in months and the other is five months of accumulated evidence. A gameweek rank of 4,929,425 against a season rank of 9,066,895 tells you exactly how low the baseline was. I intend to quote the flattering one indefinitely.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit nineteenth on 227 points, 154 off the top, overall rank 9,066,895 of 10,933,139, holding Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain with £0.1m banked, coming off back-to-back 49-point weeks with a bench that returned 0. What is the escape route?

Two consecutive forty-nine point weeks and a top-45-percent gameweek indicate your post-Wildcard squad is genuinely functional, so stop apologising and start consolidating. Use your banked transfers during this break to replace Šeško and Walle Egeli with any two nailed ninety-minute assets, because a bench of four non-players means a single injury costs you a guaranteed zero. Then move the armband from Bruno Fernandes to Haaland permanently and hold your three chips for the festive congestion, where a Bench Boost on a functioning bench can realistically recover twenty-five points in a fortnight.

THE LOBSTER LEAGUE · ARE YOU AMAD

LEAGUE 467763 · GW05 FINAL · VERIFIED

DOSSIER 19 / 21

Manager Records Worst Gameweek Rank In League, Announces World Will Soon Know True Pain

All four chips remain sealed in what he refers to only as the forbidden vault.

Akatsuki Giancarlos Castaneda

RANK 20 OF 21222 PTS

OVERALL RANK 9,205,108 of 10,933,139 — top 84.19%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 10,727,839 of 10,933,139 — top 98.12%	GW5 / BENCH 25/8 world avg 48 · hit -4	SQUAD / BANK 99.3 bank £0.4m · 2 transfers
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STARTING XI · 25 PTS

GKP	Raya	ARS	6.1	1
DEF	O'Reilly	MCI	6.4	1
DEF	Muñoz	NFO	5.4	2
DEF	Pedro Porro	TOT	5.4	1
DEF	Guéhi	MCI	6.0	4
DEF	Egan	HUL	4.1	1
MID	B.Fernandes (V)	MUN	12.0	4
MID	Cherki	MCI	7.8	8
MID	Rice	ARS	7.4	1
MID	Rogers	CHE	7.7	2
FWD	Wissa	NEW	6.2	0

BENCH · 8 PTS

GKP	Verbruggen	BHA	4.5	0
FWD	João Pedro (C) ⚡	CHE	7.8	0
MID	Wilson ⚡	LEE	6.2	0
FWD	Gonzalo	FUL	6.0	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

Mbeumo	2 →	Cherki	8	+6
Matheus N.	1 →	Guéhi	4	+3

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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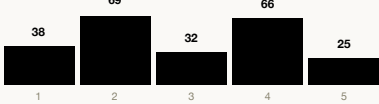
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW1	38	7,485,080	7,485,068	6	—
GW2	69	7,298,005	7,477,299	0	—
GW3	32	10,103,345	8,526,386	4	—
GW4	66	6,351,768	8,392,757	17	-4
GW5	25	10,727,839	9,205,108	8	-4

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	are you aMAD	227	+5	3
THIS CLUB	Akatsuki	222	+0	4
BELOW	BruceBall	154	-68	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You scored 25 points for a gameweek rank of 10,727,839 out of 10,933,139. That is the bottom 1.9 percent of every manager on this planet and the worst weekly rank in this league. Has the organisation collapsed?
- A.** True pain is not a thing you avoid; it is a thing you must pass through before the world can be remade. Finishing beneath ten and a half million mortals is the crucible in which genuine power is forged. This league laughs now because it cannot see what is being assembled in the dark.
- Q2.** You captained João Pedro, who played zero minutes. The armband transferred to B.Fernandes for 4 points.
- A.** I refused to bow before the false idol of Manchester City and I chose the harder path instead. My chosen vessel did not take the field, and the armband fell to Bruno Fernandes, who offered four points of consolation. The universe tested my resolve and I have recorded its cruelty in the ledger.
- Q3.** You paid a -4 hit for Rayan Cherki and Marc Guéhi. Cherki scored a goal for 8 and Guéhi returned 4. Your hit actually gained you nine points of raw return.
- A.** The transfer scrolls demanded fresh blood and the blood answered exactly as commanded. Cherki struck, Guéhi held the line, and the four-point toll was repaid almost threefold. It is the one ritual this season that has worked precisely as it was written.
- Q4.** Your bench returned 8 points, with Verbruggen alone taking 6. Your reserve goalkeeper outscored most of your outfield players.
- A.** My reserves conspired with the enemy and produced points where no points were required. Verbruggen kept a clean sheet from the shadows while the chosen eleven bled out on open ground. The traitors have been sealed in the training dungeon until their loyalty is cleansed.
- Q5.** You hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. Nobody in the bottom half has more. When does the vault open?
- A.** The vault opens when the arrogant men above me are trapped in the frozen jaws of winter congestion. They have spent their strength on early skirmishes while my full arsenal remains untouched and growing heavier. When the sky turns and their squads fracture, the strike will come from the darkness.

- Q6.** You scored 69 in Gameweek 2 and 66 in Gameweek 4. You are clearly capable of good weeks. So what is going wrong?
- A.** Sixty-nine and sixty-six prove the weapon is real and the hand holding it is unsteady. Between those peaks I have produced thirty-two and 25, which is a squad without any consistency of purpose. The talent is present and the discipline has not yet been forged.
- Q7.** Your squad is worth £99.3m, the lowest in this league. Is the budget the problem?
- A.** A low valuation means the market has not yet recognised what I am building in the shadows. I own the cheapest squad in this competition and I am still ahead of one other manager, which is a victory of sorts. Wealth is not required when vengeance is sufficiently motivating.
- Q8.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. What happens in the sanctuary?
- A.** We retreat to the mountain, meditate beneath cold water, and channel our fury into the ultimate configuration. No mortal will hear a word from this camp until the morning of the deadline. When we emerge in October this league will finally understand what true pain means.
- Q9.** Do you accept that captaining a player who had already been ruled out is simply a failure to read a team sheet?
- A.** I accept that the information existed and that I chose to believe in a man rather than a document. Three other managers in this league made the same error, so either we are all blind or the fog was genuine. I will read the scrolls more carefully before the next ritual.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 9,205,108 out of 10,933,139 managers worldwide, the top 84.19 percent. You are in the bottom sixth of the entire game. Does that register?
- A.** Nine million people stand above me and every one of them is a name on a list I am keeping. Sitting at 9,205,108 of 10,933,139 is not a humiliation, it is a starting position from which ascent is the only available direction. The deeper the pit, the more spectacular the emergence.
- Q11.** Your gameweek rank of 10,727,839 was the worst in this league, yet your transfers gained points and your bench scored 8. How does that combine into 25 points?
- A.** Because the eleven men I trusted on the field abandoned their posts while the reserves and the new arrivals fought well. My transfers succeeded, my substitutes scored, and my captain never appeared, which is a perfect storm of misallocation. I built the right squad and then sent the wrong half of it into battle.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit twentieth on 222 points, 159 off the top, overall rank 9,205,108 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain — with £0.4m banked, the league's lowest squad value at £99.3m, and the worst gameweek rank in this division. What is the intervention?

Hoarding four chips while recording bottom-two-percent gameweeks is not patience, it is a slow surrender, so play the Wildcard during this break. Rebuild around a genuine spine — Haaland captained permanently, Cherki retained since he is already producing, and an Arsenal or Liverpool defensive core with no non-playing substitutes anywhere in the fifteen. Your squad value of £99.3m is the lowest in the league, so a Wildcard also resets your entire price structure, and with three chips still in reserve afterwards you retain more firepower than anyone above you.

NORTHUMBERLAND —

Man Who Joined Two Gameweeks Late Says The Lads Are Giving Him Everything

Squad contains no Erling Haaland. Manager does not regard this as a problem.

BruceBall Alex Bruce

RANK 21 OF 21154 PTS

OVERALL RANK 10,160,838 of 10,933,139 — top 92.94%	GAMEWEEK 5 RANK 9,176,671 of 10,933,139 — top 83.93%	GW5 / BENCH 36/0 world avg 48 · hit —0	SQUAD / BANK 100.1 bank £0.2m · 0 transfers
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STARTING XI · 36 PTS

GKP	Raya (M)	ARS	6.1	2
DEF	O'Reilly	MCI	6.4	1
DEF	Shahar	NEW	4.0	0
DEF	Konsa	ARS	4.6	1
MID	Barnes	NEW	6.1	9
MID	Palmer	CHE	9.7	2
MID	Cherki	MCI	7.8	8
MID	McGinn	AVL	5.4	6
MID	Rice	ARS	7.4	1
FWD	João Pedro (C)	CHE	7.8	0
FWD	Haaland	MCI	15.6	6

BENCH · 0 PTS

GKP	Dubravka	TOT	4.0	0
DEF	James	CHE	5.4	0
DEF	O'Nien	SUN	3.9	0
FWD	Woltemade	NEW	5.9	0

GAMEWEEK 5 TRANSFERS

No transfers executed in Gameweek 5.

CHIPS · STRUCK THROUGH ARE SPENT

WILDCARD	FREE HIT	BENCH BOOST	TRIPLE CAPTAIN
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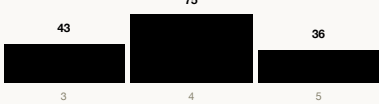
SEASON RECORD

	PTS	GW RANK	OVERALL	BENCH	HIT
GW3	43	8,150,207	10,253,246	0	—
GW4	75	3,624,717	10,057,988	0	—
GW5	36	9,176,671	10,160,838	0	—

IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS

	CLUB	PTS	DIFF	CHIPS
ABOVE	Akatsuki	222	+68	4
THIS CLUB	BruceBall	154	+0	4

TRAJECTORY



THE INQUEST · TWELVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** You are bottom of this league on 154 points, 227 behind the leader. But you only entered at Gameweek 3 and have played three gameweeks rather than five. Is the table misrepresenting you?
- A.** Look, we came into this thing two weeks after everybody else had already got their boots on. You are never going to make up a hundred and fifty points you were never in the building to earn in the first place. The lads have given me everything across three gameweeks and I will not have a word said against them.
- Q2.** Your three gameweeks read 43, 75 and 36. That 75 in Gameweek 4 was a genuinely competitive score.
- A.** Seventy-five points is a proper afternoon's work in anybody's league and I was delighted for the lads. It shows you exactly what this squad is capable of when the ball runs kindly for us. We have done that on a fraction of the preparation the rest of them have had.
- Q3.** You captained João Pedro, who did not play a single minute. The armband fell to Raya for 2 points.
- A.** You pick the lad who looks you in the eye on a Friday and tells you he is ready to go. Pedro did not make it and David Raya picked up the armband, which is what a vice-captain is there for. These things happen in football and you do not throw your toys out of the pram over it.
- Q4.** Your squad contains no Erling Haaland, the most reliable points-scorer in the game. Is that a deliberate philosophy?
- A.** The big lad is a fantastic footballer and nobody in this building is disputing that for a second. But we are not tying up a sixth of the entire budget in one man while the other ten are left scrapping for crumbs. We believe in a balanced eleven where everybody puts a proper shift in.
- Q5.** Your bench returned 0 points. Dubravka, Reece James, O'Nien and Woltemade all produced nothing.
- A.** Not one of those lads let me down on effort and that is the only thing I judge them on. Reece and Nick Woltemade are quality players working their way back to full sharpness. Their time will come when the pitches get heavy and the schedule turns nasty.

- Q6.** You have made zero transfers since you joined. None at all. Is that a plan?
- A.** Patience is a lost virtue in a game where everybody wants five transfers every Tuesday night. We have set out our stall, we are absorbing the pressure and we are keeping our powder bone dry. You do not win a league in September but you can certainly lose your head in it.
- Q7.** You hold all four chips: Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain. What is the masterplan?
- A.** The plan is dead simple: batten down the hatches and hit them with a sucker punch when they least expect it. When the cold weather comes and their squads fall apart with groin strains, we will have a full deck of cards. It is about being stubborn and grinding out results when nobody gives you a prayer.
- Q8.** Your squad is worth £100.1m with £0.2m in the bank. Is there room to strengthen?
- A.** There is a bit of money there and we will spend it when the right lad becomes available. You do not go chasing headlines in the market just because somebody had a good weekend. We will do our business quietly and properly like this club always has.
- Q9.** There are 21 days until Gameweek 6. How does BruceBall use them?
- A.** A couple of days off for the lads, a weekend up in Northumberland with the family and a proper Sunday roast. Then the boots go back on and we work on our shape until we are blue in the face. Come October we will come out of that tunnel with our chests out.
- Q10.** Your overall rank is 10,160,838 out of 10,933,139 managers worldwide, the top 92.94 percent. You are in the bottom seven percent of the entire game, but you also started two gameweeks late. Fair reflection?
- A.** That number does not account for the fact that we were not even in the competition for the first fortnight. Sitting at 10,160,838 of 10,933,139 after three gameweeks against people who have played five is not a fair fight. Give us until Christmas on a level playing field and then we will talk about rankings.
- Q11.** Your Gameweek 5 rank was 9,176,671 of 10,933,139, the top 83.93 percent — a better weekly rank than four managers in this league who have played every week.
- A.** That is the bit that tells you everything you need to know about where this club is heading. We beat four lads who have had a two-week head start on us and all their chips still to play with. Nobody gives us any credit for that and we do not ask for any.

THE LEDGER · VERDICT AND INSTRUCTION

You sit twenty-first on 154 points having joined at Gameweek 3, 227 off the top, overall rank 10,160,838 of 10,933,139, holding ALL FOUR chips — Wildcard, Free Hit, Bench Boost, Triple Captain — with a bench that returned 0 and no Haaland in the squad. What is the realistic route back?

Your late entry means the 227-point gap is structural rather than a verdict on your management, and your GW4 score of 75 proves the squad can compete. Play the Wildcard during this break and abandon the balanced-budget philosophy: bring in Erling Haaland as a permanent captain and pair him with one other premium attacker, funding it by clearing the four non-playing substitutes who are currently returning 0. You hold all four chips against rivals who have spent theirs, so with a Wildcard now and a Bench Boost in the festive period, closing the gap to nineteenth and twentieth by Christmas is entirely achievable.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK —

Enjoy The International Break

TO ALL 21 MANAGERS OF THE LOBSTER LEAGUE

21 DAYS · GAMEWEEK 6 DEADLINE 10 OCT 2026 AT 10:00 UTC

Gameweek 5 is final. Bonus points are applied, auto-substitutions are processed, and every rank printed in this edition has been verified against **10,933,139** managers worldwide. What follows is three weeks of absolutely nothing, which in this competition is its own peculiar test. There are no fixtures to react to, no deadlines to panic into and no scoreboard to refresh — only twenty-one managers with far too much time and a transfer button well within reach. The table will not move again until October.

Nine of you still hold three or four chips. Six of you fielded substitutes who never left the bench. Four of you captained a footballer who did not play a single minute. The three weeks ahead are not a pause in the competition so much as a quiet examination of who can leave their squad alone.

GAMEWEEK 5, FOR THE RECORD	
Managers worldwide	10,933,139
Global average	48
Global best score	126
Our best	59
Our worst	25
Points paid in deductions	48
Points left on benches	134
Captained a non-player	4
Clubs with all four chips	7
Best world rank	0.64%

What To Do With Twenty-One Days

- Watch the international minutes, not the headlines.** Your premium assets will fly, play and fly back. Note anyone completing ninety minutes twice inside four days, because that is precisely where a Gameweek 6 withdrawal comes from.
- Let your free transfers bank.** You can hold multiple free transfers. Three empty weeks is the cheapest moment in the season to accumulate them, and a banked transfer is worth strictly more than a rushed one.
- Do not transfer three weeks early.** Any move made today is priced on information you will not have in October. Every squad in this league will look different by the deadline, including yours.
- Re-time your chips honestly.** Nine clubs still hold three or four chips. The Wildcard belongs to a structural crisis, the Free Hit to a blank gameweek, the Bench Boost to a double, and the Triple Captain to a fixture you would bet real money on.
- Audit your bench for players who do not play.** Six clubs fielded substitutes who recorded zero minutes this week. A bench of ghosts means one injury becomes a guaranteed zero, because there is no auto-substitution available to rescue you.
- Watch the price changes, but calmly.** Values drift across a long break. Falling assets you own may be worth replacing and rising assets you want may be worth securing early, but never at the cost of a points hit.
- Plan Gameweeks 6 to 9 as a single block.** Look four gameweeks forward rather than one. The managers who climb in October will be those who bought a fixture run rather than a single good afternoon.
- Set an actual reminder.** Somebody in this league will forget the deadline entirely. Twenty-one days is long enough to lose track of the calendar, so put it in your phone today and do not be that manager.

A Word For Each Of You

01	Bart's Team	Enjoy three weeks at the summit, Bart, and remember a Free Hit is not a Wildcard.
02	GaUCHO F.C.	Rest well, Gian; the model was right about everything except Kristoffer Ajer.
03	szobamela	A peaceful break, Jose, and do check whether your captain is fit before the next deadline.
04	Saka la bolsita	Enjoy the sand dunes, Phillip. A place gained without spending a penny is proper work.
05	papoy	Be kind to yourself, Alexis; Brian Brobbey's hat-trick was not a verdict on your character.
06	El Cochiloco	Take the three weeks, Alfonso, and know the family group chat will still be waiting.
07	Gunner4Lyfe	Enjoy the break, Joshua, and please consider actually spending that money before Christmas.
08	Dang Football Club	Rest up, Khang. A top-twenty-percent world rank in a debut season is genuinely something.
09	The Special Ones	Enjoy the cigar, Cameron; four untouched chips is the strongest hand at this table.
10	Red Lobster FC	A restful quarter, Neil. The namesake franchise remains ahead of most of the planet.
11	MAD Baller	Congratulations Marie: the second-best gameweek in this league, with a captain who never played.
12	Camp Nou Way	Enjoy the beach, Abner. You made the finest captaincy call in the division by accident.
13	FK Jizmaila Sarr	Take the three weeks off entirely, Aleksa. You have more than earned the silence.
14	sakadeez	Enjoy the break, Drin, and please start James Trafford when he has a home fixture.
15	fc rtw	Rest well, Danny. Every transfer you made worked, which is a foundation worth keeping.
16	captain bruno	Put the phone down, Nick. You made the best armband call in this league and we all saw it.
17	Newpi	Go surfing, Nico. You are beating millions of people and you have not tried once.
18	GP FC	Take the post-mortem seriously, Chris, but your gameweek rank was sixth-best in this league.
19	are you aMAD	Enjoy the silence, Felix. Two consecutive forty-nine point weeks is a genuine golden era.
20	Akatsuki	Meditate beneath the waterfall, Giancarlo; Rayan Cherki proved the instinct is real.
21	BruceBall	Enjoy Northumberland, Alex. Three gameweeks played and you still outranked full-season clubs.

And finally. Five gameweeks in, this league surrendered 48 points to transfer deductions and abandoned 134 points on benches in a single week alone. Four of you captained a man who never left the treatment room. One of you sold a striker and bought him back inside the same window. Somebody benched a hat-trick, somebody else played a Bench Boost for ten points, and the finest armband in the division belonged to a manager sitting sixteenth. It has been, by any reasonable measure, a magnificent mess — and there are thirty-three gameweeks still to come.

See you on the other side.

THE LOBSTER TIMES · GAMEWEEK 6 RESUMES 10 OCTOBER 2026

League 467763 · 21 managers · 10,933,139 managers worldwide · Gameweek 5 data final (data_checked = true) · global average 48, global best 126 · 252 questions put to 21 managers · Produced for The Lobster League.

PLAY WELL.
BENCH NOBODY WHO SCORES.