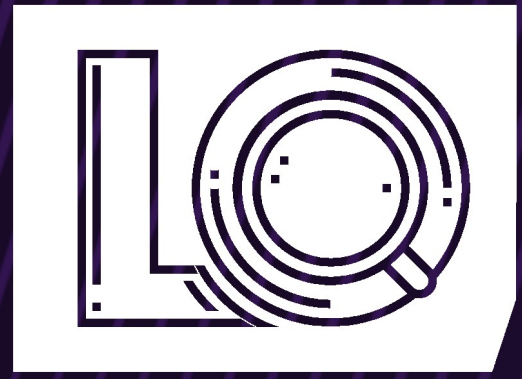


# LATTE

## QUARTERLY



Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM | **Issue Eight**

## Editor's Note

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You might have noticed the front cover which introduces the underlying theme throughout issue 8 of Latte Quarterly, love.

It changes everything. We want to know what it is. It can be endless, tainted and we can be addicted to it. We believe in a thing called it and you can't hurry it. It might tear us apart, it might be our drug.

We've taken the theme and ran with it, for sure. TedRedwood loves FM so much that he's applied many of the various aspects of the game to his real life for a week. He's our very own FM version of Craig David.

Who knew that people that play Football Manager could actually go outside too? FMAdventure combines a season of Football Manager with a running challenge across a month. Does he end up still loving both come the end?

Everyone has loved FM21, or have they? FM Grasshopper gives his expert opinion on how this version of the game has shaped up, taking a couple of key categories into account.

A collection of FM players give us their recollections of the matches they've loved the most on FM21, for various reasons. I'm sure we can all think back to one match that sticks out for us across each year we've been playing the game.

La Copa LQ returns for a second season, as three teams battle it out for FM's most coveted player v player trophy. They'd all love to win it, but only one can.

I finish up this issue by reflecting on my FM21 experience. I love it, I love it not, I love it, I love it not...

FM Samo

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### LQ Issue Eight:

#### **Applying FM Methodology To Life**

By TedRedwood

#### **Running From FM**

By fmadventure

#### **FM Strangelove**

By FM Grasshopper

#### **Fav Match of FM21**

By Various Artists

#### **Falling Out Of Love**

By FM Samo



## Applying FM methodology to life – Ted Redwood

Hi, I'm TedRedwood, and you may not remember me from informative pieces such as 'The Football Manager Index : How to profit from profits', and 'Achievement Shirker'. Having given so much to the Football Manager community over the past few years, I decided to let Football Manager guide me for a week in my day-to-day life – you'll never believe what happened!

**Monday** – I wake bright and early at 0900, as this happens to be the earliest morning time I've noticed on Football Manager without thinking it's excessive (please don't correct me). My two children complain of needing breakfast, however we're out of pain au raisin, so I need to wait until the transfer window is open to import some French talent.

Before I get to Aldi I decided to peer through the front window of a neighbours' house, and see that they're serving a continental breakfast. I knock on the door and enquire as to how much it'd cost to take the breakfast from them, there and then.

"Are you crazy? We're about to eat that! Well, if you insist, it'll be £50"

I angrily slam the door in their face, and complain on the residents forum about how expensive the price of this breakfast was. I trudge to Aldi, and buy the items for 1/10th of the price – MONEYBALL!

**Tuesday** – Today is a day that I'm in the office, unfortunately. As a Finance Manager, I'm extremely aware of the intricacies of the Income Statement, and the Statement of Financial Position (or P&L and Balance Sheet to you heathens, and I'll refer to them as such going forwards), or at least I thought I was until I became a pro at Football Manager. I've since removed the concept of capex items from the Balance Sheet, and you'd better believe that amortisation is a thing of the past. My boss calls me into his office to discuss why I've completely destroyed the notion of accurate financial reporting, to which I reply

"I didn't do it for you. Now if you don't mind I'd like to get going"

I walk out of the office, pack my things, and leave. I know I won't be welcome back, so before being removed from the premises I hire an administration grunt for £100k p/a, with a 25% yearly salary increase. That'll show the bastard.

<b>Assets</b>					
Cash	167,971	181,210	183,715	211,069	239,550
Accounts Receivable	5,100	5,904	6,567	7,117	7,539
Prepaid expenses	4,806	5,513	5,170	5,998	5,682
Inventory	7,805	9,601	9,825	10,531	11,342
Property & Equipment	45,500	42,350	40,145	38,602	37,521
Goodwill	3,580	3,460	3,910	3,870	3,850
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>234,762</b>	<b>248,038</b>	<b>249,332</b>	<b>277,187</b>	<b>305,483</b>

# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

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**Wednesday** – I'd usually look to my schedule to see what my children are training at today, however as I'm now unemployed it is completely blank. I'm roused from my mid-morning nap by a knock at the door. I answer, and it's a nice young man with a pamphlet.

"Would you like t-"

"Yes, I would be interested in the job at Kaiser Chiefs"

I slam the door in his face, and then forget about the encounter. Two hours later, I receive an email inviting me for an interview with Kaiser Chiefs! Who'd have thought? All I have to do is input my bank details, and they'll set me up with the dream job. Banging.

At dinner time I regale the story of my impending interview at one of the biggest clubs in South Africa (truthfully I'd rather have moved to Japan, but I am not licensed to do so). My wife throws a bottle (of rosé) at the floor, and demands to see me in training tomorrow...at least I think that's what she said, however I'd finished the bottle off via a few pint glasses before dinner.

**Thursday** – With the lines between reality and Football Manager becoming increasingly hard to distinguish, I hire a physiotherapist in order to assess what's wrong with me. I'm fully aware that I need a psychiatrist to assess my mental issues, however I thought it'd be funny to play dumb when recording my daily vlog for YouTube later. Until they arrive, I decide to sit in the Home and keep an eye on my inbox.

As evening arrives, I've been assessed by the physio, and sent an email about the recommended treatment. I appear to have hit my head quite badly, which I cross-examined in the medical centre and can confirm is accurate. My options are either be treated by the family doctor and be out for a day or so, or deal with the pain for the rest of the week and then be mentally incapacitated for 8 years. I decide on the latter as I don't want to let the squad down.

**Friday** – My youngest child has been asking to play some games for the last couple of days, and I had promised that we'd play on Thursday night, but I completely forgot, and she's woken up in an absolute state and demanded to speak to me. I remind her that I'm a little busy today trying to secure a loan, but after she continues to kick up a stink I promise her that we'll have played some games by the end of the day.

I apply for various jobs over a manic 1 minute period, and declare my interest publicly in others regardless of the fact that the company in question already employs a Finance Manager. I'm laughed off by many people on social media, however I score an interview with a local football club so put on a fresh suit. I fail the interview, and remain unemployed. My wife terminates her contract, and takes her staff with her. I am alone.

**Saturday** – I use the additional time in my day to try and end my loneliness by signing up to a dating app. I don't bother reading all the pros and cons about each lady in question, I simply look at their name, face, and nationality – the more exotic, the better. I chortle at the thought of being from San Marino and earning 100s of caps simply by being able to look at a football without sweating. What's that? No of course I wouldn't use my Italian second nationality to screw over the national team!

# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

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I have a date in the evening with a charming young lady from Haiti, however we spend our time in front of Netflix...not that much time, mind, as anything she shows in interest in watching I then decide to read a plot synopsis of on Wikipedia. Why watch the whole film when I can just find out instantly what happened and then write a blog about it to seem smart?

**Sunday** – My children come to visit me in the afternoon, which is nice. I greet them with a pat on the shoulder, but it doesn't seem to alter their mood.

"Hello Alex!" I say to my son, however my estranged wife reminds me that she prefers the real name fix, and that I should refer to him as 'Alexandros Villiasta Redwood c.f.C'. I call her a hipster, and she swiftly leaves the premises with my co-owned assets.

After another night spent alone, I decide that integrating Football Manager methodology into my life has gone way too far, and I announce online that I need to end the experiment early. Certain FM Twitter accounts point out that it's not actually an experiment as there are no control conditions, to which I simply tell them to not follow me if they don't like it. I then proceed to post screenshots of a 'Blocked' Twitter page to my followers in an attempt to get them to press-gang my oppressors. My conversion from Football Manager addict to Football Manager Twitter Thrall is complete.



Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training...Everything FM



**Latte Quarterly** is collated, edited and published by **FMSamo**, **fmadventure**, **FMGrasshopper** and **Ted Redwood**, but we will happily open our inbox to considering submissions from the wider community.

We invite articles of serious analysis, tactical discussion, guides, hints and tips or even tongue in cheek humour.

**Contact:** @LatteQuarterly | lattequarterly@gmail.com



## Running from FM - fmadventure

The idea for this challenge has been one we've talked about for a long time now. It is only now that we've decided to make a go of it for a number of reasons.

### The Leap From FM To Running

At the same time and in the months preceding it, we had begun to play out the Latte Quarterly save. It was a near-real-time save with monthly updates that myself, FM Grasshopper, FM Rensie and a few guests would play together on a Friday evening.

If you've read the updates then you'll know that the save went terribly. Our in-game time with OGC Nice was, what can only be adequately described as, an abomination. It was what we developed outside of that save file that led us to this point - we had enjoyed the weekly virtual meet up.

Outside of that, through COVID lockdowns and working from home, I decided to make a go of getting back to a respectable level of fitness through running. I spoke about this regularly with FM Grasshopper and FM Rensie. Then the decision came - let's blow out the cobwebs of OGC Nice with a new save, combine it with the running and let's motivate each other through it.

The choice of club for this challenge was made to be a simple choice. A mid-table club from a league with no more than 30 league games in the season. As we researched, the idea of managing Jakub Błaszczykowski back as player/owner of Wisła Kraków was just too good to turn down!

The rules are simple - a win is a 1km run, a draw is 2km and a defeat is 3km.

Here's how the month of July went as we started **Running From FM...**

#### Thursday 1st July

**Match Result: Jagiellonia Białystok 1-0 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 50s**

**Pace: 5m 17s per km**

It was a baptism of fire for this challenge with a 3km run on the first day. The reasonably warm conditions (maybe a literal baptism of fire?) provided stern opposition for this one. Nevertheless it was an enjoyable start to the Running From FM save.

#### Friday 2nd July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 0-1 Śląsk Wrocław**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 19s**

**Pace: 5m 06s per km**

The cloud cover was a welcome shield from a beating sun but even with that it didn't feel much cooler on my route. Buoyed by the ravioli and fresh salad lunch waiting for me at home, I shaved a nice 11 seconds off my time per km.

## Saturday 3rd July

**Match Result: Pogoń Szczecin 2-0 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 24s**

**Pace: 5m 8s per km**

A third defeat on the bounce gave me 3 kilometres to assess what was going wrong on the pitch. I switched it up to a morning run on account of it being a weekend and having planned a trip down to the seaside with the family. As I turned the final corner back towards home, my post-match analysis could be summed up in one simple sentence: we need to stop losing.

## Sunday 4th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 2-0 Wisła Płock**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 40s**

It was another morning run today and I left the house beaming with pride at our first victory of the season. The local temperature showed as 18°C on my phone - I can promise you that even in Summer the weather in Belfast isn't always this agreeable. Feeling good after a short burst at a higher pace, as George Ezra's one song that I know of declared — "I could get used to this!"

## Monday 5th July

**Match Result: Górnik Zabrze 0-0 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 2km**

**Time: 9m 41s**

**Pace: 4m 50s**

A late evening run to begin the week and my first at the 2km distance. After a game where we didn't create too much, I didn't want to dwell too long on the negatives. It's two in a row without defeat now and the times are looking good. Is it possible that we can turn this save around already and avoid a relegation dogfight?

## Tuesday 6th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 0-0 Lechia Gdańsk**

**Distance: 2km**

**Time: 9m 30s**

**Pace: 4m 44s**

The slight touch of rain was a welcome sight today and created a really enjoyable environment for today's run. Shaving 6s per km off my team left me returning home feeling mighty victorious!

## Wednesday 7th July

**Match Result: Stal Mielec 0-1 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 31s**

A fast paced 1km and I'm getting used to these shorter runs. It feels like we're starting to piece together a good run of form here (no pun intended...)

## Thursday 8th July

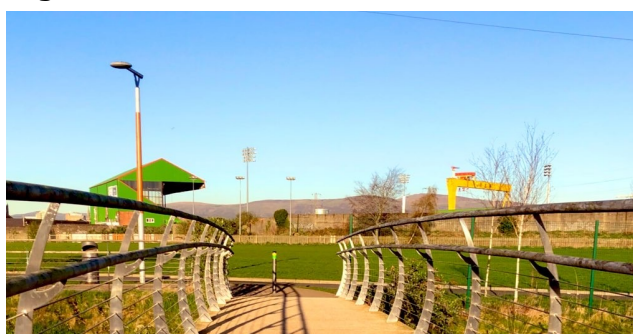
**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 0-1 Podbeskidzie Bielsko-Biała**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 0s**

**Pace: 4m 59s per km**

Having spoken too soon, I've well and truly had my medicine today. Five full days since our last defeat, this one definitely felt like an effort. As my legs started to tire I even had a bit of a stumble but managed to regain my balance and stay on my feet - Raheem Sterling, if you're reading this, hit me up for a few tips in that regard.



## Friday 9th July

**Match Result: Raków Częstochowa 2-1 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 28s**

**Pace: 5m 9s per km**

It was an early evening run today due to my having to visit the office for work. I made the dubious decision to run straight after dinner. Surprisingly my time wasn't too much worse off as a result, possibly aided by the fact I hurried myself home as I felt that my burger and chips might make a reappearance at any point.

## Saturday 10th July

**Match Result: Warta Poznań 2-0 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 16m 5s**

**Pace: 5m 21s per km**

Another Saturday morning run due to a planned trip out for the day. The blazing sunshine really took its toll on this one as the time slowed right down but I reminded myself that not every run needs to be a PB. More importantly there was some concern as we slipped to our third consecutive defeat for the second time this season after just 10 games! We've only managed 2 wins in that time... this could be a very long month.

## Sunday 11th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 4-0 Zagłębie Lubin**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 36s**

Wow, what a win! I was positively buoyant as I skipped out the door on the back of a 4-0 thrashing of Zagłębie. This was the game where we decided to switch up the tactical set up, abandoning the more cautious 4-4-1-1 and going for a swashbuckling, counter-attacking, counter-pressing 4-2-3-1.

## Monday 12th July

**Match Result: Cracovia 1-3 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 29s**

It's day one of a two day public holiday here in Northern Ireland so after my customary lie-in, I was up and out the door to celebrate our win in the Krakow derby - also known as (perhaps very apt today) the "Holy War". I was almost starting my own war on today's run when I was blocked on my outward journey by two very slow pedestrians... Luckily for them, today was still an improvement on yesterday's time! A good result all round.

## Tuesday 13th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 1-0 Legia Warsaw**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 32s**

The last day of this long weekend and it was our third win on the trot. What's more satisfying is that it was against really challenging opposition in title challengers Legia. Our turnaround in form in the last three games has really been something special as we steer ourselves away from a relegation battle into the midtable region.

## Wednesday 14th July

**Match Result: Lech Poznań 0-3 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 27s**

What an unbelievable result! Lech are among the forerunners for the league and we've just blown them out of the water on their own turf. What a joyous way to celebrate my return to work with this 1km on my lunch. With the three superb goals still replaying themselves in my head I stopped to have a think about something much more important... Do Manchester City fans still do "The Poznań"?



## Thursday 15th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 1-0 Piast Gliwice**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 11s**

Five wins on the bounce now, even if we did labour to this one ever so slightly. Still, it's not something any of us had envisaged just a week ago! I made the smart choice to take this run on my lunch having been booked in for my second COVID vaccine shortly after 3pm. Get vaccinated!

## Friday 16th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 1-2 Jagiellonia Białystok**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 16m 32s**

**Pace: 5m 30s per km**

Wow! A double hit today. We knew our winning streak would eventually come to an end but this run in this 25°C weather with the after effects of my vaccination... it was not pretty. Jagiellonia manage to complete the double over us in the league, such a shame.

## Saturday 17th July

**Match Result: Śląsk Wrocław 0-1 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 22s**

Yes, boys. We bounced back so well from that defeat and look to get back on track with this win over Slask. I took my run at 7am this morning and it was still 23°C - this is crazy weather.



## Sunday 18th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 1-2 Pogoń Szczecin**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 16m 7s**

**Pace: 5m 22s**

We appear to have hit a rocky patch just now. Pogon became the second team to complete the double over us in the league. We didn't play poorly here, luck just wasn't on our side today.

## Monday 19th July

**Match Result: Wisła Płock 2-3 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 22s**

It's my third wedding anniversary today and everyone knows that the gift for the third wedding anniversary is 1km, right? It was a hard fought win but that made it all the more special. It's the beginning of a week of annual leave from work for me too, I have a good feeling about this week.

## Tuesday 20th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 3-1 Górnik Zabrze**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 35s**

This time has really started to click. We're winning and we're winning impressively so. It's a joy to watch as the players advance down the pitch at breakneck speed.

## Wednesday 21st July

**Match Result: Lechia Gdańsk 0-1 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 15s**

Another great result to give me another enjoyable run. Aside from the running, this run of results has pushed us into the reckoning for a European spot or, dare I even say it, maybe a title challenge?!

## Thursday 22nd July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 2-1 Stal Mielec**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 29s**

It's honestly difficult to keep finding the words to describe how this save is going. The football is an absolute joy to watch as we advance our way up through the table. The runs, despite being a paltry 1km, are getting harder as this heatwave really starts to bite.

## Friday 23rd July

**Match Result: Podbeskidzie Bielsko-Biała 1-4 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 20s**

What a beautiful way to round off my week of annual leave. A convincing win with Wisła, a creditable time on the run and I unwound after by taking a swim in the Irish Sea. Just perfect.

## Saturday 24th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 0-1 Raków Częstochowa**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 39s**

**Pace: 5m 13s**

The winning streak had to come to an end again at some point but this one was disappointing. It felt like the team were starting to get into a really good rhythm but we just didn't turn up against Rakow.

## Sunday 25th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 1-0 Warta Poznań**

A hard fight to get us back on track. Usually it would be a 1km run but today I took part in a charity football match instead. It's something I want to highlight at the end of this article.

## Monday 26th July

**Match Result: Zagłębie Lubin 1-1 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 2km**

**Time: 10m 40s**

**Pace: 5m 20s**

It's been a while since we've had a draw. It comes at a really bad time for our potential title race, every point lost is a blow to our chances regardless of how well we performed in this game. With the end in sight, it feels like I'm starting to coast these runs from looking at the timings. An improvement required in every single area.

## Tuesday 27th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 3-1 Cracovia**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 5m 32s**

Yes, that's the one! A fantastic performance and great result to go with it. We're struggling for a bit of consistency at the moment and it has me on edge but I will never not enjoy these wins! Was this reflected in my timing for this run? Quite possibly as I made this 1km in a whole 1m 12s slower than the previous run at the same distance.

## Wednesday 28th July

**Match Result: Legia Warsaw 2-0 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time 15m 57s**

**Pace: 5m 19s**

Ouch. This result has killed off any chance of a run at the title with two games to go. It was always going to be a long shot given how we started the season but the tantalising possibility was just so good. Running the 3km was almost like rubbing salt into the wound.

## Thursday 29th July

**Match Result: Wisła Kraków 5-1 Lech Poznań**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 26s**

An excellent response to the Legia loss as we continue to try and finish the season as high up the table as possible. Sadly, with results elsewhere, 2nd is now gone from us. 3rd is possible.

## Friday 30th July

**Match Result: Piast Gliwice 1-4 Wisła Kraków**

**Distance: 1km**

**Time: 4m 29s**

A great way to end the season and the situation in other games means we steal that 3rd place. It would have been extremely hard to imagine this finish after the opening few games.

## Saturday 31st July

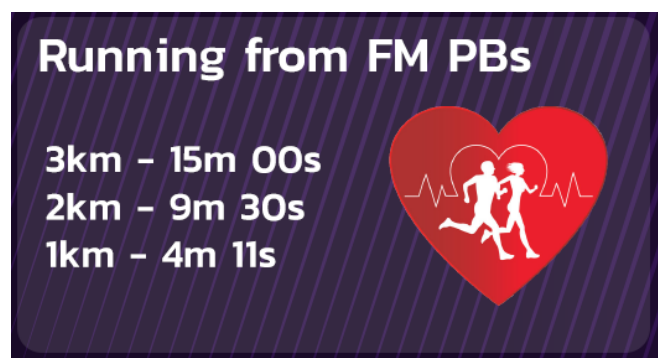
**Final Position: 3rd**

**Distance: 3km**

**Time: 15m 36s**

**Pace: 5m 11s**

In order to round the month off, I decided to run our final position in km. We began with 3km and we finished with 3km. It's been a long month but one that I thoroughly enjoyed.



## The End of a Great Month

I was almost sad to see the month of July slip away into August, it's been such a fun experience to combine FM with my running. It's also been great that FM Grasshopper, FM Rensie and myself all kept each other motivated throughout the whole month. Talking daily about our runs and the results that determined them. My wife even got on board and completed the whole month's runs along with me! Have we exorcised the demons from the OGC Nice save? I feel like we're some way there. We've gone part way to vindicating ourselves from the mess on the Riviera. There's more to come from us though, wait and see!

## Cardiac Risk in the Young

I mentioned the charity football match that replaced my run on Sunday 25th July. I want to give a special mention to CRY UK (Cardiac Risk in the Young) for the work they do.

Once a year myself and others get together to play and raise some money for a really worthwhile cause in memory of a friend who passed away far too young. We raised a good sum of money for Cardiac Risk in the Young - a charity who work hard to promote cardiac screening, raise awareness of the situation and support families affected by cardiac issues suffered by young men and women. They really are an invaluable resource in this area. I'm only too glad to be able to play even a small part in helping to support their work. Please, take some time to visit their website (<https://www.c-r-y.org.uk/>) and have a read of what they do.



## FM Strangelove [or: How I learned to stop worrying and accept the Match Day Experience] – FM Grasshopper

Even before the Epic Stores giveaway, FM20 was the most played edition of Football Manager by both the amount of people playing and the average time played. Lockdown galvanised a fanbase further, FM was the release from the pandemic that we all found ourselves in. We even dedicated Latte Quarterly Issue 6's front cover towards the momentum the game generated!

Yet, in my opinion at least, the game had its problems. FM21 was therefore a chance to correct that, and in some ways this year's game has continued to grip me in the usual ways, but has sadly fallen short of being a 'standout' edition. Why? Well, I guess you have to read on below...an opinion formed over the 500+ hours of playtime and personal to me. Don't agree? Then get in touch and tell me why, after all, so many of us play the game differently and my opinion is just a minuscule representation of the vast and diverse make-up of FM players.

I'm going to score FM on three categories: (1) Match Engine, (2) New Features and (3) Overall Gameplay...

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### **(1) Match Engine**

Purely subjective here, but the Match Engine is the overriding factor in my opinions towards an edition of FM. I know others like Samo place greater importance on other things like working the transfer market or training, because they enjoy that aspect more. But for me, the match engine is where I devote most of my cognitive attention to. I play on Comprehensive or Extended, and very rarely use other Match Modes.

FM21's initial match engine builds were some of the most fun I've experienced. I saw cut backs, real ingenuity and creative license from my attacking midfielders and was routinely surprised at how different it felt from FM20. Sports Interactive had clearly spent time on it and I could not see anything glaring wrong in the release build.

But my high opinion did start to wane, and there are probably two major contributing factors in this. Firstly, after 500 hours...even the most unpredictable of match engine builds could start to feel repetitive. I must stress, it's no way like FM19 where I felt like Nostradamus writing a poem on future events...but FM21 in 2021 has felt increasingly predictable. Secondly though, and probably more importantly, various patches took away that WOW factor for me. Maybe there were various hackz or exploits that could be easily exposed, and those patches were a way of addressing them. Or maybe I was in the minority, maybe people wanted tweaks to the ME. Slowly but surely, I felt the Match Engine went from a 8 or 9...to a solid 7.

It's an improved match engine on FM20, but I believe in better. **7/10**.

## (2) New Features

### Match Day Magic?

So, I've titled this article around the Match Day Experience...because this new feature perhaps demonstrated my love/hate relationship with Football Manager 2021 the best. I assume that removing the on demand in-game statistics proved insignificant for some. Recreating the experience of a real-life manager was seemingly the motivating factor to push players into using the updated Assistant Manager feedback, and 'touchline tablet' interface. I inexplicably lost the ability to view touch and heat maps on-demand, like in previous years, but why does the Assistant Manager have all that next to me?

I think this new feature brought the question of realism to the forefront for a lot of bloggers like myself. The game wants to be realistic, but just how realistic? Do we want to reach the point where you can no longer pause the match to make a latte? Alternatively, we can see xG tally up as a game progresses, but we can't keep track of the key passes or crosses that lead up to a goal scoring chance? Finding its place between realism and being a video game in the context of the match day experience has been Football Manager 2021's unexpected challenge, and it's not something it has truly nailed.

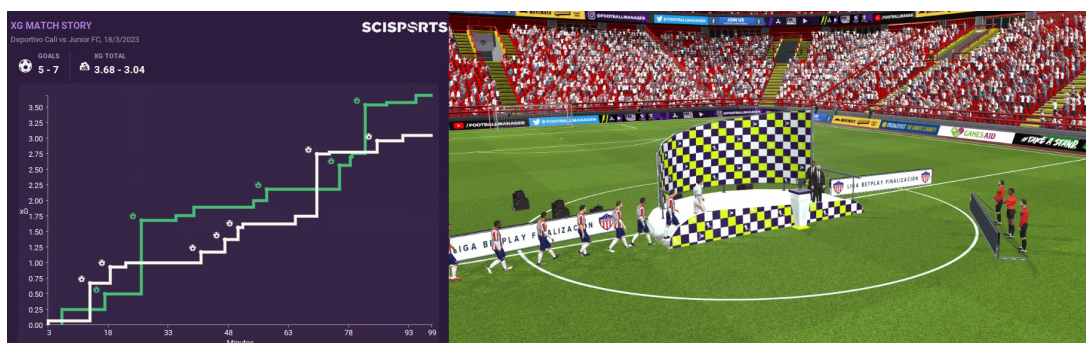
Despite the above, the slickness and entry to the match is the best it's ever been. I really liked the lineups, league table and form animations. When there is a goal, the pop-up is strangely attractive and FM21 has me watching the matches and appreciating the simplicity. I've enhanced my experience with FM Rensie's custom skin...the customised in-between match highlight panels have made better use of some of the redundant space well. I can see the focus of attacks, heat maps and AI formations at a glance, all alongside the latest events and things I want to see.

### Stamp Your Style? (communication overhaul)

Has communication changed in FM21? Or is it just re-skinned? I don't know. I never really was motivated to see player conversations change, highlighting that I perhaps don't talk to my players quite nearly as what a realistic manager would do! Gesturing is something you can do, or choose not to, whether that's one on one discussions or in the team meetings. It's a "nice to have", but not needed as a headline feature in my opinion.

Team Talks and Press Conferences feel different, even the subtle changes to the placement of how your team sits around the screen at Half/Full Time is a nice change. However, do I need to 'Start' the Press Conference after clicking 'Attend'? It's also my choice to attend them in the first place, but there is no doubt that they have become largely monotonous over time.

I haven't stamped my style here, rather put my hand on the odd player's shoulder over 5 years and told the Colombian press that I wouldn't swap Ricardo Caraballo for Erling Braut Haaland every 3 month interval.



# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

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## **Boss The Market**

Out of all the new features, this is the one I am most disappointed in. But I would caveat this by saying that Recruitment Meetings are here to stay and will only get better, I hope. I've tried to think hard on what I dislike the most about the Recruitment Meetings...and I think it's the fact that I feel like I am driving a car I am not fully in control of. Maybe we're on cruise control, or maybe the handbrake isn't fully pushed down. I just feel like I should be giving more direction to the Chairman/Director of Football, otherwise what's the point? The suggestions never truly feel applicable and if I relied on this feature to sign, I personally think I would struggle to sign good enough players.

Maybe this is the FM hard mode people want?

## **Revel In The Glory (End of Season feedback)**

I've only completed Colombian seasons in FM21, which run in the calendar year as opposed to many European leagues which run August to May. Bizarrely, I've never once experienced the End of Season feedback. I'm therefore in no place to comment on how good or bad it is.

However the absence of a headline feature perhaps demonstrates my views about FM21 headline features. I don't really care if one is missing, because the ones that are there aren't great anyway. I feel this is the weakest new feature lineup at launch that I can remember, and I'm scoring it **3/10**.

## **(3) Overall Gameplay**

Adding in xG was a big thing for the game, because it's a significant part of that data revolution arriving into mainstream football. Like the Recruitment Meeting, I imagine it's here to stay and further polished by Sports Interactive and SciSports in future editions. However, data [and use of data] seems like an opportunity missed this year. For a game to be so data heavy like FM is, and for data to not always work...is...well...terrible. Post-match statistics can be shown differently depending on which screen you visit post-match, and metrics are in some places and not others.

Then we arrive at the post-match analysis screens, perhaps not used by the vast majority of players. Nevertheless, the presentation of them in the Analysis modules has been atrocious, with rendered pass maps going off screen and some metrics never graphically represented in an acceptable way. Ironically, those modules I refer to worked in previous editions of the game...something broke over 2019/20 and it was never recovered in time for launch. The impact of broken analysis may seem like a moot point for a lot of players (who wants to go and look at pass/touch maps after each game?), but in my view was a contributing factor in the quality of written blogs in FM21. No longer could we graphically represent things in the way we would previously do, our trust in FM statistics is at an all-time low...and I believe the written word suffered because of it.

But let's not be overly downbeat and finish with some positivity: FM21 is quick. The processing speed is a lot better, and it's really improved the way we jump in and out of the game. If we were to go back to FM20, we'd be surprised at how slow the game feels.

It's been a while since I used the default FM21 skins, but from what I remember they were not awful. There are obvious quality of life improvements to certain screens, I really like the Development Centre and some updated News Items. Although some screens need an overhaul: Staff Responsibilities, Team Report etc. I think a real focus on reducing clicks is needed and I am hoping that FM22 does this.

# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

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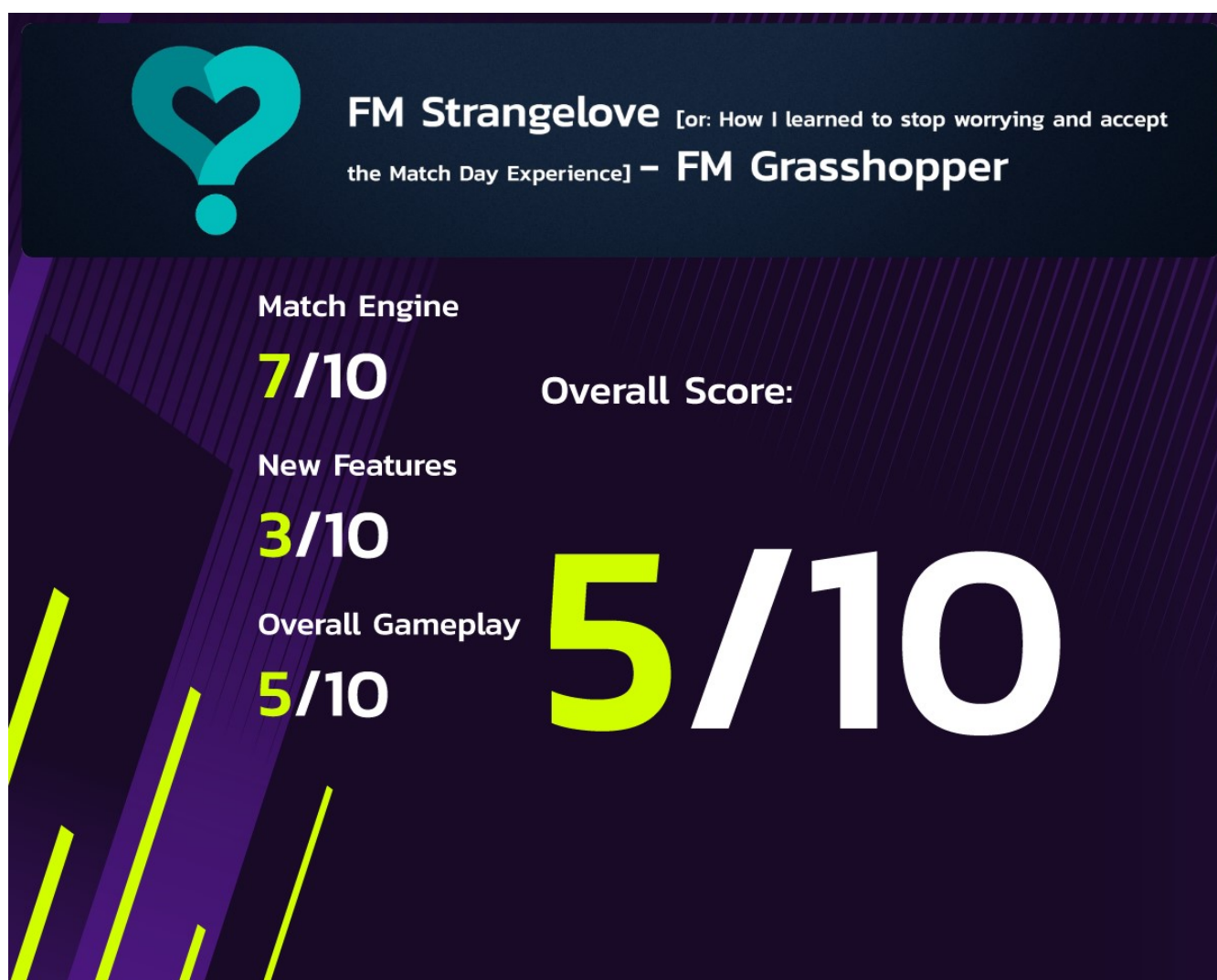
This is a nice segue into signing off this review, before I rate Overall Gameplay and aggregate my FM21 'score'. There are obvious things that need a focus. It's been years since Set Pieces were looked at, and I personally feel it's stuck in the Stone Age. But I would be happy with a title that just goes round and fixes and expands on the existing features (and their accompanying click counts!). Football doesn't change much in a year, nor should a Football Manager title. Flesh out Scouting, challenge players with revised Training modules and tactically looks at player roles. Overall Gameplay sees this edition score **5/10**...it's solid but uninspiring.

## Final Thoughts

So, my aggregated score for Football Manager 2021 comes out a devastatingly bland **5/10**. There are some really nice bits and some really bad bits, but the basis of a game is there to be built upon and I really hope FM22 can reach previous highs. As my title alludes to: FM is a strange love. For all my therapeutic moaning above...I still love this game, and you can be sure I will be back for more come FM22.

Thanks for reading,

FM Grasshopper





## Favourite Match of FM21 – Various Artists

Some of the most interesting saves/narratives are never captured via words or on screen. Just think about that for a second. An endless amount of matches played out in millions of save Universes from around the Globe, which are usually only known to the single player driving the computer game. It's why I, FM Grasshopper, reached out on FM Twitter in July 2021 in order to ask if anybody wanted to share a favourite match from their FM21 saves. The remit was simple: *"just tell me what made it special to YOU".*

I'm delighted to report that we have some crackers for you in LQ8, I hope you enjoy reading these brief excerpts...

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### **Liverpool 10-2 Chelsea** **Peter Prickett – @PeterPrickett**

I love thrashing teams. When playing FM my objective is to demolish the opposition and win everything possible. I play the game with immense greed, close games are boring to me. I want goals and lots of them.

This is the way that I aim to set up teams on FM. The defending is not important to me, only the pile of goals matters. I want strikers and forwards galore. In an early version of FM21 I had achieved a high scoring team using a 4-2-3-1 system. When updates seriously slowed this system down I decided to throw a Hail Mary at the game, a 4-1-3-2.

When I previously attempted this system (on FM19) it was a bizarrely solid and uninteresting effort. This time the game exploded into life.

I took the 4-1-3-2 to Liverpool and signed my favourite striker, the beast that is Erling Haaland. The team romped to the title in season one. In season two Chelsea made big moves in the transfer market and started the season with a flurry of goals to be level with me on points.

We faced off and it happened. My favourite game.

After 9 minutes Mo Salah put us in front. In the 18th Erling Haaland grabbed a second. Then came a scoring blast like no other, confirming the devastating goal power of the formation. Goals in the 28th, 30th, 31st and 33rd minute. A six goal lead. Sabitzer pulled one back but Salah would score another in first half stoppage time. An incredible 7-1 score at half time. Haaland and Salah both had first half hat tricks, the other goal belonging to Diogo Jota.

Anyone who has played FM will have experienced blowing away the opposition in the first half and then the game says no more. This time it complied and granted a further three goals in the second half. Erling Haaland finished with five to his name in an incredible 10-2 victory.



# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

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The team did as I had always hoped in this attacking system, standing toe to toe and outpunching the opponent. Chelsea created chances and scored goals, but we did far more, 25 shots, 17 on target, 6.73xG, 5 clear cut chances and 10 half chances. One of the most creative performances you will see and done against an opponent I had been wary of.

Perfection.

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## **Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors 1-4 Suwon Samsung Bluewings**

**Adam - @adamc\_76**

My favourite match from FM21 isn't a cup final game or a win that clinches the league title, but a midseason win halfway through the league campaign. In my Suwon Samsung Bluewings save, we had finished second three times in four seasons with Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors extending their dominance to 7 consecutive titles.

I was beginning to feel that it was now or never to break the Jeonbuk dominance. We had a golden generation youth intake in season 1 and four of these players were now first team regulars for us with newgen striker Lee Hong-Sun winning the golden boot last season with 25 league goals.

Our season started well, but we were still 2 points behind Jeonbuk when we made the journey to the Jeonju World Cup Stadium on match day 18. Two days before this game Lee Hong-Sun picked up a damaged shoulder which would unfortunately rule him out of this game.

With our best striker injured and our poor record against Jeonbuk, I wasn't confident going into the match. This feeling was compounded when some poor defending allowed Jeonbuk to open the scoring after only 5 minutes. We then levelled the score 10 minutes later with backup striker Yoo Ju-Ahn finishing off a good team move. By half time we found ourselves 3-1 up with goals from two newgens from our season 1 golden generation.

At half time we made some changes to lower the tempo and control the game. We dominated possession in the second half restricting Jeonbuk to only one shot and our winger Han Seok-Hee scored on the counter to seal a comfortable 4-1 win.

This game sticks in the mind as it moved us up to top of the league and we didn't look back, securing our first league title since 2008 in a season where we would also end up winning the Champions League and FA Cup.

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## **Rayo Vallecano 1-1 Mirandes**

**Adam - @FM\_Stag**

"The Segunda Conspiracy"

It was the final day of my first campaign in charge of the passionately socialist Rayo Vallecano in Spain's second tier. An appalling November containing four league defeats and one draw had dented El Rayo's promotion hopes but hadn't extinguished them.

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Springing back into form as Christmas 2020 came and went, another blip in April since forgotten; the Franjirajo were sat at the top of the table on the morning of Sunday the 31st of May 2021. 82 points and +40 goal difference banked after 41 games. Mallorca were in second place, incredibly also with 82 points and +39. Espanyol sat in third on 79 and +37. The final round of fixtures were vital.

Rayo's opponents on the day were Mirandes. A team who had mathematically survived relegation, so arguably had "nothing to play for." Mallorca hosted Albacete. Espanyol went to Logroñés.

Although all three fixtures were of course played in parallel, it gives nothing away to tell you that Mallorca drew 0-0 to finish on 83 points, while Espanyol thrashed Logroñés 3-0 to finish on 82. If Rayo were to lose even 1-0, goal difference would see us drop to third, destined to suffer the playoffs.

With a wage budget one third the size of Espanyol's, finishing in the top half of the table was already a minor miracle. When finishing first in the table is within touching distance however, it's impossible not to feel like anything short of reaching out and grabbing it would have been a massive disappointment.

Platitudes aside, the game kicked off brightly with chances at both ends. This turned sour for Rayo Vallecano on 63 minutes when Erik Jirka placed a lovely bottom corner shot past the flailing Stole Dimitrievski to fire Mirandes 1-0 ahead.

Rayo boss Fernando Teixedó crouched sternly in his technical area like Marcelo Bielsa had possessed both his legs and facial expression as a penalty kick to Mirandes was given. The usually reliable Luis Advíncula had hauled down a Mirandes attacker. His red card doubled Rayo's woes.

A late Mirandes substitute stepped up to take the penalty with more than 89 minutes on the clock. Javi Muñoz.

Not only did Muñoz look nervous, he looked sick.

A tame penalty down to Dimitrievski's left was saved by the Macedonian international, and the game continued.

91:26 on the clock and Rayo then had a free kick. It's about 35 yards out, but so wide it's almost at the touchline. With every player with any attacking ability pushed forward, functional centre back Emiliano Velázquez lofted a high and hopeful ball towards the six-yard box.

As the final seconds of the game ticked by, on-loan striker and fan favourite Antoñín leapt in the air above his marker and nodded the ball anywhere near the net. The hapless keeper flapped at the ball as it slipped past him to tie the game at 1-1. The final whistle blew during the chaotic celebrations which ensued.

Rayo Vallecano had done it. Automatic promotion by a single point. Champions by a single goal! Final-day drama. There's nothing else quite like it.

The drama didn't end there, however. Javi Muñoz, the player who had looked sick stepping up to take the Mirandes penalty which would undoubtedly have sealed Rayo's defeat had it went in? He already had a pre-contract agreement signed and his future transfer already arranged for the end of this campaign. Who was he about to sign for? Rayo Vallecano, of course.

Let the conspiracy theories begin!

## **Porto 1-6 Racing CFF** **Serv - @ServalarianFM**

Hello there, it's Servalarian FM. May or may not be an FM content creator, that's still something that's up in the air. One thing that is sure is that I still play FM, and this year it's been with Racing CFF who dominated French football back in the day. Starting in the French 5th tier (the Championnat National), I've taken Racing to the top-flight in France, where we've just finally beaten PSG's 11 year run of titles. This match, which was our 2nd ever Champions League match, was against Porto in the 2032/33 season. The team took a trip down to the Estádio do Dragão, and what happens in this match is, quite simply, domination from one man that resulted in a 6-1 win against the Liga NOS Runners Up.

The one and only Lou Van den Broeck, signed from Benfica for chump change (€4.5m) in 2030/31. His six-goal performance began from Montenegrin winger Marko Lukic's ball into the middle of the pitch. Controlling the ball, Van den Broeck controls and dinks it over the keeper, despite being surrounded by three defenders, to score his first of six. His second begins with Lukic again, who sprays to Bosnian Emir Dzafic, who plays another ball into the centre of the pitch, where VdB takes it out of the air, takes a touch, and finishes coolly into the bottom right of the goal. The third goal starts, again, on the left-hand side, with a diagonal through ball to the right-hand side of the penalty area, which is slotted into the right-hand corner yet again. Number five is another through ball, this time from the right-hand-side, which is, surprisingly, saved by the Porto keeper, but he can't keep the rebound out. Porto, shockingly, get a goal from a penalty from FM Wonderkid Eddie Salcedo, but we hit right back with number six. Record signing Abdelouahab Fodil, our world class CWB lofts a truly sumptuous ball over the top which Lou just deftly controls out of the air and, yet again, slots past the Porto keeper to break Lionel Messi's 5 goal-in-one-game record against Leverkusen.

This game is significant to me because, simply, it's the best performance I've ever had from one player in a game in FM, and it came in our first foray into the Champions League. Domination was the name of the game, and one man encapsulated that domination, which just made it extra sweet.

## **LATTE** **QUARTERLY**

Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training...**Everything FM**



Latte Quarterly is collated, edited and published by **FMSamo**, **fmadventure**, **FMGrasshopper** and **Ted Redwood**, but we will happily open our inbox to considering submissions from the wider community.

We invite articles of serious analysis, tactical discussion, guides, hints and tips or even tongue in cheek humour.

**Contact:** @LatteQuarterly | lattequarterly@gmail.com

# LA COPA LQ

2ND EDITION - AUGUST 2021



## THE TEAMS



SAMO'S VALERENGA  
ODDS: 1/16

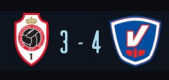


ATHLETE'S TRABZONSPOR  
ODDS: 4/1



EADSTER'S REJECTS  
ODDS: 12/1

## RESULTS:



## GAME OF LA COPA



3 - 4



"VALERENGA BOSSSED THE GAME, BUT THAT DID NOT STOP ROYAL ANTWERP FROM ALMOST CAUSING LA COPA'S BIGGEST EVER UPSET.

EDVARD TAGSETH THE 81ST MINUTE HERO"

SCORING:  
3 POINTS PER WIN,  
1 POINT PER DRAW,  
1 POINT PER EACH GOAL SCORED

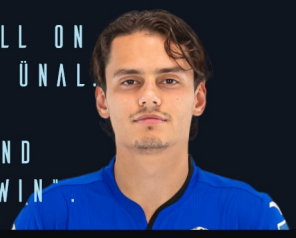
## PLAYER OF LA COPA

ENES ÜNAL 

"TRABZONSPOR NEEDED TO BE CUNNING IN ATTACK AGAINST VALERENGA'S BACK THREE.

THANKFULLY THEY COULD CALL ON EX-MAN CITY FORWARD ENES ÜNAL.

ENES LED THE LINE WELL AND GRABBED A GOAL IN A 2-0 WIN"



POSITION	W-D-L	POINTS
	1-1-0	7
	1-0-1	7
	0-1-1	5

WINNER: ATHLETE'S TRABZONSPOR



## Falling Out of Love - FM Samo

What do you do when you think you're falling out of love with Football Manager?

If you're reading this it's highly likely the longest relationship you've had is with Championship Manager and Football Manager. It's been a long time for a lot of us and an even longer time for others. There's been games we've loved and games we haven't liked as much. We still put in a fair few hours to the ones we didn't like at all. There's nothing like a bit of time off work as we approach the start of a new game cycle to make you evaluate whether you actually still love, or even like, Football Manager or not.

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### Love the save, dislike the game

For the past few editions of the game now I've made the decision to just focus on one main save. I've loved my time at Vålerenga, Eibar, Vitória, Stirling and the Red Bull clubs. They've all been brilliant saves and I've loved my club choices, if I don't say so myself.

I remember the clubs I managed, the players I signed or developed, the league titles and trophies I was able to win. Some people might be able to remember the key features from each of those editions of the game, but for me they eventually just roll into one big FM memory. The most recent game is always the one that sticks out for me in terms of features and in terms of how much I've enjoyed it.

For FM21, I think that should probably be rephrased as "features" and in terms of how little I've enjoyed it.

### "Features"

This isn't an FM21 review post, that's elsewhere in this edition. A quick reflection on my experiences of the game this far into the cycle tells me that I'm just mercilessly clicking around now to be honest.

Off the top of my head I can't remember what the headline features were for FM21. I'm going to Google them to remind myself...

Oh dear, it really doesn't make great reading looking back now. Anyone still doing recruitment meetings? I'm delighted when you get to skip them without having to enter into it first. The amount of revamped matchday screens we need to go through to get to a match now was ridiculous at the time of release, never mind this far into the cycle. Football Manager? More like Click Manager, am I right? I'm still annoyed that the End of Season review revamp was billed as a headline feature.

# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

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All in all, FM21's features haven't really encouraged save longevity in my opinion. Then again, maybe they're looking at the data and can see that save longevity is a rare thing for the vast majority of players. I'm never actually sure what would attract players to keep on playing the same save for a longer period of time. Better AI squad management and transfers? A hard mode has been debated back and forward. I don't think the game needs one, but how many players do you see struggling 5+ years into their save? Periods of dominance exist in the real world, of course, but things change too. Would a human managed Celtic lose out on the title to AI managed Rangers after nine consecutive seasons of winning it on the game? I'm not so sure.

## **Repetitive**

The match engine has moved on, we got some early variety in comparison to previous editions. The more you play it, the quicker it wears off. I'm probably even nowhere near some of the top numbers for hours played in comparison to others, god knows how they're feeling. You feel like you have to change tactics regularly to encourage something new from your team.

I'm a creature of habit though. Maybe it's me that's repetitive and not the game? I've said this a couple of times over the past few years but the matches on Football Manager are the thing I enjoy least about the game. I love finding players, signing them, developing them and my own young players, selling them all on and starting that all over again. It's certainly what I've enjoyed most about FM21 to this point.

## **Working from Home**

The past year and a half has been horrendous, let's be honest there. There's been parts of it I've loved, particularly no commuting, but the big thing from an FM perspective I haven't enjoyed is that lack of down time. When I've switched off my laptop at the end of my working day the last thing I've wanted to do is fire up my other laptop to sit in for an evening of FM.

The game hasn't pulled me in to do that, but in truth, there's just been way more things I've wanted to do with my time when you do get that free time. If this period has taught us anything it's surely that there's more important things in life. Things are on the way to getting back to some sort of normal, do we all really want to be sitting indoors on our own playing a game for hours on end? I'm not sure I do. Sometimes real life gets in the way of your FM time, and that's perfectly okay to admit.

## **"Community"**

There's a brilliant core of people who still do some excellent things when it comes to Football Manager. I'm including writers, video producers and live streamers in that. Some are able to create some great content around the game, explain how things work or showcase certain things they've got working in a succinct and sensible way. However, in recent years that number of quality FM content creators, in my opinion, has declined. Does it make me fall out of love with the game? It actually does a little bit in all honesty.

# Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM

It's probably more on the side of getting annoyed at the game rather than falling out of love with it here. I spoke about it in a previous piece in LQ4 when I spoke about the rising relationship between playing FM and earning money from playing FM. You can clearly see people and sites starting to move away from creating content because they love the game, to creating content because they want to be as big as the best in their category. It's just the way things are now isn't it, everyone wants to be an influencer. I appreciate it in every other thing, but it just doesn't sit right with me for FM for some reason. Maybe because I've loved the game so much over the years.

Football Manager is now a career for some people, it's enabled plenty others to make a career for themselves in the game too, through working with clubs or agencies. These people started off by loving the game and they've managed to build themselves up to where they are now. For me, you need to start with that love, you can't throw yourself straight in to wanting to make money from FM. It shouldn't annoy me, but it does. It shouldn't impact my enjoyment of the game, but it does.

For me, Football Manager is in a bit of a rock and a hard place situation at the moment. Interest in football has never been higher. Social media is taking the game to the next stratosphere. SI are able to capitalise on that sometimes, wonderkids from the game make moves to be celebrated, partnerships with clubs can produce some occasional content, but I don't think the game at its core is able to keep up with how quickly everything around it is changing.

This isn't me stepping away from playing the game, I'm not announcing a retirement from all things FM (to then announce a comeback a few weeks later with a rebrand). Sometimes you've just got to admit to yourself that you've not enjoyed something as much as you wanted to enjoy it. That thing has unfortunately been FM21 for me. Will FM22 be better? I really do think SI have some work on their hands on that front.



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Issue 1



Issue 2



Issue 3



Issue 4



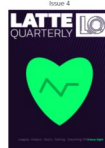
Issue 5



Issue 6



Issue 7



Issue 8 (coming 27th August)

# LATTE

## QUARTERLY



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