

## Pounds and Pence

I used to remember watching my team play when I was younger, much younger, probably about 8 or 9. Transfer windows, sales, loans and buys didn't mean much to me. We used to buy players and I was happy when we did. Sometimes players would leave, and it would usually be a sad occasion. During another annoyingly quiet transfer window, I miss those days of naivety when things just seemed to mysteriously fall into place.

To be fair, it's not the fact that we haven't signed anyone that annoys me the most, it's the fact that we get stuck on one player (NB read as Hargreaves) and refuse to move on from him. We've offered near to £20million for a player who is worth 12, maybe stretching it to 15 on a good day, but even after having that turned down we continue to chase a lost cause. I'm fully aware of that Bayern apparently have said we can have him for £20million in the summer, but I also might win the lottery next month. However that doesn't mean I am going to encourage the breadwinner of the house to leave work because there's a one in a million chance we'll be millionaires.

Some fans say we don't have the money. Now I don't believe that, if we didn't have money there's no way that we would be willing to cough up £20million for a midfielder, knowing we will have to buy a striker soon who is bound to cost at least that if not another £5-10million depending on who we get. It's stubbornness. Manchester United and our beloved manager Sir Alex Ferguson must be the most stubborn representatives in football. When Sir Alex sets his heart on a player, then he will pursue that person until he gets them. I mean come on; we hardly signed Laurent Blanc because he was still world class. Now Sir Alex has his heart set on Hargreaves and him and Mr Gill are focusing their energy on him, rather than moving on to a cheaper and possibly better player. However I am not going to go on about Hargreaves, far too much has been said about him over the last six months, both by the press and our fans.

It's the money part that annoys me. We have the money, but still we continue making low bids for players that a club is obviously not going to part with for anything less than their set amount. Now I don't think that we should just go out and bid silly amounts for players, or pay over the top for all players, because you can pay little and get a lot. Last years signings of Evra and Vidic are great examples of this. I would however like to see the club just set an amount that they have valued a player at, the minimum they think they can get away with paying, and the maximum they would be willing to pay. Bid the minimum amount, but if a player is valued at £10million, then bid that £10million and avoid pissing the player's club off by offering half the amount of that. Some people say that we're not willing to pay for players because the Glazers won't give us the money. The problem with that argument of course is that we were playing this transfer market game for years before they even considered taking over the club. I've said it before, and I will say it again, the Glazers are business men, they know that to earn money off the club they need the club to be successful, and for us to be successful we need the right players.

Maybe we don't need any additions this window, we can still go on to win the league without any new players, but it would be comforting to hear something from the manager

rather than just the usual “we are looking at some players” or “there have been one or two people we are interested in”. Our team, as with any other team in the league, have weaknesses. We might have less of these than other teams, but they are there none the less, and it’s not been a comfort that our only targets have been a 17 year old kid, who **might** turn out to be the next big thing, and someone from Die Bundesliga who hasn’t even kicked a ball in months. I’m purposely not counting Larsson in this because he’s just a temporary solution to a striker problem. It’s like putting plastic glazing over a broken window, it will help keep it together in the short term but it’s never going to be the long term solution.

I already covered the positions that I think we need in my last article a couple of months ago, a right back, another midfielder, a left footed winger and a striker would be additions that I would expect to be made over the next months and up to a year. Some of these positions might be able to be filled from our own ranks, but when it comes down to approaching players of other clubs, I really hope the club have learned from the lack of success that we have had this window and last. When a club doesn’t want to sell, just move on. It’s no use frantically counting and recounting every single pound and pence you are willing to use on a player if the club doesn’t want to sell, or if the player doesn’t want to join us badly enough, and especially if we’re nothing more than slightly interested. If we want to go back to being the best club in England on a permanent basis, and the best club in Europe, we have to show strength and determination. Not just on the football pitch, but when Gill and his Visa card go travelling, he needs to bring both those qualities with him.

We might win the Premiership this season without any additions, but at some point over the next year we will have to make a purchase. It is about time that we do business like a company rather than someone who wants the cheapest price for a carpet in a Turkish market.

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