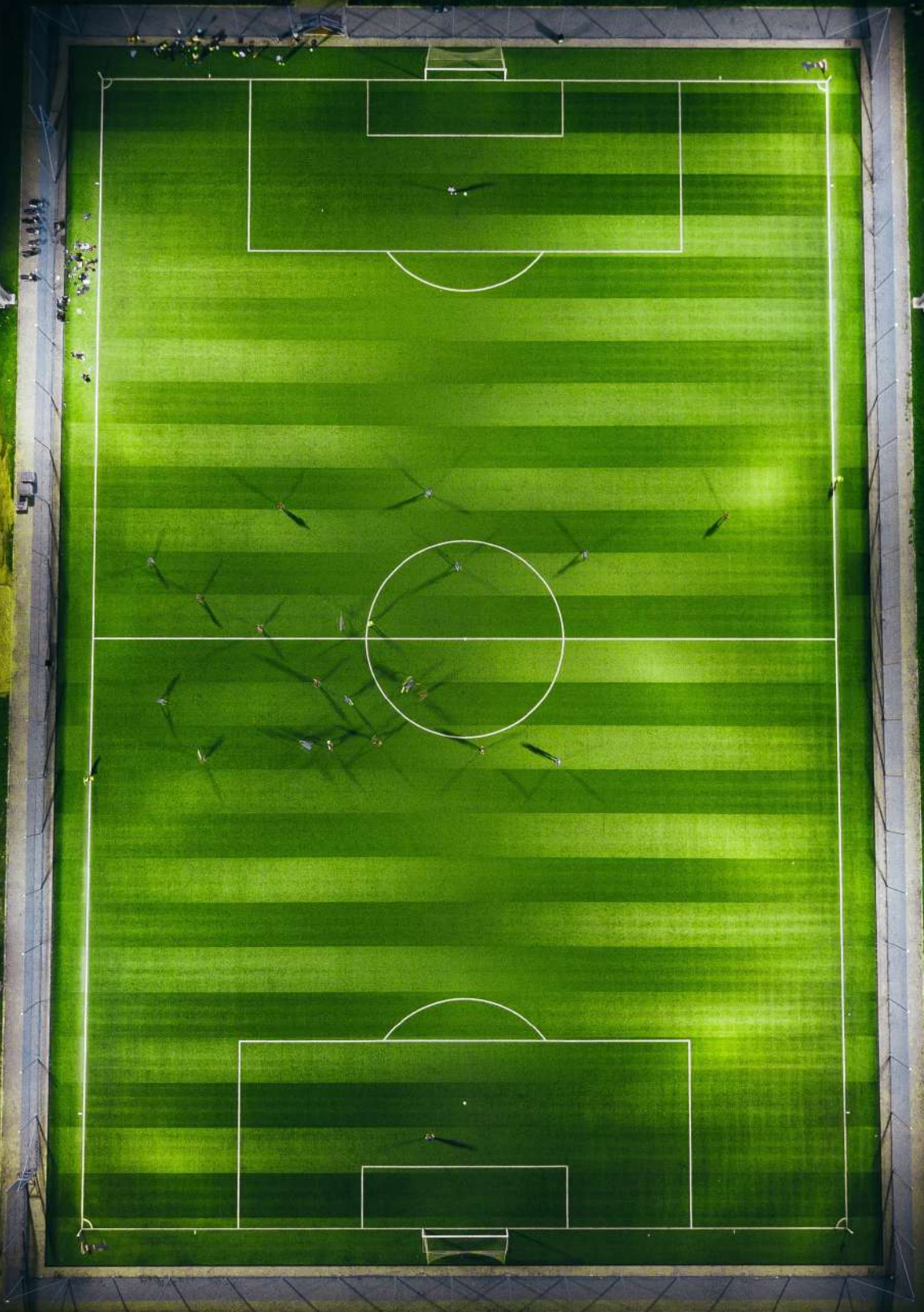


# LATTE QUARTERLY



Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM | Issue One

# Editor's Note

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Thank you for downloading our very first issue of Latte Quarterly, our e-magazine that aims to deliver exactly what it says: quality articles on Leagues, Analysis, Tactics, Training... Everything FM!

This magazine has been in the making for the best part of a year, inspired by those that came before us. There are so many different mediums to consume FM now from the old school blogs to the vast array of audio-visual outlets, but we wanted to offer something a bit different. We will bring you a handful of quality articles across the spectrum from a variety of writers.

In this inaugural issue I will give you a whimsical look at the various thought processes we all go through when deciding on a new save.

We also have an opinion piece from FMSamo where he discusses the reasons why he hides his FM obsession under a bushel. Samo ponders his reasoning for doing this and considers if he should be a more public herald of the game we love to play.

FMGrasshopper takes a tactical look at Antonio Conte's Internazionale and attempts to replicate this in Football Manager.

Last, but by no means least, AccordingtoFM presents us with his Diary of an FM Daddy, a humorous look at how to balance (or try to) playing an increasingly in-depth tactical game with the needs and attentions of a young family.

Latte Quarterly is collated, edited and published by FMSamo, fmadventure, FMGrasshopper and AccordingtoFM but we will happily open our inbox to considering submissions from the wider community. We invite articles of serious analysis, tactical discussion, guides, hint and tips or even tongue in cheek humour.

I hope you enjoy this first offering. Sit down, pick up your Latte and dive in.

**fmadventure**

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## **LQ Issue One:**

### **What's in a save?**

By fmadventure

### **It's worth shouting about**

By FMSamo

### **INTER IS COMING**

By FMGrasshopper

### **Diary of an FM Daddy**

By AccordingtoFM

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# What's in a save?

By fmadventure

**Choosing your new save is like choosing your new car, house or partner. Except it's much more important. Here's how to decide...**

The dawning of a new edition of FM is a beautiful time in the life of any ardent Football Manager obsessive. A clean slate, time to plan your next career – maybe set yourself a new challenge?

This isn't a "Top 10 Clubs To Manage" article but, instead, a look at the different methods people use to select a new club to manage. Whether you're a One Save Loyal or your club history page reads like Leon Knight's Wikipedia page, your first step into a new save is a big decision. After all, you'll probably spend more time with your save in the next twelve months than with your family...

## Old Familiar

You watch them week in, week out. You know the squad, you know the tactical set up, you know you can do better than they're doing in real life! What better place to start than with the club you support? After all, they are *your* club.

Maybe it's all bit too familiar. December comes and your team are struggling in real life. Suddenly it's a chore to watch them at 3pm on a Saturday, never mind coming home to boot up your virtual career which puts the team's real-life accomplishments to utter shame. No, perhaps not.

## The Fallen Giant

They were big in the 80s, but they don't make the back pages anymore. Their name barely even registers when you're listening out for the classified results on a Saturday at full time. They're still a big club at heart though and you can bring them back to the glory days.

But then you pass the 2040 World Cup, hosted by the newly proclaimed Moon territory. You've won everything in sight, it's all a bit too easy now. They were big in the 80s but there's a reason no one listens to Kajagoogoo anymore...

## Superclub Domination

You don't have time to work your way up the ladder, you're starting right at the top. You tell yourself that it's every bit as hard to get a team of world class players to gel, maybe even harder. You're throwing transfer offers at Europe's best clubs like an over excitable game of Numberwang. This. Is. Great.

It turns out you were right, it is harder to get a team of Galacticos to co-operate. Your Frankenstein's Monster of the best players in world football just don't seem to click. You finish 3rd in the league, the continental competition was a non-runner, you're out on your ear. Zidane is back again, maybe it'll work out for him this time. Maybe.



## The Gimmick

You've gone *attributeless* or you've adopted Moneyball. Maybe you'll only sign Newgens who are 5 foot 5 inches or less and have a moustache. It's fun, it's quirky. Most importantly – IT'S UNIQUE!

Oh, but now everyone is doing it. It's no longer unique. It's no longer enjoyable. You start making sacrifices in your strategy: sideburns are almost a moustache, right? You've sold out. Just sign Jadon Sancho, for god's sake.

## Dealer's Choice

You live life on the edge. Every day is a new adventure. Let the game decide who you manage! This is fun and you get a kick from playing in a league you've never played in before. You don't know any of the players so there's not even an ounce of unconscious bias. This is Football Manager in its purest form and you've got a newfound love for Guatemala's seventh best team.

First place secured in your first season. This is amazing! There's a playoff? This is unexpected. You've lost in the final and the opposition are crowned league champions. What is this nonsense?! My Profile > Resign. It was a stupid league format anyway.

## Sign on at the job centre

Starting unemployed is the perfect way to kickstart your world journeyman tour. A few months pass and you take the reins at an underperforming club that are perfectly set for a comeback that Lazarus himself would envy. A quick scour of the free agent market lands you with a team of experienced pros who will take you from zero to hero in an instant.

Twenty years pass and you've finally made it to the pinnacle. The board of an elite level club takes a chance on you despite your collection of fifteen clubs in thirteen countries and only four winner's medals and a promotion to boast of. The players aren't as convinced though and after a difficult opening fixture list there's a dressing room revolt on your hands. You are right back in the job centre again. The Concord Rangers job is available, it's better than nothing.

## Just pick one!

There's no right or wrong way to pick a new save. The wonderful thing about Football Manager is that you can play the game in your very own way. Maybe you'll win everything going or have a trophy room as bare as White Hart Lane's – either way you'll enjoy every second of it.



# It's Worth Shouting About

By FMSamo

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One of the first pieces of writing I did around the subject of Football Manager, way back at the end of 2014, was looking at the discussion point of being addicted to the game. It was a semi-serious piece questioning whether there was a definition of addiction that could be applied to the feeling us managers have when we're playing, or not playing, the game.

It's always been refuted by Miles Jacobsen and of course it would be. Addiction is of course serious and shouldn't be taken lightly. I do consider myself addicted to the game but not to the point where I feel as though it affects my physical, mental, social and/or financial wellbeing. I would hope that everyone else that plays the game feels as though they're in the same boat.

I don't necessarily hide the fact that I play the game, I just don't talk about it much outwith my separate Football Manager Twitter account. It's never the first thing I say to people when I meet them nor is it something I share regularly with the people closest to me. Why though? Lately I've been feeling like I should be shouting about being a proud Football Manager player and here are some reasons why I think I should.

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## It's Bloody Great

If you're reading this, I don't think you need me to tell you that Football Manager is bloody brilliant. It's a hobby I've sunk over 2,000 hours of my spare time into over the last couple of years according to Steam, which is probably small time compared to some others, and that obviously doesn't count the hours writing and discussing the game. It would be very difficult to get the stats on this from all of the other games out there but I'm just going to go ahead and say that I bet none of them provide as much playing time as that over whatever lifecycle they have.

I'm happy enough to play FIFA against people in person round at friends houses or at work (humblebrag), but I couldn't sit there and go through whatever career mode is on the game these days and play against the

computer. I used to constantly try and fail to progress through the missions on Grand Theft Auto, before just driving around, listening to the music on the car radio and running people over. Games on your mobile phone are decent enough to play during a train journey to work but I wouldn't sit and play them in my spare time in the house.

This game captures our imagination like no other but as time goes on, players do fall by the wayside. Those friends you used to hunch round a desktop playing the old games with stop playing. Their hours dwindled as mine stayed steady. Talking about Football Manager saves felt a bit, well, weird, whenever we saw each other. I managed to disguise my FM knowledge as real life football chat, saying players were amazing even though I'd only seen them running around as dots on my laptop screen.

The game is so entwined with modern football these days, various clubs have used or still use the database in their scouting and player recruitment, plus you see Sky Sports using information from the game to talk about how good players are. These things have helped to bring Football Manager back front of mind for those lapsed players. If it's good enough for football clubs or Sky Sports, why do I continue to keep quiet about the amount I play the game?

## **New Friendships**

Making friends on the internet is for weirdos is it not? Wrong. As the Football Manager chat with my closest friends dried up, I needed somewhere to discuss, debate and share everything I wanted to about the game. I'd dipped in and out of the numerous forums like the SI community one, The Dugout and The Away Stand over the years but Twitter became the ideal platform ahead of deciding to go the way of a few others and start an FM blog at the end of 2013.

The love of writing about FM started with Shrewnaldo and Lee/FMAnalysis. These two, Scottish, guys writing brilliantly about the game made me think I could do the same. Years on from when I first encountered their writing it's amazing to say that I regularly speak to Lee and he's in fact written for my own site now, and that I've met Shrewnaldo, albeit very briefly.

Ed, George and the Deep Lying Podcast brought so many people who love the game closer together. It even went some way to bringing some of those lapsed players back through them wanting to hear about the saves they were playing. It brought about those memories of chatting about it with your friends way back when. It was great to meet them both, separately, when they visited

Edinburgh. I loved recording a pod in one of the meeting rooms in my office with Ed and I rue the fact that it's my fault that it's not still around today.

I've talked about it loads elsewhere but starting up FM Slack might just be one of the best things I've done. A huge number of people have joined it over the last few years and, similar to other platforms like it, while not all of the people that joined use it regularly there's a really good number of those that do. Is it weird to say it's like a family? I certainly speak to some of the guys in there more than I do with some members of my family.

The idea for Latte Quarterly was born on there, I speak to Mike/AccordingtoFM, Matt/FMAdventure and Tony/FMGrasshopper every day. From chatting on Twitter to him joining Slack to us meeting in London, TedRedwood is a brilliant guy too and we speak pretty much daily now as well. There's so many others too, far too many to individually mention.

I always get a bit confused when people don't really use it regularly, but I do appreciate that there's often a lot to catch up on and it can be difficult to, even if you're away for just a few hours sometimes. I started it because I thought it would give anyone and everyone the opportunity to bring their FM saves even closer to those that are following along with them. It's certainly done that for me with my own and it's done that for me with being able to follow along with others as well.

## **Opportunities**

Alongside regularly meeting and chatting to others, playing Football Manager has helped me seek out and get involved in other opportunities around the game and even outwith it.

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I properly caught the podcast bug and that eventually led to me stepping up to be on the then Tempo10 Podcast and now One More Game Podcast alongside Mike.

I think that regular podcasting has actually seen me become more confident overall. Despite it being you in a room just talking into a microphone, albeit with someone on the other end of the conversation, I think it builds you up to take that into your everyday life. One thing it has led to has been taking on more podcast projects. My other loves alongside Football Manager are Greenock Morton and the marketing of sport. I co-host the Scottish Football Marketing Podcast in association with the Scottish Football Association and just recently I've started co-hosting a new podcast called Pure Championship, a podcast from the team at Pure Fitbaw focused solely on the Scottish Championship. I don't think I would've done either of these things without Football Manager.

If you're reading this then you probably didn't miss this, but during the FM19 cycle Football Manager created the Byline which is billed as the home of original FM content including

hints, tips, features and interviews. I was lucky enough to be asked to do some writing for the site, alongside Tony and a few other FM writers. We even got invited to the SI office ahead of FM20 launching to have a chat about how we want to shape the future of the Byline for the new game coming out. How can this not be something I shout more about?! The opportunity to write for the actual game that I've been playing for the best part of 20 years of my life. That's pretty bloody cool.

As a Football Manager writer it's easy to hide behind words. If you're making videos or streaming the game, the general consensus is that you show your face and people get to know you and what you're all about. You become recognisable and because you're putting yourself out there like that I would tend to say you're more likely to be comfortable in promoting yourself and what you do a bit more. Those forms of sharing saves have risen exponentially over the last couple of years, but I've hopefully shown that writing can bring you opportunities too if you take the plunge. I've certainly shown myself that I need to shout about my love for Football Manager a bit more and what it's brought me over the years.

**FMSAMO.COM**



**FOOTBALL  
MANAGER 2020**

# INTER IS COMING

By FMGrasshopper



Back in August, when thinking of content for the inaugural edition of LQ, Antonio Conte's appointment at Inter stood out as something that would grab my attention to write about. The attraction wasn't just about having him back in Italian football, but also the interesting sideshows playing out with players I have long admired...both in and outside of Football Manager:

- Romelu Lukaku – the ex-Anderlecht FM Wonderkid who Conte had long pursued, making his way from Manchester United with a point to prove.
- Alexis Sánchez – one of the best players I've seen live over the last 10 years at The Arsenal, returning to Calcio where he made his breakthrough in European football.
- Antonio Candreva – A repositioning of sorts was always on the cards after Conte's appointment. If Candreva were to fit Conte's 3-5-2 system, he would most likely be deployed as an attacking wingback and not a conventional winger.

- Diego Godín – One of the best centre backs of this generation, but can you be considered a true defensive great if you don't try yourself out in Italy...one of the most defensively/tactically astute leagues in the World? Godin has taken the plunge, a move from Atletico Madrid to Inter in the Autumn of his career.
- And finally Lautaro Martínez, the boy wonder from the previous couple editions of Football Manager. Can you exploit his enormous potential and make sure he stakes his claim as Argentina's 1st choice No.9?

Since my initial interest a lot of football content has been produced on Conte's Inter side, from match reports to videos. I therefore don't intend to repeat these pieces, but rather apply their

insight into Football Manager. Can Conte's 3-5-2 be interpreted and replicated in such a way to produce similar results? Can those players have similar impacts in Football Manager as they have in real-life? Read on to find out...



## The Backline



Central Defenders: A common misconception among Football Managers players is that a Ball Playing Defender is one that dribbles out from the back, making marauding runs forward and contribution to attacks in the opposition half. Personally I think this misunderstanding is brought about by analytical pieces that label defenders who do this as 'ball players/ballers' whereas in Football Manager it means something else. A Ball Playing Defender in FM terms increases the likelihood of more riskier passes towards teammates, which will often tend to be vertical in nature. Think of David Luiz at Chelsea/Arsenal, who looks to stretch the play with his good range of passing and vision. In Conte's system there is certainly one BPD in the back three, Milan Škriniar, who has a good passing range using two naturally good feet. But I would also argue that on the right hand side of the three Diego Godín is also making far more riskier passes than in his Atlético days. I've therefore gone with x2 BPDs on the side of a traditional centre back: Setfan de Vrij, who despite not having the passing range of his peers is an extremely capable and solid marshal at the back.

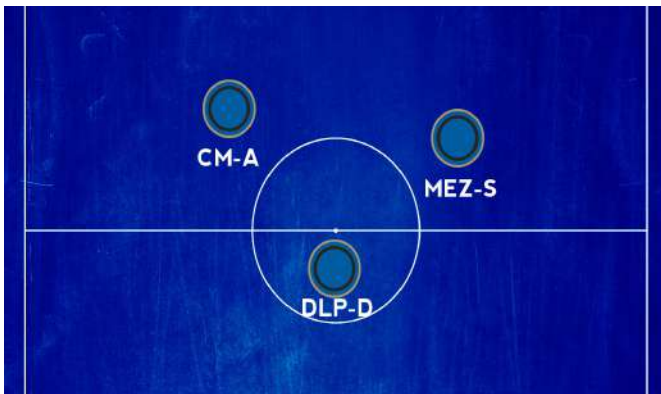
This trio is the bedrock of Conte's system, who demonstrate the behaviours that Conte wants

from his players: the upmost bravery, total commitment, concentration and relentless work-rate for the whole 90 minutes. The Wingbacks are vital in any narrow system, because they offer much needed width. It sounds self-explanatory, but they need to cover a lot of ground up-and-down the pitch. The demands are therefore great on these players, they need to show good defensive discipline in tucking in to create a back 5 when out of possession; but they also need the know-how of when to transition and attack. It's the reason why World Cup Runner-Up Ivan Perišić was moved on quickly by Conte, extremely effective going forward but fairly imbalanced in his [non] ability to position himself and defend.

Instead, Conte goes with domestic experience: Kwadwo Asamoah and Antonio Candreva who between them have clocked over 500 Serie A games. Out of the two, Candreva is usually the most advanced on the right hand side in order to make use of his attacking instincts (I've profiled him as a Complete Wing Back on Attack). To counter this, the right sided central midfielder either becomes a more reserved Carrilero-type role, who offers cover and wide positioning to give Candreva free licence to roam. Conversely, depending on the position, Conte is also known to put a player in there to attack the half-space and overload the right flank (Mezzala). This is a good example of how Conte adapts the 3-5-2 game-by-game in order to gain an advantage and something that could be adopted in Football Manager 2020.

I should also mention football's often forgotten position: The Goalkeeper. Samir Handanović is my kind of keeper, experienced at 35-years of age and has 20 Reflexes and an outstanding Natural Fitness of 17...meaning we can expect a couple of years from him still at the top-level. I've put him in at Goalkeeper on Defend with a goalkeeping instruction to distribute to the Centre Backs.

## The Engine Room

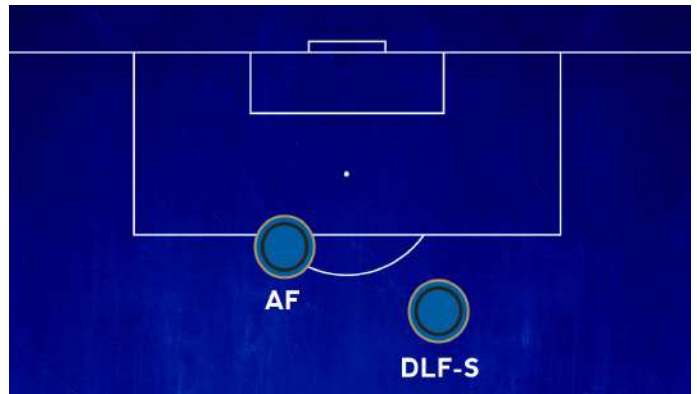


In my view it's essential to find the right balance of passers/holders/runners in a Central Midfield trio. It's probably the delicate bit within the 3-5-2, as your engine room looks to support the strikers whilst offering cover in the build-up. Get it wrong and the imbalance will impact defensively too, leaving a void and an open invitation for the opposition to attack.

Inter's Marcelo Brozović is perhaps the easier of the three to role-profile. Under Conte, his game is that of a Deep Lying Playmaker on Defend. He holds his position and recycles possession and keeps the game ticking over. He is being played much deeper compared to his previous years at Inter, which is evidence of his growing maturity in the game. It could be argued in some games that he is more aggressive in his movement, if that's something you want to replicate, I'd perhaps consider the Regista role.

Alongside Brozović you have athletic runners who are unsurprisingly younger, enthusiastic talents of Nicolò Barella, Roberto Gagliardini and Stefano Sensi. All are interchangeable in a number of roles and Conte tweaks these relationships to suit to opposition. It could be the DLP holding with a Carrilero in front to shuttle into the space vacated by the marauding Attacking Complete Wing Back OR a Mezzala to support attacks (if that Complete Wing Back has a reduced attacking mentality). I have profiled the left-sided partner to be a

Central Midfield on Attack, who is expected to get up the pitch and support attacks centrally. This is often demonstrated by the drive of Stefano Sensi – who is entering his peak years at 24-years of age and certainly one to watch this year.



## The Attack

Despite Football Manager recommending Romelu Lukaku for the Target Man role, I don't see this as his best role in real life. He certainly has the strength but it doesn't always seem to be used in the way of the classic Target Man. I've therefore slotted him as a Deep Lying Forward on Support, in this role he will be more mobile and will mirror some of his Inter movements when dropping deep or running into channels. On a support rule he'll be more motivated to help in the transition, bringing his midfield into the attack and playing in his partner in attack...

His attacking partner was easier to role profile: Advanced Forward. In this role, Lautaro Martínez is the guy to get further forward and stretch the play. He will often be the most advanced attacker who'll be willing to run at the defence and look to break beyond the opposition defence.

## Team Instructions

Team Mentality – I'm of the view that a team not only switches mentality between games, but also within games itself. Certain conditions mean you may want to adjust, in order to

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exploit your opposition's weaknesses or to play to one of your strengths.

Conte's team shape is naturally defensive, with 3 at the back and wingbacks who are positioned more defensively than traditional wingers. It's therefore not overly risky to choose a more positive team mentality, as you'll more than likely have defensive cover to fall back on if the riskier passes or more attacking gambles don't pay off from your players.

However a more risk-averse mentality with this 3-5-2, such as Counter, will produce a more traditional Calcio style of play. Where 'defence first' mentality prevails over a more expansive style of play. So, consider both mentalities ahead of each game you face and also adjust as you see it play out in the match engine.

Pass Into Space – Consider passing into space in order to make use of the runners from wingbacks and the youthful midfield. But like mentality, it's probably something you want to switch on-and-off when viewing how your approach play is going.

Play Out Of Defence – This is probably one you will want to stick with, as you build a philosophy around building from Conte's imperious central three defenders. This instruction will slow your game down slightly, but it will help with ball retention as your

central defenders look to combine with the Wing Backs and central midfield. You can also combine this team instruction with one of the new training modules: Play From The Back. Here your players will spend time outside of games developing their competency of technical play in defensive areas.

Counter – When possession has been won, Conte's teams look to counter and attack the space vacated by the opposition. This will certainly make good use of the attacking mentalities of the Complete Wing Back, Central Midfielder and Advanced Forward, who will all look to bomb forward. This movement is encapsulated really well in Inter's second goal in a 2-0 Vs Borussia Dortmund in October 2019, where an Antonio Candreva ran the length of the pitch to finish off a great counter attacking move.

Use Tight Marking – I've purely selected this on the basis that the central defence are so well disciplined at the back – play to your strengths, right? All three Centre Backs are experts in Positioning, Marking and Tackling.

## Inter is coming?

So, this is my interpretation of Conte's 3-5-2 system at Inter Milan. The real test is how it plays out in Football Manager 2020. Can you de-throne Juventus and end Inter's near-decade wait for a trophy? Why not try it out and see if Inter really is coming..



# Diary of an FM Daddy

By AccordingtoFM

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Since my return to FM at the end of September I found that old itch to play was as strong as ever. Over the summer months I was focused on other things, fitness, work and generally being outside. FM20 was on the horizon and the new football season tempted me back into the fold and I have been playing again, as if I never left. One thing about my life situation which cannot be changed is being a father. As with many players, our love for Football Manager started before we even knew we could love another human being, let alone how we would feel having kids. The following diary type piece reflects my real life of trying to balance FM and being an FMDaddy.

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## Wednesday 25th September

My ears are now tuned to the sound of small feet thudding across the bedroom floor, the notable sound of the toddler gate providing little resistance to the intelligent three-year-old who bursts through it with ease. It's four o'clock in the morning, and not for the first time this week I'm ejected from my own bed and replaced by my son. Faced with three options I choose to forgo cramming into his half sized bed, pass up the bottom bunk of my daughters uncomfortable Ikea bed and head downstairs. I'm unusually awake and with two hours before my alarm rings, I can fit in some Football Manager. Playing before the day begins can be a risky strategy, but I get away with it today as my side is on a great run of form. Three wins later and it's time to break and return to reality. It's porridge for three and coco pops for my eldest daughter then off to shower.

## Monday 30th September

"No love, of course I don't mind you going out with the girls on Friday once the kids are asleep." My mind was already planning

ahead to the upcoming Copa Colombia final. It would be my next game so once she leaves with the youngest, after a quick dash to the fridge, I'll be able to load up. Every FM daddy I've spoken with over the past few years would actively encourage their better half to go out for more drinks or the odd yoga session, freeing up valuable time for virtual sporting activities.

## Tuesday 1st October

Possible change of plan. A slot has opened up at the 'positive birth club' and the wife may be going with the newest youth product, giving a two hour plus window of free time tomorrow. Ok, I need to plan this right. I can play the Copa Colombia tomorrow, then use the next days to advance the game a little before having a possible league title run during Friday's slot. Beautiful.

## Wednesday 2nd October

Arriving home with the possibility of some FM time in the evening gives an extra spring in the step tonight. Bed time will bring its usual headaches and the 15th rendition of



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The Gruffalo that week, but after that, Colombia. Instead, however, I open the door to blocked noses, 'snuffle babe' and misery! Had I not been careful to not get over excited about the FM session I'd have been crushed. The group was cancelled and worse still, no one was in the mood for a swift bedtime. On this occasion I'd rather have never had the opportunity for FM than to have it cruelly ripped away.

## Thursday 3rd October

Awful night, the kids are poor sleepers at the best of times, but not being able to breathe through their nose does somewhat impact on that. No chance to find continue today, survival is the only aim.

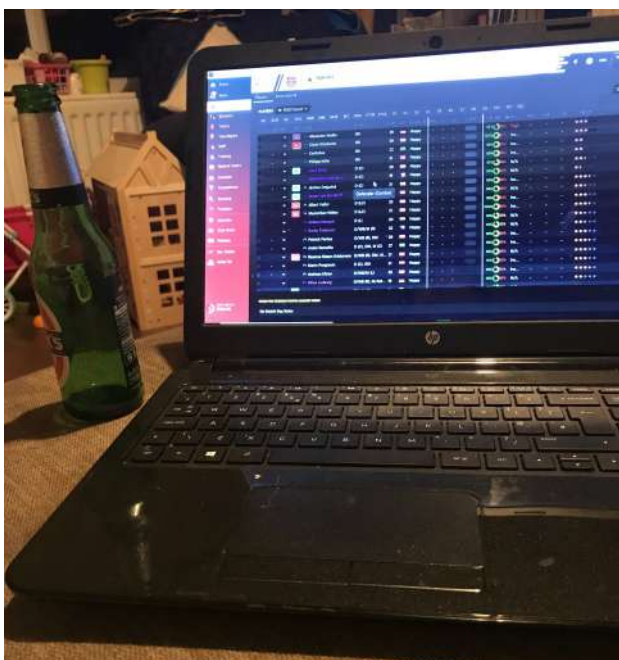
## Friday 4th October

So here it is, the day I've been looking forward to all week. Beers and food purchased, only two cans, you can't afford a hangover with an early start the next day, and I dream of FM. Aside from the controversial 'Beans on Kale on Toast' lunch the morning was uneventful. Mid afternoon I send a message to Mrs According to check everything is a go, but she's bailing. Doesn't "feel up to it any more!"

Deflation.

It's not that she'll ever stop me doing what I enjoy, quite the opposite, but generally after a busy week we would watch a film together. It's the reason I don't play much FM in the evenings, prefer to focus on family time, that's what makes these times when I am free extra special. It's that they're few and far between, a change to the regular schedule. Once again it's taken from my grasp at the last minute. I get back, get everyone to sleep on time, it is generally an easier task when they're sick, then share the pizza I had got. FM comes on and I play the Copa Colombia final. We win and I raise a glass to the Cali 2020 side. Soon after it's over I return to family life, satisfied with my shorter session and the sense of achievement lives on through the weekend.

I have always loved Football Manager, but now that our time together is made shorter with other commitments, I've had to adjust. My time is more and more split, I cannot get through more than a few season each year, but my mind still dreams of tactics and the possibility of success. I think that feeling will always be with me and this is why I will always come back. Hopefully the kids will grow to be independent soon and leave me in peace to watch my dots.

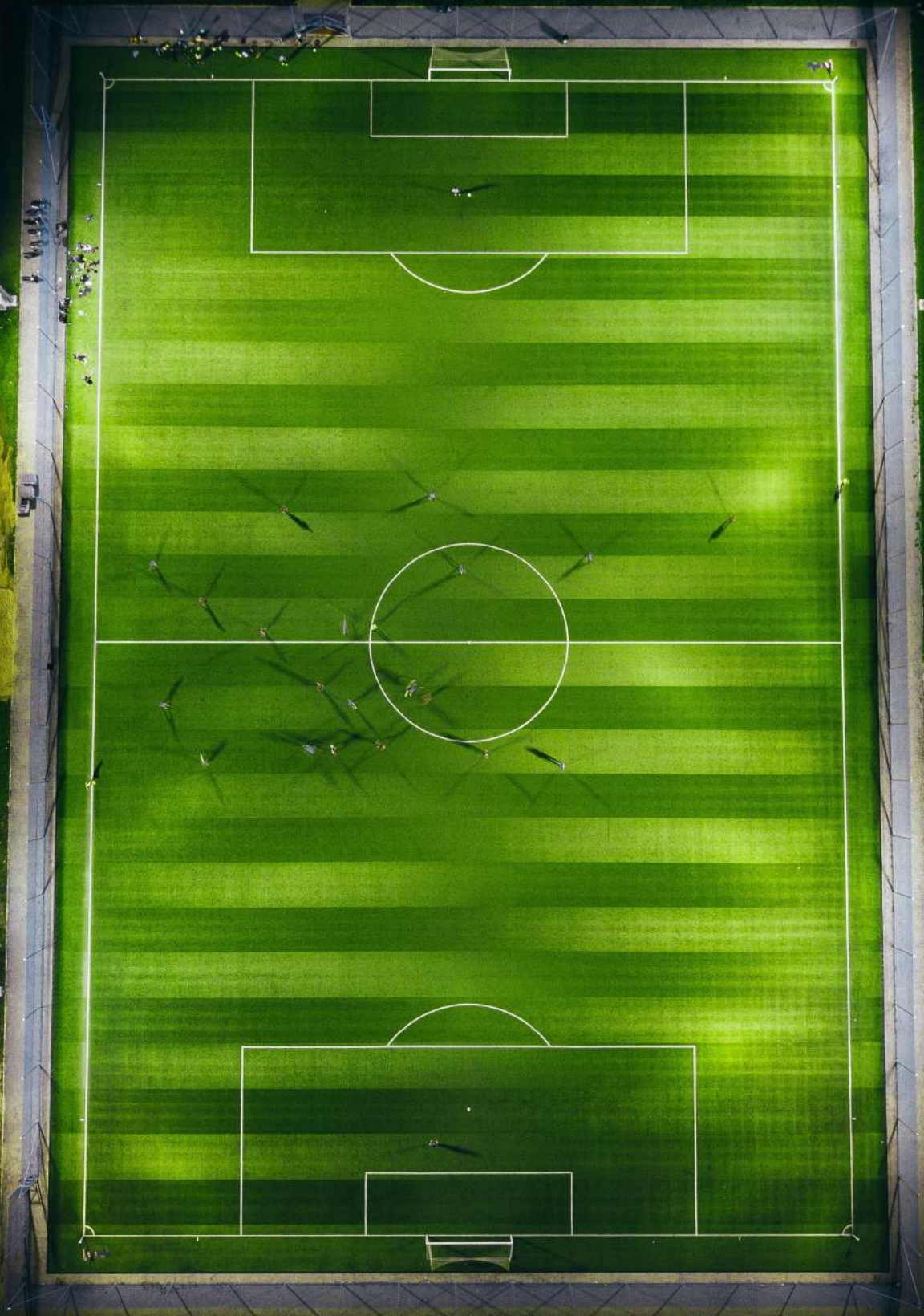


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