

L A C O P A

CLUB WORLD CUP

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022



SPECIAL EDITION

LATTE
QUARTERLY



Editor's Note

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder", something my dad always said to me when I was growing up.

I was itching for FM Versus Mode to return to Football Manager, yet it wasn't really gone for that long. Around 4-5 months in fact, until Sports Interactive brought it back into full-fat Football Manager via a FMFC log-in. Yet, when it arrived in late February I was desperate to see some of the sides I had been reading about come together to face-off in a bigger 'La Copa' than we've ever done before.

Eight teams, two groups and one club world cup winner. We've got the crazy scoring rules (below) like before, and I managed to get the seven other participants I wanted to see face-off against my Inter Miami side.

Rules & Scoring

Each team plays three matches, with three points awarded for a win, one point for a draw and none for a defeat. An additional point is awarded for every goal scored.

Pre-agreed seeding will be used as a tiebreaker if teams are tied on points, GD and GS. Two teams advance from each group to the Semi Finals, a knockout one-legged tie that would go to extra time and penalties if needed.

I think I speak for the other seven Bloggers when I say that it was a good fun. But we didn't want it to be just a few tweets, we wanted to immortalise the tournament in a Latte Quarterly edition. Each manager will briefly summarise their tactical philosophy/hopes/predictions, before FM Stag kindly joins us to summarise the tournament match-by-match using his theangrylinesman point-of-view. We conclude with the thoughts of our winner, now titled "King of the Bloggers" (at least by me).

Do I want to do this all again? Absolutely. I think there is one last Bloggers La Copa tournament left for the FM22 cycle over the Summer. I'll be inviting our two finalists back, and I have a further three Bloggers expressed an interest to join in for La Copa: Club World Cup #2...but are there more? If there is, get in touch.

FM Grasshopper

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
FM ATHLETE



TACTIC
4-3-3

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE QUARTERLY

Background

Although in the real-world Fortuna Düsseldorf are a second division side, in the world of Frank M. Athlete, the year is 2029 and the Fortunen have been promoted to the Bundesliga. They've spent the last three years solidifying their top flight status and, with Frank's help over the last eighteen months, have now established their position in Germany's top league.

Despite their progress, it should be noted that they're still considered a "small" side in the division and as such the Board of Directors have insisted Frank's team play defence minded football, with a direct and counter attacking style.

The draw for 'La Copa: Club World Cup' has pitted Düsseldorf against MLS titans, Portland Timbers, Premier League heavyweights, Newcastle United, and La Liga overachievers, RCD Mallorca. In such illustrious company, it will be prudent to set up with a cautious approach, just as we have been doing in the Bundesliga.

The Tactic

Tactically we have opted for a 4-3-3 set up with the wide players operating in the attacking midfield strata. The defensive midfielder plays as a half back acts as both a shield and an extra defender alongside the back four, while the ball playing defender uses a cover duty to sweep up any balls over the top.

Our full backs and wide attackers offer us a mix of asymmetrical attack and support duties, with a full back and winger combination on the right side, and a full back and inside forward on the left. Through the middle we can afford to be a little bolder thanks to our HB, and so an Advanced Playmaker on support offers our key creative output, with the inside forward ahead of him, while our attacking central midfielder combines well with our striker (usually a False 9), with both players switching places to confuse the defence.

As mentioned above, we want to hit teams on the counter and be direct in our approach play so these instructions are reflected in the tactic too, with us distributing to the back four and looking for more direct passes up the pitch. We're also aware of our defensive vulnerabilities and so have opted to take a deeper defensive line, as we look to absorb pressure and create space behind our opponent's defence.

Great Expectations

You don't enter into a contest like this one without some belief that you can win it, but realistically we have to recognise it will be very hard for us and we'll do well to get out of the group.

Our tactic has been effective in terms of soaking up pressure and scoring goals on the counter, but we're very slow to track runners into the box and seem content to watch our opponents attempt shots from the edge of the area instead of closing them down.

Our best hope for success will be to use our experience to limit our opponents to as few goals as possible as we look to sh*t-house our way to back-to-back 1-0 wins.

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
FM ADVENTURE

TACTIC
4-2-3-1

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
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My Tactic

My five seasons (at the time of writing) with Mallorca have seen me bounce around tactical theories. I have gone from three at the back to flat back four, flipped from wide to narrow and back to wide again. I would not yet say that I am at a position where I feel I have the finished article of a tactic but it is one that works for us right now.

4-2-3-1 is hardly revolutionary. Two central defenders flanked by wingbacks. My two man midfield is a Deep Lying Playmaker paired with a Central Midfielder on Support – they provide a solid base from the transition from defence to attack. Wide on the right I've got a Winger on attack while on the left I am making use of a Raumdeuter for the very first time. The AMC position is currently an Enganche, there to link up the play. Up top it's a very basic role of Advanced Forward.

There are two main routes that I like to attack from – direct balls over the top from the DLP or crosses from the winger on the right side. The Raumdeuter's movement in attacking phases has been an absolute revelation to me... how come I've never used this before now?!

With a player like Danilo Cataldi in my midfield, set pieces are naturally a big focus. Keep an eye out for the pin point delivery finding behemoth Colombian centre backs Cristian Vergara and Yerry Mina.

My Chances in La Copa: Club World Cup

I come into this tournament as the first ever winner of a La Copa tournament. However, it is important to note that my current Mallorca side is nowhere near the level that my then-Atalanta side was. I have just managed to take Mallorca to Europa Conference League football for the first time at the end of the fifth season by finishing 7th in the league.

Group A has some quality opposition for us.

Eadie's Portland Timbers side have been ripping things up stateside – they were Continental champions! The last time I watched, Timbers were also lining up in a 4-2-3-1 but there were some distinct differences in the style of play. They will be an interesting match up for us.

FM Athlete's Fortuna Dusseldorf are a bit of an unknown quantity in this competition. With only one season of information to go on, it's a shrewd move from Mr F. Athlete. Burak Ince will be one I'll be keeping an eye on, having previously been snubbed by the promising Turkish midfielder in an earlier season with Mallorca.

MaddFM's Northern Boys Newcastle will be an intriguing proposition for us. Despite their relegation to the Championship, I won't allow myself to consider them as anything other than strong contenders for this group. Madd has a great vision for the club's future and his determination to regionalise the recruitment makes for a great save. I've become accustomed to hearing how good Adam Armstrong is in FM22 and I don't look forward to facing off against him during this competition.

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
MADD FM



TACTIC
4-1-3-2

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

Background

Northern Boys is a Newcastle save like no other. Not only are we limited to signing players and staff who are born or raised in the North-East of England, we also put a huge focus on reviving football in the North-East by pumping funds into the local region through affiliations, local friendly tournaments and investing extortionate amounts of cash into the other North-East clubs around us by signing their players for exorbitant fees in the hope that this will in turn accelerate their own development and production of local-born players - thus expanding the pipeline of Northern Boys available later down the line.

We spent 5 seasons clearing out all non North-East personnel from the club, earning plenty of cash along the way (selling the likes of Allan Saint-Maximin, Callum Wilson, Joe Willock etc) which then paved the way for us to build out our North-East only playing squad.

The Tactic

We recently changed from a flat 4-4-2 to a narrow 4-1-3-2 as our Centre Halves were regularly exposed and we felt the need to place a solid DM (Sean Longstaff) in front of them for protection. Converting Shola Shoretire to a CM(A) has been a master stroke with him bagging 26 goals and 17 assists over the past two seasons, while Adam Armstrong seems to thrive as long as he has a strike partner (98 goals in 5 seasons). In the absence of wingers we have seen a bigger impact from wing-backs Leif Davis and Freddy Briggs who do a good job progressing the ball forward, making runs and offering width even with a narrow tactical style.

Speaking of style - the move to a narrow 4-1-3-2 without wingers saw us switch to a Vertical Tiki-Taka system. The likes of Longstaff, Shoretire, Barlaser and Wing are all good passers of the ball and we have seen some wonderful team goals created off the back of some one-touch football and quick ball progression from back to front - that being said it is the Championship, La Copa LQ may be a different story altogether!

Strengths: Possession style football, Aerial Threat from Set Pieces, Excellent Set Piece Delivery and freedom for Shola Shoretire to make explosive runs from midfield.

Weaknesses: In the absence of opportunities to play it short we tend to give the ball away a lot, particularly out wide with no wingers to make themselves available.

Opportunities Vs Group Stage opponents

Hopefully the synergy we have built up with these local-born players carries into the game - when the tactic clicks it looks glorious on screen and I reckon we can outplay the likes of Eadster's Portland Timbers or FMAthlete's Fortuna Düsseldorf.

Threats Vs Group Stage opponents

After a sneak peak at FMAdventure's Mallorca series, I saw he has had some proper wonderkids come through as well as some quality in the squad like Ben Yedder, Kubo etc. Would fear that any of these guys with a bit of extra quality and pace might demolish my relatively slow backline who are notoriously bad when being turned.

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
FM EADSTER



TACTIC
5-2-1-2

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

Tactic – During season one of my MLS network save with FMGrasshopper I used a 4-2-3-1 formation that was born out of the tactical pre-sets for “control possession”. We did make some tweaks but the system was largely similar to the initial pre-set. While I don’t feel there is anything wrong with this approach, going into Season 2 I wanted a little more variation to the highlights I was seeing, and some more goalmouth action. Season 1 had been successful but it wasn’t exactly exciting at times.

Back three’s seemed particularly prevalent amongst AI managers in MLS so I thought why not join them. Over the years I have never really built a good back three tactic from scratch myself, so why not try it now in front of the viewers on stream. I already knew I had two very good wing-backs who were mobile and energetic enough to hold a flank themselves. So during the off-season my recruitment focused on Centre-Backs and central attacking players.

Our back three set up made use of the new Wide Centre Back role, which Tony rightly suggested on stream, could cover the more attacking wing back (Jose Van Rankin) on Portland’s right side. The middle centre back was just a standard centre back on cover and the left sided centre back was a Ball Playing Defender. In order to give our wingbacks time to get up the pitch we played out from the back, in the hope that as soon as they were in position our Ball Playing Defender would have the option to switch play to an advancing Van Rankin, or alternatively play it simple into midfield and the side could naturally move up the pitch.

In Centre Midfield we had a Box to Box midfielder and a Centre Midfielder on support. The CM(s) was an important position within the side and it was a role that took me a while to get absolutely right. In attack he often got too far forward leaving us badly exposed in the middle of the pitch during defensive transitions. I did try a CM(d) however, this role wouldn’t get far enough up the pitch and would also play a lot of low risk passes that didn’t really help the team advance. In the end I added some player instructions to the generic CM(s) to get the balance I wanted. I added “holds position” so he could provide cover when we lost the ball, and I also added “takes more risks” so he would be more inclined to play penetrating passes from his slightly deeper position. This made him behave similar to a Deep lying Playmaker but keeping him a CM(s) meant he didn’t unnecessarily attract the ball.

Having played a wide 4-2-3-1 in season 1 I was short in numbers for central attacking players. I didn’t deliberately set out to bring in Brazilians but in the end we found ourselves with a trio of high flair, high dribbling, high finishing Brazilians in the centre of the pitch. Paulinho, once of Tottenham, took on the Box to Box role with traits of “gets forward whenever possible” and “arrives late in opposition area” ; he was perfect for this. Johnathan Goiano was plucked from the Chinese second tier to play as a deep lying forward. His trait of “comes deep to get the ball” meant I had to tailor the movement of my number 10 (Nathan) to ensure we had adequate numbers attacking the opposition’s box. The number 10 role has been a tricky one for me to get right in recent versions of the game and here I decided to use a standard AM(a). Depending upon the game and the opposition I would occasionally add the player instructions “Roam from position”, “moves into channels” and “Take more risks” to try and get the most attacking output from Nathan.

If all of the above has worked well then a chance will fall to the goal machine, Yimmi Chará, our advanced forward who hit an amazing 36 goals in season 2.

Aims for La Copa CWC – I think Group A is wide open. Newcastle are bound to be strong even with the limitations that MaddFM has put upon himself. FMAtelhe’s Dusseldorf look good but he isn’t with them that long so perhaps we have a chance there. Finally FMadventure’s Mallorca, any side challenging in the top 6 of Spain will be difficult but it is one I feel my Portland side are up to matching. My aim is to sneak out of the group in second with Samba-ball scoring a few bonus points for goals scored!

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
FM GRASSHOPPER



TACTIC
4-4-2

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

Tactic

During the two season MLS network save with Chris Eadie, Inter Miami have cruised their way to domestic and continental success with a simple 4-4-2 tactic. However, often taking the 'simple' route doesn't mean you have not thought about it. Johan Cruyff once said: "Playing football is very simple, but playing simple football is the hardest thing there is". It's easy to overload your tactic with lots of instructions, a lot of the pre-sets are indeed littered with a lot of instructions to channel a side into play a particular style. My 4-4-2 is not like this.

Part way through Season 1 I determined that I was not getting the best out of Gonzalo Higuaín. I was continually being nagged by Chris about how much he was being paid compared to the rest of the league, and I took the decision to build around him. At first I didn't get it quite right...using him as a CF-S, before switching him to a Poacher in order to solely concentrate on goal scoring. It shows that you are better off not 'chop and changing' a tactic, but accept that gradual/continual refinements of an existing shape/style are 'part and parcel' of the process.

The basic premise of my tactic is getting it up to the two forwards in the penalty area, who are blessed with exceptional Mental attributes such as Anticipation, Decisions and Off The Ball. To do that, I need wide men who are decent at crossing low. We release these attack minded players by passing into space, and do this more often by playing on the counter. See, it's simple...but it required thought (and several tweaks in the process).

We're playing with a Positive mentality, but we're not afraid to adjust when closing out the game. That's known as 'Lockdown' in the streams, and they follow the same gradual path towards a low block. We're happy to mark tightly, waste time and slow the game down. This isn't a tactic that works for everybody, but it works for us.

This is Inter Miami in Football Manager 2022.

My thoughts on La Copa: Club World Cup

I think on first viewing of Group B, you'd probably put me down as 2nd best behind undoubted La Copa favourites Southampton (managed by FM Samo). However, the beauty of Versus Mode is that we know the other guys in the group have been busy building their sides in their respective offline saves. I know that Jose/YouthIntake's Ternana Calcio are doing great things in Serie A and only a fool would go in confidently against FM Rensie. I personally feel any one of Miami, Ternana or Warta can finish 2nd in the group and enter the Semi Final stage.

I see my side's weakness as twofold: (1) we are overly reliant on one man to finish our chances. Higuaín has been so good in a Miami shirt, and if any injury were to occur during the games...I may struggle. (2) We're a rigid 4-4-2, it's natural that a No.10 or an influx of opposition centrally can cause us problems. It's something that I've got to be mindful of, and accepting I may need to deviate from the usual approach.

I'm excited to see how we do.

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
FM SAMO



TACTIC
4-2-2-2

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

Tactic

If you're reading this then you're highly likely to have already read the previous issue of Latte Quarterly, in which I wrote about my 4-2-2-2 in great detail. If you've completely forgotten about it, can't be bothered to go back and read that or have no idea what Latte Quarterly is and you're just here because you clicked on a link to read something, then let me enlighten you again!

The tactic is loosely based on Saints' real life approach, with the front six being two 8s, two 10s and two 9s. I might only be into my fourth season in-game, but the squad is much changed from the one I initially inherited when I arrived at St Mary's.

Billy Gilmour and James Garner take their place in the centre of midfield as my two 8s. The way I imagine them to play in my head doesn't quite translate into the way they play on the game, no matter what role I give them both. For the most part they are a CM(D) and a CM(S), it's not very original and they don't provide the dynamism I'm looking for in their roles but they provide stability and they do a job. Just not the job I necessarily want them to do.

The players playing in the two 10 roles wide right and wide left change all the time. It could be Marcos Leonardo, it could be Amine Gouiri, it could be my South Korean stars, Lee Kang-In or Jeong Woo-yeong, it could be my newest signing, Conor Gallagher who can't usurp my CM two just yet. The possibilities are endless, and they're a danger when they get on the ball.

Benjamin Šeško is the main man up front now, despite Adam Armstrong's goalscoring heroics across my first three seasons at the club. If Šeško doesn't finish as top scorer in La Copa Club World Cup, I'll be shocked. He's my Advanced Forward, while the Deep Lying Forward next to him is usually up in the air. It could well be Marcos Leonardo, who the game loves but I usually prefer to play out wide.

My Expectations for the La Copa Club World Cup

I've got to be favourites for the whole thing, surely right? I've got a target on my back as the only Premier League side in the competition, and probably the most expensively put together squad in the competition.

But what will the new FM22 Versus Mode throw up? Who knows what's going to happen as we venture into this new way of playing the game, especially as we export all of our own sides to play against each other. I don't think any of us know what to expect, and that's the beauty of it.

Enjoy reading all about it!

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
YOUTH INTAKE



TACTIC
4-1-3-2

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

Background

We find ourselves in the 2026–2027 season, that's six years of managing Ternana Calcio. Out of those six seasons, five of them have been in Serie A. In the real world, Ternana finished the 2021/2022 season in 10th place, not bad for a club that's just been promoted to the division.

Back in the metaverse... We were able to achieve promotion to Serie A by finishing unbeaten in my first season at the club. Scoring 100 goals and only conceded 15. In my second season with the club, we were able to miraculously finish in 2nd place in Serie A after an amazing season from our veteran striker, Alfredo Donnarumma, finishing the season with 46 goals and 6 assists in 39 matches in all competitions. The following season we struggled a bit but managed to qualify for the Champions League on the final day.

By this point in my save I've been playing more positive/attacking football, it reflected on both the amounts scored and conceded, so for the next three seasons I decided to tinker with the original tactic. I switched some players for a more balanced and cautious approach. These changes led us to three consecutive Serie A titles. Each season improving significantly in points with 86, then 94, and finishing unbeaten in our last season with 100 points.

Tactic

"Ternizilla 4-1-3-2" was inspired by FMGrasshopper's "Godzilla 4-1-3-2" tactic from his FM21 save with Junior. I fell in love with the exchange of play between the midfielders and the strikers, the #gifgoals were just splendid. The first couple of seasons were used as a trial period for certain Player Roles and Player Instructions. After three seasons of tinkering with PR and PI, I was able to achieve the balance that I needed.

The idea was to play with what Ondrej has described as a 'false CD' and create a back 3 in defence with two CB-D playing alongside a HB to dictate the tempo of the match and spray balls to his teammates. They will be helped by two CM-S in front of them, they will serve as the bridge between defence and attack. In attack, the team will end up looking like 5 up top. Two CWB-A on either flanks, a CM-A making runs through the middle, and two strikers in the channels.

We will look to overload the central areas with very short passing sequences and whip some early cross in for our two strikers and CM-A to get on the end of. We will play very narrow in the defence and teams will be forced to cross the ball into the box where they will meet our wall of 6'4"+ CDs. Although this sounds confident, I've struggled with two formations through the six years at Ternana. The first one being a 3-4-3 and the second being a 4-2-4, our complete wingbacks are not the best and will struggle at times to cover that amount of pressure from players over/underlapping.

Expectations

My nightmares came true as I was drawn into Group A alongside FM royalty; FM Rensie's Warta, FMGrasshopper's Inter Miami, and FMSamo's Southampton. All three clubs have their own way of playing and it will be tough to get a result. Ondrej's set pieces will make me anxious throughout the match. Tony's Flamingos have been hard to break down as we've all seen him split dominance of the MLS alongside Eadie's Sambaball. Lastly, we can all agree that no one wants to face Samo's Southampton. The team that I've imported is a very young team, averaging at 21 years old. Most of the older stars have already left to bigger clubs so my hopes are now to have fun and find a way to squeeze past Ondrej and Tony into second place.

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



MANAGED BY
FM RENSIE



TACTIC
3-5-2

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

Tactic and the team background

My nation and club for the Football Manager 2022 are Poland and Warta Poznan. I spent the opening three seasons of the save while using the formation with two central defenders and the Half Back. I called it a formation with the false central defender. The reason is simple thanks to the natural behaviour of the HB role (dropping back, distributing the ball, covering a lot of space and more). It would be natural to use this formation as it was successful, and it worked exactly as I wanted. But I changed the formation back to more standard three central defenders after three seasons. If you know me, you also know that I love to play with flat three central midfielders. No matter how many defenders are at the back. I also like using the boring CM(S) role instead of roles with more interesting names. The main idea is to use CM(S) roles in combination with different player traits. It means both my MCL and MCR players can offer something different in terms of playing defensively and offensively. The perfect example is when one of these players developed the Comes Deep To Get Ball trait so I can use him as another pivot who will offer another option where to distribute the ball from the back. One of my players developed almost all player traits that suit the Mezzala role perfectly but still, he remains as CM(S). What's the point of this approach? One of them surely is that my players have some kind of freedom. Another thing is that it keeps my roles simple. And it also gives some kind of unpredictability to our playing style because all my central midfielders have different player traits and anyone knows what they will do. Short passes? Or long-range passes from the left side to the right side? Tackle harder instead of playmaking skills? There is everything. I also like that I found the perfect Target Forward in this save in Sebastian Musiolik. It gives me another unpredictable thing because we are not dependent only on the Advanced Forward as many of our opponents would expect...

I decided to export the squad from the 2025/2026 season despite I lost the best newgen of the save so far a couple of weeks ago in the in-game date but I enjoyed watching this team when I played the save.

La Copa: Club World Cup expectations:

The Football Manager 2022 edition is not getting as much attention as editions in the past from me. There are a couple of reasons for it, including working/personal life, the war in Ukraine where I lost a couple of friends and two relatives and returning health issues for myself and my family members. The fact I don't enjoy playing the game itself due to many boring small things is also important to mention (even writing this short post was more enjoyable than playing the game for hours). But La Copa brought together great friends and perfect FM players, and it would be too hard to not participate in it. No matter if I will win something or lose everything against the strong sides, I was put together in the group stage with Inter Miami, Southampton and Ternana. My aim? Just have some fun.

theangrylinesmen

football news and analysis

The Marvellous and the Menacing

Words by FM Stag

Greek philosopher Epictetus said, *"The greater the difficulty, the more glory in surmounting it."*

That is often the ethos of the Football Manager blogger. Some choose atypical or obscure football clubs; others create self-imposed restrictions on recruitment or make moves in pursuit of the most compelling narrative. This quote must have been on the minds of some of the managers who registered their beloved sides for the maiden La Copa Club World Cup campaign.

£1bn drafts be damned, this competition is a little different. From Poland to Portland, Terni to Tyneside, these aren't the biggest clubs and the biggest players. These are the passion projects of the blogging community facing off in a low-key tournament, throwing up some wonderful chess-style tactical encounters in the process.

In a notably antithetical quote from another Greek philosopher, Epicurus said "Being happy is knowing how to be content with little." Try telling that to the managers involved in this competition, whose team's range from the marvellous to the menacing. You can take away the elite footballers and the social media persiflage, but you can't take away the burning desire from these eight bloggers to lift the inaugural Copa Club World Cup.

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP

GROUP A:



**FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022**

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QUARTERLY

Group A – Fortuna Düsseldorf (FM Athlete), Newcastle United (MaddFM), Portland Timbers (FM Eadster), Real Mallorca (FM Adventure).

La Copa: Club World Cup

Portland Timbers 2-2 Real Mallorca

A high-scoring draw between two sides with opposing tactical ideologies. Portland Timbers set up in a narrow 5212, their three central defenders allowing the wing backs to regularly venture across the halfway line. Mallorca by contrast in a 4231. Nearly 700 completed passes by Portland eclipsed Mallorca's 450, but eight of Mallorca's ten outfield players spent more time in the opposition half than their own. An FM Adventure, indeed. Portland led 1-0 at half time after Yimmi Chará's well taken near-post low drive from a well-timed through-ball from Brazilian veteran Paulinho. Driven by the impressive creativity of midfielder Daniel Cataldi and winger Luka Romero however (12 key passes between them), Mallorca roared into a 2-1 lead midway through the second half. Vidovic's delicate curling finish the undoubted highlight. It wasn't over though, as Samba soccer star Nathan dinked a lovely free kick over the wall and into the net in the 84th minute to equalise. Eadster's possession-based Portland couldn't get the better of a resolute yet attacking Mallorca side who outran their opponents and attempted nearly twice as many crosses. A fair result.

Player of the Match – Nathan – Portland Timbers – 8.4

Newcastle United 2-1 Fortuna Düsseldorf

MaddFM's Newcastle United are not the extravagantly funded pet project they are in many other people's saves this year. Instead, local recruitment is not only a focus, but an unbreakable rule. Though Newcastle (adopting a narrow 4132) managed eleven shots on target to Düsseldorf's four (playing a wide 433), three of FM Athlete's chances were considered high quality, where only two of Madd's were (the goals). Despite Fortuna's inspired goalkeeper Charlie Setford, pulling off an incredible nine saves, it wasn't enough to keep Newcastle at bay. Goals either side of half-time by Shola Shoretire and Adam Armstrong cancelled out Hansen-Aaroen's beautifully placed opener and sent the points home with the English side. Newcastle's regular short distribution from goalkeeper to centre-back, namely Dael Fry, led to the Magpies dominating possession in midfield, while sole Düsseldorf striker Daryl Dike cut an isolated figure, involved in only 24 passing combinations before his 81st minute exit from the game. Adam Armstrong by comparison was involved in 70. A deserved victory for Newcastle United, but it wasn't as cleanly won as you might think.

Player of the Match – Shola Shoretire – Newcastle United – 8.2

Real Mallorca 2-2 Newcastle United

Another two goals for Madd's Newcastle side, but this time it ended in a draw against Adventure's Mallorca who followed their 2-2 result against Portland with another one. The short distribution to Dael Fry was a key tenet of Newcastle's system again here, but Mallorca's positive 4231 meant that they restricted Newcastle's possession in their defensive third while largely matching them in the battle for the ball in midfield and at Newcastle's end. Mallorca's shape was more expansive and focused play in the wide areas, while often Newcastle's playmakers were bogged down in the middle of the park with few available penetrative passing options. This frustration led to the opening goal for Magpie Lewis Wing who smacked a beautiful shot from well outside the box off the inside of the far post before wheeling away to celebrate. A late goal from each side deep into injury time added some drama after Mallorca's first equaliser, but 2-2 was a fair result. A great day for Mallorca's Jonathan Fröhlich as he grabbed both of his side's goals.

Player of the Match – Jonathan Fröhlich – Real Mallorca – 8.7

La Copa: Club World Cup

Fortuna Düsseldorf 1-0 Portland Timbers

After defeat against Newcastle United, Athlete's Düsseldorf roared back into contention in Group A with a narrow 1-0 victory over Eadster's Portland. A match of few notable chances, this was a tense affair. Portland dominated the middle of the park mainly due to short distribution via Bill Tuiloma who nestled between his centre backs, while Düsseldorf had more joy down the flanks. Portland's Claudio Bravo was a creative spark, delivering regular crosses from the left wing-back position, but a goal never looked likely. Sadly, it was a Tuiloma mistake which led to Lazetic's winning goal in the 85th minute after a poor clearance dropped the ball at the feet of the Fortuna player. Düsseldorf had Hadjam sent off late on, but Athlete's men held on for what could be a crucial win.

Player of the Match – Marko Lazetic – Fortuna Düsseldorf – 8.4

Portland Timbers 3-1 Newcastle United

In the final group stage match for both sides, diminutive cult hero Yimmi Chará was lethal in bagging the points for Eadster's Portland. His two second half goals added to Nathan's leveller in the first, and Newcastle were eased past. Although an even game in terms of chances created, a quick look at the shot map shows that Portland attempted most of their shots from the middle of the box just in front of the keeper. Madd's Newcastle by comparison largely attempted their shots from further out and from narrower angles. Portland's three at the back seemed to push the Newcastle attackers wide and away from the centre of the goal, and it looked like that was the most noticeable difference between the sides.

Player of the Match – Yimmi Chará – Portland Timbers – 8.3

Real Mallorca 0-0 Fortuna Düsseldorf

Closing off Group A was a 0-0 between two sides who didn't show quite enough ruthlessness in their three games to progress in the tournament. Despite the score line, Mallorca's Danilo Cataldi showed again why he's the creative heart of this team, delivering 11 key passes. Charlie Setford in the Düsseldorf goal had another excellent performance too with another nine saves made. Both teams completed almost 800 passes each and based on the average positions of the midfielders of both sides; they effectively cancelled each other out. A tactical gridlock between two good sides. Now that Group A is settled, Düsseldorf defended well but didn't create enough. By contrast Mallorca created more chances to score than even Portland or Newcastle managed in Group A, but their finishing and leaking of goals let them down in the end.

Player of the Match – Charlie Setford – Fortuna Düsseldorf – 8.3

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP

GROUP B:



FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE QUARTERLY

Group B – Inter Miami (FM Grasshopper), Southampton (FM Samo), Ternana Calcio (Youth Intake), Warta Poznan (FM Rensie).

La Copa: Club World Cup

Inter Miami 2-2 Ternana Calcio

The opening encounter in Group B was the Italian team's victory to throw away. FM Grasshopper's Miami were in fact 1-0 up after 17 minutes against the run of play thanks to a Gonzalo Higuaín strike but lost Colombian playmaker Edwin Cardona to a red card on the stroke of half time. Jose Youth Intake and his Ternana side took advantage and continued to dominate in the second half. Despite Miami's attempts to work around Ternana's compact system often by way of Ethan Laird's marauding runs up the right flank, the Italians bagged a deserved equaliser via Gerardo Gonzalez's beautiful curving volley in the 80th minute. Ternana then thought they'd won it with De Rossi's tap-in in the last minute of regulation time, but the tireless Laird crossed for the veteran Argentinian Higuaín at the other end who looped a 93rd minute header over the keeper for the equaliser for Miami. A breathless finish to an interesting affair.

Player of the Match – Gonzalo Higuaín – Inter Miami – 8.3

Southampton 4-0 Warta Poznan

Inarguably the biggest side in the competition, FM Samo's Southampton faced off here against the smallest side in FM Rensie's Warta Poznań. Despite an impressive 89% tackle success rate combined with over 400 completed passes, the Polish side were simply outclassed by a higher calibre of footballer. Rensie's side were highly organised, battling hard in the middle of the pitch and winning the lion's share of aerial battles but ultimately Southampton found an alternative route to goal. Three of the four goals came from crosses, and one from a lofted free kick from deep. Livramento and Perraud regularly supported the wide men in front of them, regularly creating overloads on both flanks. Samo's side patiently wore down Warta, who were spirited but ultimately lacked the required quality to truly compete.

Player of the Match – Mohamed Salisu – Southampton – 8.5

Ternana Calcio 0-1 Southampton

Plucky and unlucky Ternana hit the woodwork twice in this thrilling match which was technically decided in the opening minute when Benjamin Sesko fired into the bottom corner to fire Southampton ahead on 24 seconds. Southampton's wide attackers drifted inside more often than they did against Warta, but their signature double-up with the full-backs was again in full motion here. Ternana were compact and organised in what ended up as a 3-5-2 based on passing positions but Southampton's 4-2-4 was expansive and more direct. Substitute Kang-In Lee managed five key passes in just 23 minutes after his introduction, and though this creativity did not result in a second Southampton goal, it kept Ternana from being able to break into any meaningful late-game pursuits for an equaliser. A deserved victory for the Saints.

Player of the Match – Romain Perraud – Southampton – 7.8

La Copa: Club World Cup

Warta Poznan 2-0 Inter Miami

FM Grasshopper's Miami side utilised their 4-4-2 to capture the lion's share of possession (59%), more attempts at goal (16-12) and more completed passes (488-377) but unfortunately for the MLS outfit, the chances created were not of the highest calibre, and almost half of Miami's shots were from long range. By contract, Warta were deadly when required. Musiolik dinked a lovely chip over the onrushing Andrada to open the scoring on the stroke of half time and Kaminski capitalised on a missed interception to sweep home a floated cross to confirm the victory in the 87th minute. Warta keeper Grobelny was the player of the match, holding onto seven saves, while the right-sided defensive pairing of Konzewicz-Zylka and Drapinski managed a competition-high 31 clearances between them. Miami played well, but too many hopeful pot-shots were fired at a resolute team who took their chances well and deserved the win.

Player of the Match – Jędrzej Grobelny – Warta Poznan – 8.1

Inter Miami 0-2 Southampton

Unfortunately for Inter Miami and FM Grasshopper, this was FM Samo's Southampton side at their very best. Over 30 attempts on goal and over 90 miles run between the Southampton players, this was two 4-4-2 variants facing off with only one winner. A key difference seemed to be the Miami players' insistence on attempting shots from outside the box. By contrast, Southampton aimed 19 crosses onto and around the edge of the six-yard box. Esteban Andrada was in great form, grabbing a 7.9 rating with his seven saves and excellent distribution, and while Ethan Laird continued to show his impressive pace on the right flank, the gulf in player ability was just too wide of a chasm for the US side to close. Southampton's Harwood-Bellis had the game of his career; a 96% success rate from 28 contested headers, a competition-high nine successful interceptions and even a goal to his name. What a day for the defender.

Player of the Match – Taylor Harwood-Bellis – Southampton – 9.1

Ternana Calcio 3-0 Warta Poznan

Jose Youth Intake's Ternana side were dominant in this one-sided affair. Midfielder and player of the match Antonio Palumbo incredibly completed 16 key passes in the 90 minutes. That is, 16 passes which led directly to an attempt on goal. Rensie's Warta were off the boil and couldn't break down the Italians who outfought them in all areas of the pitch. All five of Warta's chances came from long distance passes while Ternana found the most joy from crosses wide on each flank very close to the Warta byline. Dragicevic's 82nd minute first time volley from just inside the box was the goal of the game. An exciting match which started nervously ended in Ternana running out as the deserved winners.

Player of the Match – Antonio Palumbo – Ternana – 8.9

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP GROUP FIXTURES

FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE
QUARTERLY

GROUP	TEAM 1	SCORE	TEAM 2	TELE
A	PORTLAND TIMBERS	2 - 2	RCD MALLORCA	
A	NEWCASTLE UNITED	2 - 1	FORTUNA DÜSSELDORF	
B	INTER MIAMI CF	2 - 2	TERNANA CALCIO	
B	SOUTHAMPTON FC	4 - 0	WARTA POZNAŃ	
A	RCD MALLORCA	2 - 2	NEWCASTLE UNITED	
A	FORTUNA DÜSSELDORF	1 - 0	PORTLAND TIMBERS	
B	TERNANA CALCIO	0 - 1	SOUTHAMPTON FC	
B	WARTA POZNAŃ	2 - 0	INTER MIAMI CF	
A	PORTLAND TIMBERS	3 - 1	NEWCASTLE UNITED	
A	RCD MALLORCA	0 - 0	FORTUNA DÜSSELDORF	
B	INTER MIAMI CF	0 - 2	SOUTHAMPTON FC	
B	TERNANA CALCIO	3 - 0	WARTA POZNAŃ	

GROUP A	PLAYED	W	D	L	GOALS SCORED	PTS
PORTLAND TIMBERS	3	1	1	1	5	9
NEWCASTLE	3	1	1	1	5	9
MALLORCA	3	0	3	0	4	7
FORTUNA DÜSSELDORF	3	1	1	1	2	6

GROUP B	PLAYED	W	D	L	GOALS SCORED	PTS
SOUTHAMPTON	3	3	0	0	7	16
TERNANA CALCIO	3	1	1	1	5	9
WARTA	3	1	0	2	2	5
INTER MIAMI	3	0	1	2	2	3

La Copa: Club World Cup

Unfortunately, we say goodbye to FM Adventure's Mallorca – the most creative side in the tournament; racking up 7.06 xG from their created chances but frustratingly seeing that cancelled out by conceding four goals and only scoring four in return. As the only team to go out without losing a match, FM Adventure can feel hard done by. FM Athlete's Fortuna Düsseldorf also exit the competition despite goalkeeper Charlie Setford's heroics. Warta were resolute and well-organised and given the stature of the Polish outfit Rensie manages, he can't be too frustrated at exiting at this stage. FM Grasshopper's Inter Miami depart the tournament without a win and with many long-range misses in the memory but with the goal-scoring prowess of the veteran Gonzalo Higuaín and performances of Esteban Andrada and Ethan Laird meriting another mention.

Portland Timbers and Newcastle United shared top spot in Group A and progress. FM Eadster's Portland look tough to break down with their three at the back and short distribution style working well with Yimmi Chara's goalscoring danger clear to see at the other end (three goals so far). MaddFM's Newcastle have bags of pace in attack and goals coming from midfield are a potent threat too. Antonio Palumbo-inspired Ternana scored 1.91 less goals than their expected goals tally suggested, so if a Ternana striker can find goal-scoring form, Jose Youth Intake's side look like the surprise package of the competition, creating chances with alarming regularity. FM Samo's Southampton must be the current favourites. Seven goals scored, zero conceded, three wins from three. Yes, they are the biggest side financially and reputationally being managed in La Copa but that doesn't automatically translate to good performances on the pitch. The doubling up of full-back and wide attacker is a key tenet of Southampton's tactical system, while competition top scorer with four strikes, Benjamin Sesko, looks unstoppable.

The semi-final stage will be a nervy affair, and no matter which teams face off against each other, with 32 goals from the opening 12 matches, we are guaranteed the rest of the competition won't be short on action.

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP



La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP

SEMI FINALS:



FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE LO
QUARTERLY

Portland Timbers 4 - 1 Ternana Calcio

The first of two epic semi-final battles kicked off in breezy 29-degree weather. Jose Youth Intake's Ternana started brightly against FM Eadster's Portland and even pulled the game back to 1-1 on 12 minutes, a smartly taken left foot finish from Facundo Maldonado cancelling out Nathan's seventh minute tap-in opener. Unfortunately, that was the last truly bright spark in this affair from the Italian side. Ternana's 4-1-3-2 which plays out more like a 3-5-2 on the pitch covered all of the grass but the Portland press ensured that the most common passes for Jose's side were from the goalkeeper to his defensive trio. Timbers, on the other hand, made full use of width, both marauding wingbacks the most common pass recipients on the field. Despite our repeated championing of Ternana playmaker Antonio Palumbo throughout this competition, unfortunately his Copa experience was to end 34 minutes into this semi-final. Inexplicably doing his best Granit Xhaka impression and diving two-footed into Portland wide man Josecarlos Van Rankin near the halfway line was to be Palumbo's last action as he saw red immediately. Patient Portland didn't go for the jugular right away, however. It in fact took until the 105th minute in extra time for Nathan to add to his early strike, pouncing on a calamitous defensive mix-up to tap in from close range. With no further reason to hold back, Ternana mounted a spirited attack, but this allowed Eadie's Portland and their talismanic striker Yimmi Chará to sneak in twice to end the game after 120 minutes with a lop-sided 4-1 scoreline. Amid cries of "Stop it, they're already dead!" from the crowd, the final whistle blew and Eadie's Portland were deserved finalists.

Player of the Match – Yimmi Chará – Portland Timbers – 9.5

Southampton 0-0p Newcastle United

Two English Premier League juggernauts. Big names, big talents but err, zero goals. Unfortunately, the intensity of this semi-final must have got to the players as FM Samo's Southampton couldn't break down Madd's resolute Newcastle, who ended up sneaking the victory in a penalty shoot-out. An incredible 33 attempts at goal and 58% possession bore no fruit for Southampton as Newcastle held on. Southampton's usual line-hugging 4-2-4 translated more like the famous Brazilian box formation as the wide men were drawn more and more narrow to try and create numerical overloads against Newcastle as the game went on. Newcastle remained stable in their back four block protected by Sean Longstaff sat in front. Samo's side were the more adventurous of the two and didn't put a notable foot wrong. Sometimes when the opposition keeper, Freddie Woodman in this case, pulls out an 8.7 rated performance and your star striker Ben Sesko misses the final penalty, it's hard not to feel like anything Samo could've done differently would've prevented a Newcastle victory in the end. Credit where it is due, however, sometimes a resolute and committed defensive performance pays off, and that's exactly how Madd and his Northern Boys proceed to the final. Bravo!

Player of the Match – Freddie Woodman – Newcastle United – 8.7

La Copa: Club World Cup

LA COPA CLUB WORLD CUP

THE FINAL:



FOOTBALL
MANAGER 2022

SPECIAL EDITION
LATTE QUARTERLY 

Portland Timbers 2-3 Newcastle United

From eight bloggers down to two, it has been quite the competition. Only one can be named La Copa Club World Cup champion. In a nice twist, two sides who have met already in the group stage reunite for the final. FM Eadster's Portland Timbers and MaddFM's Newcastle United. The last encounter finished as a 3-1 Portland win. A Chará-inspired counter-attacking affair, Portland restricted Newcastle United by using their back three to push their attackers wide and away from goal, meaning Newcastle had to make do with shots from distance. Would a similar pattern emerge today, or would Madd's Northern Boys have something else up their sleeve? By the 25th minute, Newcastle were 2-0 up, so yes they did. Shola Shoretire finished with a deft chip after sneaking in behind the Portland back line in the 7th minute, followed by Adam Armstrong's curling wonder strike in the 24th. By the time Joe Hugill added a neat finish to make it 3-1 in the 62nd minute, the matter looked like it was settled. Eight minutes later however, competition favourite Yimmi Chará was found in acres of space inside the Newcastle box to tap into an empty net after some excellent work out wide by Van Rankin, and it set up a nervy final 20 minutes. Both sides had over 650 completed passes and covered over 85 miles of relentless running, but there were to be no further goals. The match would end 3-2. While in their first meeting, Newcastle allowed themselves to be pushed wide by Portland's clever defending, although the systems were largely the same in the final, Madd's side found the resilience to form a battering ram through the middle to win the battle in the middle of the park and ultimately lift the Copa. That proved to be the difference. Commiserations to FM Eadster, Portland Timbers and especially to his six goal hero, tournament top scorer Yimmi Chará. Dogged, determined and deserved, MaddFM's Newcastle United are the inaugural champions!

Player of the Match – Shola Shoretire – Newcastle United – 7

La Copa: Club World Cup

A Winner's Reflection

Well, well, well. We didn't see that coming! Despite the fact that our #NorthernBoys Newcastle side are still languishing in the Championship in the year 2027 within my own save (and have been for three seasons now), our Northern spirit seems to have rallied the lads to put in some top performances in the La Copa Club World Cup and win our first ever trophy with this team! (it counts right?) With a squad of only players born and raised in the North-East of England, it's been a really challenging save but somehow our lads managed to string together some great performances once exported to the La Copa Club World Cup (with the exception of getting trounced by FMEadster in the Group Stages). Great fun taking on teams from other bloggers' saves as well as having their Managers join us live on stream where we also enjoyed an opening win over FMAthlete's Fortuna Dusseldorf and a draw with FMAdventure's Real Mallorca to advance to the knockout stages.

It was at this moment I feared getting a hiding from FMSamo's Southampton side in the Semi-Final once I saw the likes of Benjamin Sesko and Kang-In Lee in his squad (not to mention both of us having different multiverse renditions of Adam Armstrong) however we put on a defensive masterclass to reach the final after a thrilling penalty shootout and managed to secure our revenge over the aforementioned Eadster to win it outright.

Overall great fun and a different take on FM Versus Mode by using the teams from our saves and pitting them against each other in a competitive environment. GG's to FMGrasshopper and FMStag for all the work put in to making it happen - safe to say the content from all the La Copa Club World Cup competitors is top notch so give them all a follow and check out coffeehousefm.com where they host their content. Looking forward to defending the title next time round!!

Madd FM

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LA COPA LQ INVITATIONAL [FM21] - FM ATHLETE
CLUB WORLD CUP #1 [FM22] - MADD FM



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CLUB WORLD CUP

FOOTBALL
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