



VOL 30, ISSUE 1

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There is still a sense of crushing injustice about last season. Football aside, there's still the fact we had to endure months of spygate talk and pay a large fine for breaking a rule that didn't exist. Meanwhile, Financial Fair Play evasion has almost become a sport in itself and, as ever, the line where one is a 'clever way of doing things' and one is outright cheating seems to be drawn around Leeds United.

On the pitch, we played the best football in the division, had horrendous injury problems and chucked away two golden opportunities to be in the Premier League. Frank Lampard failed just as much as us, just as much as every Derby manager does, but rather than end up at QPR, he got a top Premier League job. Football isn't fair, and we probably need to accept that if we're ever going to move on.

Part of the initial anguish of the play-off defeat was fearing it could also mean the end of Marcelo Bielsa at Leeds. His new contract reassured us that, yes, we weren't in the Premier League, but we also weren't back to square one. We've become so accustomed to throwing away a full management team and squad each and every summer that we forgot there is an alternative. An infinitely better alternative.

As I write this, the transfer window hasn't closed, so it's impossible to know how well Marcelo has been backed, though up to now our business has certainly verged on disappointing; especially when everyone appears to acknowledge that this is the last stand for Bielsa and possibly Radrizzani. In other seasons the departures of Roofe and Jansson would have felt catastrophic, but we know from Bielsa's past that if promises aren't kept he's willing to walk away. In short, if Bielsa can live with it and thinks this squad can go up then so do I. It's precisely the kind of blind faith I wouldn't normally advocate, but then Bielsa isn't a normal manager.

Michael

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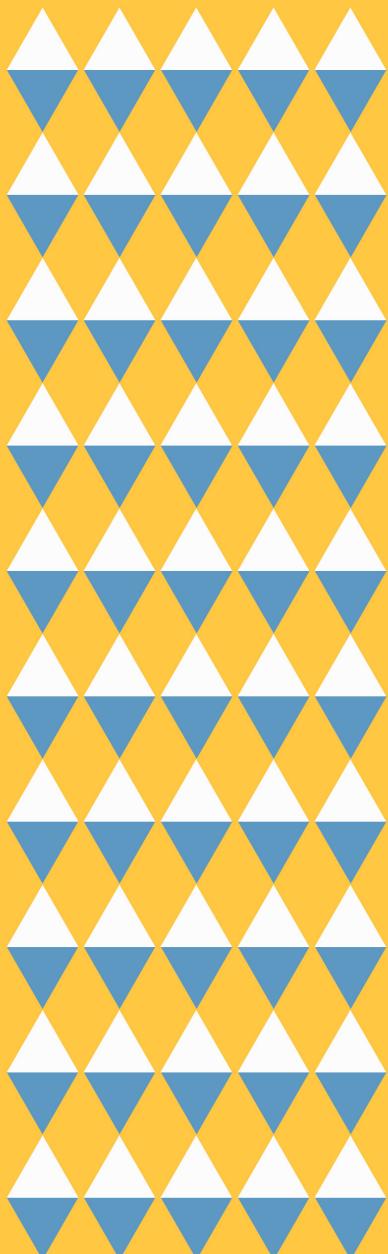
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Volume 30
Issue 1



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Registered office: The Old Mill, Sunfield Place, Stanningley LS28 6DR

DEAR DIARY



AAAAAAND RELAX...

Following weeks of post-play-off turmoil, the club finally announce that Andrea Radrizzani has "officially exercised the option" to extend Marcelo Bielsa's contract for a further season. Thank. Fuck.

Despite Leeds fans stalking Bielsa at a car dealership (hoping he needed a car because he was staying), to a city centre lunch with Victor Orta (hoping they were discussing transfer targets), and around Morrisons in Wetherby (hoping he was stocking the freezer for his return from Rosario), we were none the wiser whether the greatest thing to happen to Leeds United in the best part of two decades was going to keep happening.

For a man who made his name in PR, Radrizzani is piss poor at PR. The optimum time to announce this would have been the morning after the defeat to Derby. Lift the mood, get everyone onside and start planning for the centenary season. We'd still have stalked Bielsa anyway, but that's just because we like him.

STONED. AGAIN

As the finishing touches are being put to the latest batch of supporters' celebratory granite stones in Bremner Square, the Club announce plans for another paved area outside the Centenary Pavilion to feature new commemorative stones.

Centenary Square will be created "to celebrate the Club's rich history over the last 100 years". Fans will be able to have their personalised stones placed alongside a list of every player who has pulled on the famous white shirt. If you're unlucky enough to find yourself next to Guiseppe Bellusci, your stone will be under the bins.

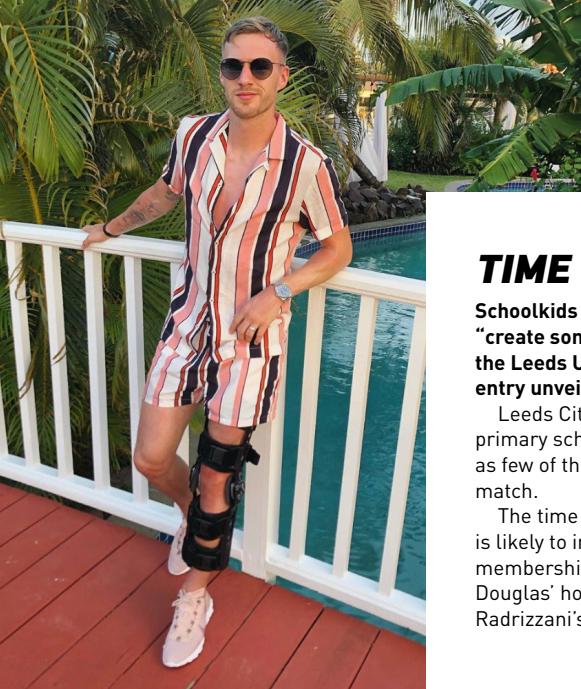
The square will feature a series of granite benches that will, apparently, allow fans to "reflect key moments in the Club's history"; a space to think about the trophies, the European nights, the goldfish, and just what the fuck happened with David Livermore.



HOME AND AWAY

The 2019/20 fixtures are released and, despite the hype, the same thing happens every year: we get to play everyone twice, once at home and once away.

The highlights: we're away for the first day, supposedly at the request of the club to give the pitch a little longer to bed following the Kaiser's gig; and we're at home for the final game, against Lee Bowyer's Charlton, for the promotion party. We'll obviously need somewhere to go for a small shandy to celebrate afterwards.

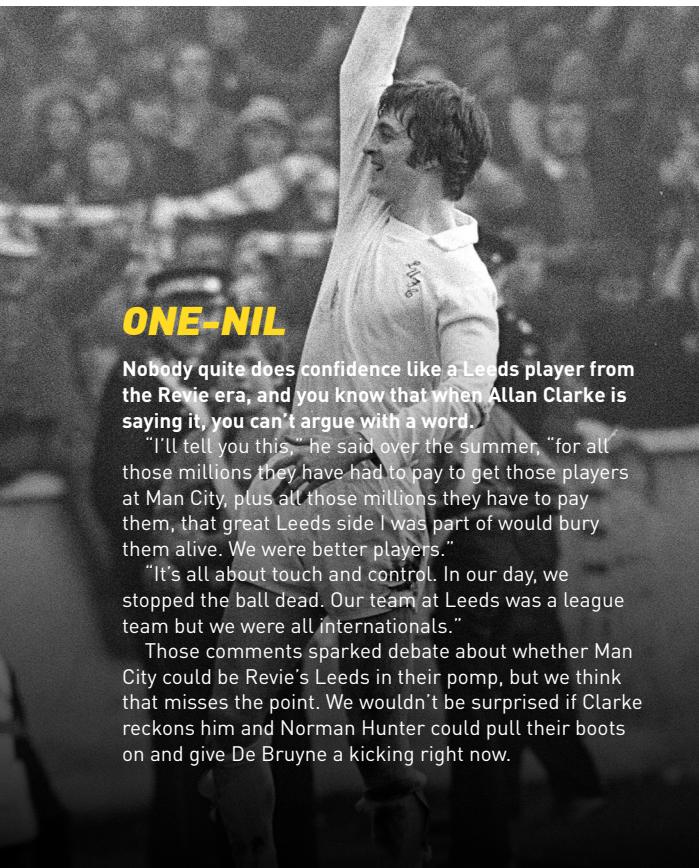


TIME AFTER TIME

Schoolkids in Leeds from Years 5 and 6 have been asked to “create something entirely unique” that will be placed into the Leeds United Centenary Time Capsule, with the winning entry unveiled at a special commemorative event in October.

Leeds City Council say, “this is a unique opportunity for primary schools to play a part in the centenary celebrations,” as few of them will ever have the chance to get tickets for a match.

The time capsule will be placed in the players’ tunnel and is likely to include such historic items as an EFL honorary membership certificate (donated by Shaun Harvey), Barry Douglas’ holiday suitcase (donated by the whole squad) and Radizzani’s keys to the transfer warchest.



ONE-NIL

Nobody quite does confidence like a Leeds player from the Revie era, and you know that when Allan Clarke is saying it, you can't argue with a word.

“I'll tell you this,” he said over the summer, “for all those millions they have had to pay to get those players at Man City, plus all those millions they have to pay them, that great Leeds side I was part of would bury them alive. We were better players.”

“It's all about touch and control. In our day, we stopped the ball dead. Our team at Leeds was a league team but we were all internationals.”

Those comments sparked debate about whether Man City could be Revie's Leeds in their pomp, but we think that misses the point. We wouldn't be surprised if Clarke reckons him and Norman Hunter could pull their boots on and give De Bruyne a kicking right now.

MO PROBLEMS

Amid all the furore over Garry Monk's er, completely above board transfer dealings involving his best mate as agent, which again our lawyers want to stress were all perfectly legitimate, up pops Massimo Cellino to remind us just how mad those years were:

“Remember Mo Barrow from Swansea? I didn't want to sign him because the number 17 brings me bad luck, but Garry wanted to bring him in. We had a fight about Barrow.”

If only Barrow had worn 16 at Swansea he would have got us promoted that season on his own. (His number at Leeds, by the way, was 27.)





SKY TV IS (STILL) FUCKING SHIT

Our now traditional Sunday opening fixture slot is confirmed by Sky, with our trip Bristol City chosen for broadcast and a less than convenient 4.30pm kick off time. As sure as eggs-is-eggs, Sky will fuck up our opening day and Lee Johnson will be an insufferable prick.

In other 'thanks for signing-off on an appalling TV deal, Shaun' news, our first home game against Scabby McScab Face Forest is also chosen for a broadcast, as is the visit of the team formerly known as Fat Frank's Derby County. Both are switched to lunchtime kick-offs and both will be hyped to fuck by Sky.

The midweek fixture at home to West Brom on October 1st has been chosen, but until such time that Sky are allowed to dictate 6pm, 8pm and 10pm midweek broadcast times, our kick off time will remain unchanged.

WE FORGOT THAT YOU WERE HERE #1

Poor old Yosuke Ideguchi. After the worst eighteen months of his life, he's rejoined Gamba Osaka. He did get to see life in Spain and Germany, but mostly he saw treatment tables, and his World Cup hopes disappearing faster than Jody Morris from [legal edit: a strong play-off position to defeat at Wembley].

Ideguchi moves for the now customary Ken Bates favourite, an undisclosed fee, although that fee is rumoured to be considerably more than the £500,000 Leeds paid for him. Which you can either believe or file under, 'you're having a laugh, Victor'.

LOVE U TIL I DON'T

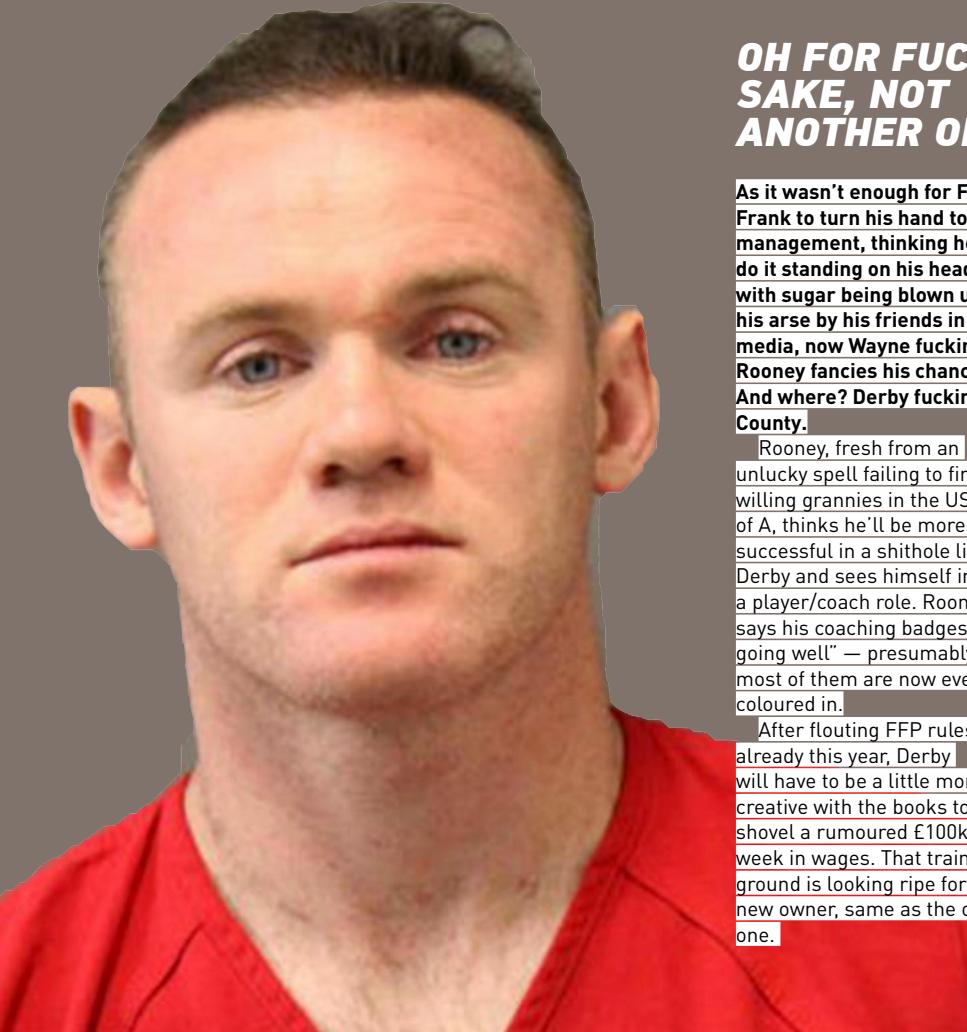
While on international duty through the summer, header of bricks and self-styled Mr Leeds United Pontus Jansson said he expected Marcelo Biesa to guarantee promotion for Leeds this coming season, and that it will be "an incredibly exciting year for Leeds."

Then rumours developed that Leeds were looking to move him on and cash in. With £10m bids for Jansson reported last summer, Leeds' sell before we buy policy seemed to be continuing.

But while talk of Financial Fair Play and dressing room bust-ups emerged, bids didn't flood in. Just Brentford, with a ridiculously low £5m for an international defender with three years left on his contract. Even more ridiculously, Leeds accepted.

Jansson loved life in Leeds. He loved playing for Leeds — a team that gave him back his love of football — but through gritted teeth says, "I wanted to stay in England, and couldn't let the chance to join Brentford pass me by."





OH FOR FUCKS SAKE, NOT ANOTHER ONE

As it wasn't enough for Fat Frank to turn his hand to management, thinking he'd do it standing on his head, with sugar being blown up his arse by his friends in the media, now Wayne fucking Rooney fancies his chances. And where? Derby fucking County.

Rooney, fresh from an unlucky spell failing to find willing grannies in the US of A, thinks he'll be more successful in a shithole like Derby and sees himself in a player/coach role. Rooney says his coaching badges "are going well" — presumably most of them are now even coloured in.

After flouting FFP rules already this year, Derby will have to be a little more creative with the books to shovel a rumoured £100k per week in wages. That training ground is looking ripe for a new owner, same as the old one.



BIG FAT KEV'S 40TH - DRINKS IN THE KING'S HEAD AT 5PM

Due to Constable big fat Kev Savage's 40th on the 14th September, and all of South Yorkshire Police's finest wanting to knock off early that afternoon, the away trip to Barnsley has been switched to lunchtime on Sunday 15th. As Sky have picked the Dog Botherers vs Wendies game for the Sunday lunchtime TV slot, we won't feature on the box so your chances of a live stream will be limited. Erm, nothing.



THE REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED. BUT NOT ON LUTV

For someone owning an “award winning, global sports provider” that delivers “world class, live sports coverage to dedicated fans everywhere”, **Andrea Radrizzani is shit at providing live Leeds United coverage.**

LUTV coverage of the games Down Under against the Trafford Park Mall Rats and Western Sydney Warriors is less than award winning and, at more than a fiver a pop, a bit of a piss-take. Given that the quality of most LUTV Championship live broadcasts wouldn’t look out of place back in the halcyon days of internet dial-up (ask yer dad, kids), someone who provides “world class live sports coverage” should be embarrassed.



NOT ON MY WATCH, SUNSHINE...

Leeds’ Official Timing Partner Louis Erard have released a brand new centenary watch following “collaboration with the club” to bring supporters a “unique and premium timepiece”. Just what, you may ask, would a true supporter with almost two-and-a-half grand in spare cash get that is unique and premium quality for their money?

Brick dust. The luxury watch not only comes with metal and leather interchangeable straps, a deluxe box and that bloody centenary crest, but it also comes with brick dust, taken from a brick from the players tunnel.

Not only that, but the deluxe box includes a memory card holding “previously unseen footage” of the brick being taken from the tunnel. Oddly, there will only be a limited number of these centenary watches, but owning one will be “a constant reminder of the club” and, by wearing this £2,400 monstrosity, “memories that the club have provided” will come flooding back. Seriously. Leeds. Get a fucking grip.



I AM THE LAW

It's like a new signing etc etc but great news and a massive step in the right direction for LUTV, as Bryn Law is announced as the new commentator for the coming season. He knows the club and has been here through highs and lows — alright, not the lows of Ken Bates, or the desperate lows of GFH, or the scraping of the barrel lows of Cellino — but hey, he's back.

Now if the club could just upgrade the visual quality to a high standard to equal the commentator, that would be smashing.



TICKET TO RIDE

Leeds announce a new matchday ticketing policy as demand to see the Whites in action outstrips availability. It's a far cry from the days when a sprinkler going off or a Chevy Spark going up in flames was the highlight of a game, and you couldn't give a spare ticket away.

The club have managed to flog 22,500 Gold Memberships — at fifty quid a pop — and there are just 7,000 general sale tickets. While members do get first dibs, they are restricted to one ticket per member — and now also have priority over season ticket holders.

A successful team will increase demand for tickets and we've already gone full-on Premier League with this, where the chances of picking up a ticket are slim to non-existent if you can't afford a season ticket or to stump-up for a membership.

ONCE UPON A TIME

Charlton boss Lee Bowyer is looking forward to his first full season as Addicks manager, joking “who would have said Jonathan Woodgate and I would become managers?” He already has one eye on the final day fixture against Leeds at Elland Road, when “it would be great to see Leeds get promoted,” and if Charlton were also safe, “that would be a great way to end the season.” And they all lived happily ever after.





CH, CH, CH CHANGES

The trip to Preston is changed at the request of the EFL and will now be played on Tuesday 22nd October.

That's the EFL, the Championship's governing body, who are now amending their own fixtures within weeks of releasing them — with the small caveat that the game could be switched again subject to "television broadcast selections." FFS.

WE FORGOT THAT YOU WERE HERE #2

Samuel Saiz was on the move this summer, joining Spanish second tier side Girona for, you guessed it, an undisclosed fee. After failing to impress on loan at Getafe last season, Saiz got caught up in a police investigation into match fixing.

We know there are some esoteric markets in the Far East but bravo the syndicate that came up with 'spitting in stoppage time' on their betting slip.

UNEXPECTED ITEM IN THE BAGGING AREA

Shaun Harvey may have left the building, but the EFL remain steadfast in their belief that if something needs doing badly, they're just the clueless fucks for the job. Putting aside the Checkatrade Cup fiasco, or standing by as clubs are failing to pay their players and on the brink of going under, they've outdone themselves with this season's Carabao Cup.

While Shaun Harvey organised cup draws on the other side of the world, often in the middle of the night, this year's cup draw took place in a north London branch of Morrisons. With John Barnes as host, the EFL and their sponsors hoped to raise the profile of the competition while making the draw "as inclusive as possible" by allowing fans to come and watch the draw live. That sound you can hear is the bottom of the barrel being well and truly dredged.



WE'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT... NIGEL WORTHINGTON

In the days before footballers had celebrity girlfriends and Instagram accounts there were players like Nigel Worthington. Ordinarily, an introduction like that would mean I was about to slag off modern football and all its overblown accoutrements, but the fact is, I fucking hated Nigel Worthington. I was eleven at the time and Worthington seemed infinitely older than my dad. Old enough that I couldn't possibly accept he was a professional footballer, yet he was a mere 33. Younger than Cristiano Ronaldo is now. Given all this happened 25 years ago and kids are notoriously bad at judging how old people are, I did some due diligence on Google Images and can confirm he looks as old to me now as he did then. More recent images show he still has the identical blonde/grey hair I remember him with, leading me to conclude that he emerged from the womb with that hair; a perfectly scaled down 50 year old man.





ANDY HUGHES HERO OF THE MONTH

PABLO HERNANDEZ

Pablo spent the last twenty minutes of the friendly down under trying to beat Western Sydney Wanderers on his own, and succeeding with a delicious individual goal in the last minute. That was just a pre-season match, though; after his weary end to last season, he couldn't possibly repeat that kind of form in the Championship, could he? Well. All we're saying is that Bristol City are supposed to be one of the top half teams, and 34-year-old Hernandez played against them like 21-year-old Maradona in the opening game. He might have taken him fifteen years, but Pablo fought his way home from 'Nam eventually; he can fight United's way back to the Premier League now too.

KEN BATES VILLAIN OF THE MONTH

LEE JOHNSON

After instigating some pushing and shoving on the touchline while Mateusz Klich was down injured, Lee Johnson explained, "We sent an email out to the clubs," about how Bristol City will no longer kick the ball out, "because this happens often." Yes, like in last season's Leeds match against Aston Villa, after which Marcelo Bielsa, under microscopic attention, told a press conference Leeds would no longer kick the ball out. We wonder how long it took for Johnson to think, 'Ooh, we're going to do that too!', and whether he's realised yet that the entire EFL has his emails on filter. If sender="Lee Johnson" and subject="Dear colleagues" then send to trash. All this comes after Johnson and Bristol's offshore billionaire owner, Stephen Lansdown, did all they could to make 'spygate' about them, and we've still not forgotten Matthew Taylor, Berardi's headbutt, and the phantom broken nose. But while Johnson keeps crying for attention, his back four paid none to Pablo Hernandez, and that works for us.





GET BENT

Scrolling through a summer of clickbait finds:

"I'd like to see Kalvin Phillips move on, he's earned that Premier League status. He can go to Spurs, quite easily. That holding role, getting about the pitch and making tackles and that, I can see him at Tottenham easily."

"I'm surprised already someone like Tottenham's not come and got Kalvin Phillips."

"I'd love to see Kalvin Phillips at Villa. The perfect, ideal replacement for Glenn Whelan."

"I would love to see Kalvin Phillips in the Premier League, and he'd be brilliant for one of the two new boys, Sheffield United and Norwich. I can see one of them getting him."

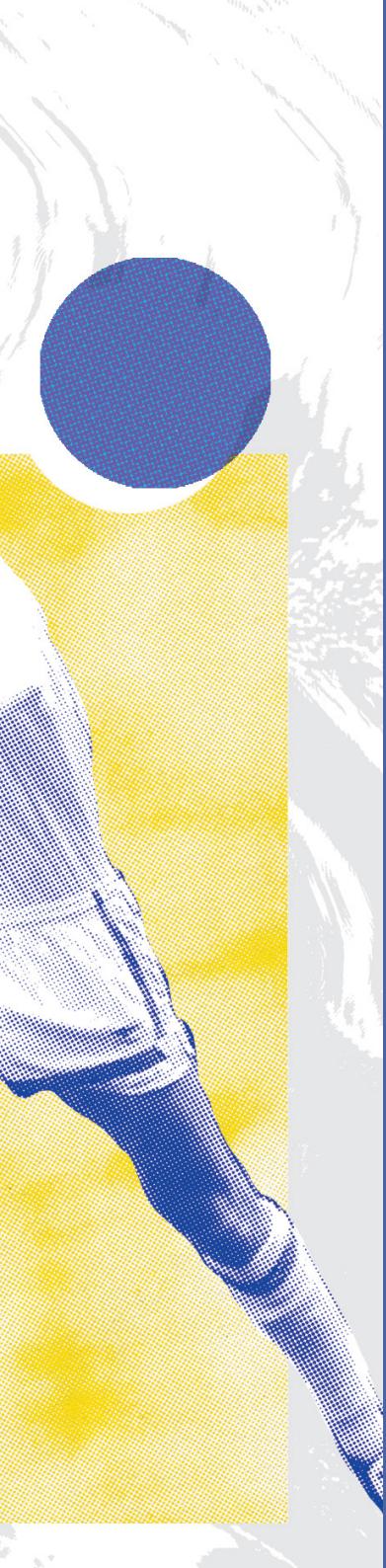
"Leeds are a big football club and Kemar Roofe's a fan favourite there. If Leeds get off to a bad start next season he's thinking: 'I need to get into the Premier League.' He probably wants to go there now."

"I don't believe it. I don't get it, because Helder Costa was another player for Wolves that really impressed me a lot. I thought he would be really comfortable in the Premier League but for whatever reason, he's gone to Leeds."

Would somebody mind telling Darren Bent to fuck off?



TUESDAY 20TH AUGUST, 1991



We love a good omen, and playing our first home match against Nottingham Forest is one of those, although the start of our title-winning season was an ominous time for the wrong reasons. Everything should have kicked off the weekend before, but with three days to go Crystal Palace announced that Selhurst Park wasn't ready, and the Football League refused all Howard Wilkinson's suggestions for getting the game played. He wasn't happy; he'd read the news in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* before Palace said anything to him. It was "astonishing and disgusting."

A hastily arranged friendly against Aldershot and a 3-0 win filled the gap, but Wilko had more grumbles on the eve of the game against Forest. Their manager Brian Clough wrote in his national newspaper column that George Graham, Graeme Souness and Neil Warnock all had "bigger heads" than he did, but that if Wilkinson joined them to try walking into Notts County's ground, "I'm telling you they would have to enlarge the entrance." The headline read, 'Big Head Wilko Gets On My Wick!'

Although Wilko was never actually a teacher for very long, he had a teacher's weary way of rising above this sort of thing; he'd just been made chairman of the brand new League Managers' Association, and set about drafting a code of conduct. Meanwhile, Leeds set about beating Forest 1-0, Gary McAllister cracking home after Lee Chapman flicked on David Batty's long throw. A goal straight from the training ground.

Wilkinson wasn't entirely happy; the Palace postponement had upset his preparations and the performance wasn't what he wanted; and things got even worse in October, when the rearranged game was United's first defeat. But by the end of April, all that was forgotten.

Words
Moscowwhite

Artwork
Graeme Chapman



There didn't seem much to add to the story
of Leeds United. Maybe another financial
crisis, but a pantomime star?

LEND US A FIVER

Words **Moscowwhite**

Artwork **Grady Tidy**

When I started writing about things that have happened to Leeds United Football Club over the last century, for the book I wrote that Icon Books published this week, 100 Years of Leeds United, 1919-2019, I knew that I knew where to look. That felt like my advantage, the start that might end in a good book.

I didn't know what I'd find, and certainly not that I would find Mona Vivian, one of the most famous stage actresses of the 1920s, piloting aeroplanes from Sherburn Aerodrome a few years after her lover put the entire future of Leeds United at risk, almost as soon as it had started.

But I had the clues all stored up. When I was a kid, at school I was good at English, history and geography, but wanted to be good at football; my way of getting into the game, living far from Leeds with only Match of the Day and three end-of-season videos of Howard Wilkinson's double-title team to watch, was to read and absorb everything I could.

Newspaper reports about Frank Strandli and Chris Fairclough went into a scrapbook. Old Topical Times and Shoot! annuals came home from charity shops, no matter how old they were, if they had something about Leeds inside. Through the static, I could just hear BBC Radio Leeds' commentaries broadcast from the country's tallest and most beautiful concrete tower, the Emley Moor transmitter; Ian Dennis, Bryn Law and Norman Hunter told me what was going on, and my imagination filled in the gaps.

That method of piecing things together to understand what was going on, of listening to Rod Wallace scoring with number eight on his back, then flicking through an old book, looking at photos of another number eight, Allan Clarke, and working out how one led to the other, served me well. It didn't change when I became a matchgoer, then moved back to the city of my birth to become an adult, i.e., a season ticket holder. By the time Icon Books suggested I might write a book for the centenary, my mind was cluttered with trivia and details that never quite fit, or that I thought I could explain fit in different ways: unconsciously, I'd spent my life gathering my reference points. I knew where to look.

“I am quite powerless to save the club,” said Crowther

This being 2019 — or 2017, when I started working — there were new research methods, too. I remember the internet coming along in the late 1990s, and music filesharing clients like Napster and Soulseek, when I could flick through my well-worn copy of The Guinness Who's Who of Indie and New Wave Music (published 1992, the library were chucking it out) and search for and finally hear all the bands I'd been reading about for years. The methods still apply.

The process with online newspaper archives is catching up. In fact, one of my biggest tips came from a silent newsreel — 'Leeds United in Financial Difficulties' — uploaded online by the British Film Institute, an impossibility ten years ago. It's from 1924, a report about a game Leeds played at Elland Road against Newcastle against a backdrop of money problems. That's something that became clear the more I wrote — nothing at Leeds ever bloody changes.

Written across the front of the old barrel-roofed Main Stand was a plea to the fans: 'Lend Us A Fiver'. 1924's fundraising slogan became 2017's search terms in archives, along with names from the time: Major Albert Braithwaite, the new chairman, replacing Hilton Crowther, who bankrolled Leeds after failing to move Huddersfield Town to Elland Road in 1919. The match in the film gave me a date. And I had a brand new jigsaw to play with.

The Lend Us A Fiver campaign is first mentioned in the local press a few months earlier, as part of preparations for United's first ever game in the First Division. With Leeds promoted, Hilton Crowther had decided to step down, his work done, and asked to be paid back £35,000 — about £2million today — of the £54,000 he'd put into the club. It wasn't a demand as such; it had been felt for some time that the people of Leeds should be taking ownership of their soccer team. Crowther had paid for the hard part to happen, promotion, and was ready to hand over a top level club to the city. Those fivers would be £5 bonds, paying 7.5% interest, turning the debt to Crowther into a stake for supporters.

So far so simple, and Braithwaite launched the campaign. But mid-November brought new urgency. Crowther revealed that he'd used the £35,000 he was owed as collateral for a mortgage, and it had to be paid by December 31st 1924. If it wasn't, the London-based lenders would become owners of the club, and they were already taking advice on how much they could raise by selling the players and effectively closing the club down. "I am quite powerless to save the club," said Crowther.

Major Braithwaite, an energetic former army instructor, put his faith in the city, and in the Lend Us A Fiver campaign to save the day. Local businesses let him down, despite

sending out hundreds of circulars and making personal visits, the pubs, bars and restaurants that made money from First Division football crowds wouldn't be persuaded to help. It was down to ordinary folk to give what they could.

A campaign office opened at the Corn Exchange and money poured in; £20,000 was raised by the start of December, supporters arriving with small sums saved in gold and jars of pennies. A light-hearted controversy broke out over who was the youngest fan to buy a bond; a three-month old baby from Horsforth was soon bested by a three-day newborn from Harehills. Fans of the Peacocks, or only of soccer in general given the club was so young and yet to establish itself, were digging deep, but Christmas was coming, and spare cash was drying up. The campaign was slowing to a trickle; the papers were updating the amount needed daily.

After a Christmas trip to London to beg an extra week, Braithwaite changed tack, making a bold declaration of success at a Sportsman's Dinner at the Majestic Theatre. It might have been premature, but Leeds United were just about safe, and a while later Hilton Crowther was thanked for his work with an autographed photo album of the promotion team — and his £35,000.

But the repercussions for Leeds were long



lasting. As I sifted forward through the archives, those bondholders, receiving 7.5% on their fivers every year, remained a prominent complaint in the club's accounts. For as long as the club was carrying that burden it was the first thing its income went towards, and it didn't leave much cash for buying players or improving Elland Road: the Lowfields got its roof, bit by bit, thanks to the Supporters' Club.

The debenture wasn't paid off until 1950, 25 years later, when Major Frank Buckley's talent for selling the right players for the highest prices finally cleared it. With John Charles in the team and Raich Carter taking over as manager, Leeds were in reasonable financial health when they were promoted to the First Division in 1956; at which point the Main Stand, hardly touched since it was built in 1904, burned to the ground. All the club's records of those years burned with it, one of the main reasons I didn't think there would be much new to write in this book about the years before Don Revie. But, well, I guess I knew where else to look.

And there was more. I wanted to know what became of Hilton Crowther, a huge figure in our history, and in some ways an eccentric one; United's blue and white striped jerseys, copied from Crowther's previous club Huddersfield, look different when you know he spent a while lobbying the FA to impose standardised football kits: blue and white stripes at home, red and white stripes away. He was full of ideas, and full of surprises.

In 1927, two years after the Fiver campaign, Crowther was still a minority shareholder at Leeds, and was back in the news. Mona Vivian, a pantomime and revue star who had been famous from the age of four, when the little Scots girl went on stage as 'Wee Mona', shocked society one afternoon by going to the registry office on The Strand in London and marrying a northern mill owner, eighteen years her elder: Hilton Crowther.

The only witness was Mona's mother, and another had to be found in nearby offices to make it official. Reports say Mona was married in a grey squirrel coat, and that after a celebration lunch, she was back on stage that night in Camden, performing in a show called 'Hello

Charleston!' She moved up to Leeds where her fame continued, racing greyhounds on the new stadium on Elland Road and flying aeroplanes, but she couldn't resist going back on stage.

"I cannot tell you about our romance," she told the press, "It would take a whole week to do so." But she did reveal she'd met Crowther some years earlier when she was performing in Huddersfield, and it was possible now for me to track that down: twice nightly at the Huddersfield Palace Theatre in May 1917, when Mona was nineteen, and Hilton had been married for two years.

I followed a hunch back through the newsprint, and there they were: the reports of Crowther's divorce from his previous wife, Maud Evelyn. She'd become suspicious of her husband, they said, in 1917, around the time Mona Vivian was on stage in their town; Maud moved out to a house in London in 1920. She finally won her divorce from Crowther in February 1924 — a few months before his money troubles caused even bigger troubles for Leeds United.

A cast of characters I couldn't have dreamed of, a story richer and more significant than I'd ever imagined, and an answer to a question that has always bothered Leeds fans: why was the club so average before Don Revie came along and made it great? And the opportunity, in 100 Years of Leeds United, to put Hilton Crowther and Mona Vivian, and many others, back into the history of Leeds United, bound between book covers with Revie and Wilkinson, and to talk about them to a new audience.

I knew where to look, but the exciting part was not knowing what I'd find.

100 Years of Leeds United, 1919-2019, is published by Icon Books in association with Leeds United, to coincide with the club's centenary celebrations. It's a hardback book available from any decent bookshop worldwide, including Amazon, Waterstones and Booktopia; signed copies are available from thesquareball.net

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including Waterstones and Amazon**



**Signed copies available from
thesquareball.net**



Pontus Jansson was Leeds United's
latest loveable rogue. But he wasn't
the first, and he won't be the last.

MOVING ON FROM JANSSON

Words **Ben Whitelaw**

Artwork **Rhys Lowry**

HE STRODE
AROUND, PULLING
THE REF FOR
INTIMATE CHATS
BETTER THAN
ANYONE ON LOVE
ISLAND

As break-ups go, this was a bad one. Public and mean-spirited but, most of all, it was quick. Four tiny weeks in June was all it took for Pontus Jansson to decide to leave Leeds or for Leeds to decide it didn't need Pontus Jansson, depending on the chain of events you want to believe. At the end of May, Pontus was in the press reaffirming his commitment to another title challenge, saying he needed a beer and a break but claiming to be '110 per cent Leeds'. As it happened, the break was permanent. He never returned to Thorp Arch and by July he was gone. Brutal.

When you go through a traumatic breakup like this, the received wisdom is to focus on yourself and steer clear of any reminders of your ex. Don't text, unfriend them on social media, stop everything that reminds you of them, you know the drill. You shouldn't, probably, watch their first Brentford TV interview on repeat, reading into the luscious green hills in the background (where is the bastard? Italy? France?) and hoping for clues about why they left so suddenly. And definitely don't manically refresh the score of their new team on the opening day of the season. But, because it's Pontus, that's what I was doing last Saturday.

Initially, it was torturous. Our crazy Swede donning red and white stripes, walking out of the tunnel wearing the captain's armband. Who did he think he was? It didn't look right. He strode around Griffin Park like he owned

the place, barking orders and pulling the ref for intimate chats better than anyone on Love Island. He might as well have got a tattoo saying 'Fuck off Leeds'. It's like we didn't even exist anymore.

But quickly Pontus proved that, maybe, this was a love affair we're better off without. A video clip did the rounds showing him pushing a Birmingham player into the fourth row and somehow escaping a yellow. Not significant in the grand scheme of things, but textbook Jansson petulance nonetheless and unhelpful at a time when his team were trailing. Bees boss Thomas Frank probably already knows this, but he's going to need a host of able deputies for when captain PJ gets suspended for stupid stunts like that.

And therein lies the Jansson conundrum. He's never happy unless he's at the centre of events. Last season it felt like everyone's gaze had to be directed on him at all times or he would self-combust (see: Sky Sports swearing, going between the sticks vs Sheffield United,



slumping by the advertising boards after Derby). 'Side before self' didn't resonate with him, or at least not the way it did to other senior members of last year's squad. Pontus commits to a cause, as long as it's aligned with his own. And so, the reason that everyone loved him, was the reason he had to go.

Leeds fans have had their fair share of break-ups in the past and so you'd think we'd be used to it. Most of the time the reason players leave is legitimate: either the chance to play in the top division (Wood, McCormack, Delph) or money (Beckford) or because the football food chain means there's always a Premier League club ready to pick apart your bare carcass (Milner, Howson, Cook). They're all fine, in a sense. But moving to a club with less chance of promotion? It's like dumping Margot Robbie or Idris Elba. You just wouldn't do it.

There are a lot of similarities between Pontus' departure and Lee Bowyer's exit from Elland Road back in 2003. Adored by the Kop, Bowyer turned down a big-money offer (£10m from Liverpool, remember that?) before jumping ship to West Ham for £100,000 to fight in a relegation battle the Hammers were always going to struggle to win. It was a curious decision then and seems an even stranger one now. Whites fans didn't go easy on him (read the comments crystallised on the BBC article

if you're in doubt) but he remains beloved. Maybe Pontus will end up the same.

For now, it's impossible to look past the fact that Leeds fans and Pontus Jansson were in an unhealthy relationship. Unchecked anger by one or both parties? Check. Different moral standards? Just ask anyone who was at that Villa game. Bad relationship with an ex? He said he'd rather retire than play for Torino again. Using your own emotions to hurt you? See the last six weeks. It doesn't take Jeremy Kyle's lie detector to show things weren't as rosy as they seemed.

Luckily, we've found a nice young lad who'll help us get over our bad boy from Malmö. Ben White, all slicked-back hair and perfect skin, looked solid in the opener game against Bristol City and teased us with some delightful long diagonal balls. A near-post covering run and clearance in the second half when backs were against the wall even resembled that of a certain hothead Swede.

No, young Ben won't ever turn to the stands and get the fans pumped up but that's okay. As long we can take him home, not to our mum but to the Premier League, at the end of the season, we won't mind what happened to Pontus, or think about what could have been.



**Patrick Bamford's first
season looked like those of
Jermaine Beckford, Ross
McCormack and Chris Wood.**

THE WELL-COIFFED CONUNDRUM

**What will his
second season
look like?**

Words **Calum Archibald**



Beginning a new season with concerns about a striker is familiar territory for Leeds fans. Sometimes it's justified, and other times you've got to have faith in the process and look at it objectively. Patrick Bamford has ambled into the category of 'beleaguered Leeds United striker' with the languid style that has jarred with many people.

He may have received copious amounts of criticism, but how much of it is perception, how much is circumstance, and how much is justified?

Twelve months ago we were all excited to see a new number nine, one we'd invested in heavily, with a reputation for goalscoring in the Championship. An injury-hit start to the season left Bamford chasing his own fitness in a race he was never going to win. A cameo away at the Macron/Reebok/generic sports manufacturer stadium showed us a glimpse of what we were missing, but his fitness problems kept delaying his introduction to the first team.

As Kemar Roofe's fitness also eluded him, Bamford was thrust into the starting line-up, and despite an impressive record of nine goals in fifteen starts and seven substitute appearances, he never seemed to have the same impact as Roofe.

The underlying stats suggest Bamford was underperforming in terms of expected goals from the chances he had, through a combination of factors. While he regularly gets in opportunistic positions, his shooting proficiency means he's often visibly missing chances; unlike a striker who doesn't get into positions to shoot meaning it isn't as noticeable when they're not scoring.

Chris Wood had a similar issue in his first season, although he played a much higher percentage of the total minutes that year. His finishing was often poor and much of the criticism levelled at him was similar to that aimed at Bamford. That's not to say Bamford will now score 25 goals, although the statistics





do suggest that if he was to play 40+ games in a season he has the potential to hit a very respectable total.

After signing for Chelsea as a youth player, Bamford followed the archetypal Chelsea youth player path. Several loans, with decreasing amounts of success, followed by departure for a tidy profit. Not having a permanent residence may have stunted his footballing development, particularly when you consider the variety of managers he's played under. His upbringing, coming from the upper middle class, is unusual for an English footballer, and Sean Dyche seemed determined to break him. It's long been said that English football has failed to embrace the middle class, with most young English footballers coming from a working-class background.

In terms of his footballing development, Bamford has only played two consecutive seasons for the same club once, and even then he had only joined that club, Middlesbrough, in January. This season gives him an opportunity he has never been afforded in his career. A month before he turns 26, he finally has continuity, stability and a platform to build on.

The similarities with Wood are relevant here, as he too had experienced diminishing returns in loan moves, and a big move to Leicester had faded, like Bamford's peripheral position in Tony Pulis' Middlesbrough squad.

It's not just Bamford who is entering his second season, with Marcelo Bielsa putting his squad through another gruelling pre-season. The step up in many players' individual performances last season was so remarkable that it's not inconceivable to imagine another increase this season. It can only help to have a world class coaching team aiding your development, and while profligacy in front of goal was both Bamford and Leeds' problem last season, a slightly adapted system, some new additions and more repetition could remedy that.

Patrick Bamford ended last season looking short of confidence, and it seemed likely that Kemar Roofe would have started as first choice this season. However, we are cursed,



and we aren't allowed nice things, therefore he has no choice but to dispel his demons and play himself into goalscoring form. The danger being, of course, that he does the opposite and becomes a lightning rod for frustration and criticism.

There are debates to be had about whether Bamford fits the system, about his movement, his finishing and just about everything. The hope is that through the sheer volume of chances Leeds create, he'll find his finishing boots. What may help is an improvement in Jack Harrison's performances, the introduction of Helder Costa and the continuation of Pablo Hernandez's performances to create a higher quality of chance for Bamford.

We have been here before with uncertainty around a striker in pre-season, before witnessing stellar performances from Jermaine Beckford, Ross McCormack and Chris Wood in career defining seasons. We've also witnessed catastrophic failure, but Patrick Bamford is not terrible. He's good, but it's time to show it.

THE LARGEST INDEPENDENT
LEEDS UNITED FANS FORUM
ON THE INTERNET
HOSTING HEATED FOOTBALLING
DEBATE (AND ANY AMOUNT
OF OTHER NONSENSE)
SINCE 2003



WACCOE.com

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS, CHAMPIONS OF EUROPE

Words
Nico Franks

Artwork
Lee Shackleton

ANY NEWS GRAHAM?

How do you like your news?

There's been a changing of the guard in West Yorkshire. After thirteen years of service, Phil Hay left his post as chief Leeds United correspondent at the Yorkshire Evening Post. The bard of Beeston is due to join The Athletic, a US-based sports site that's been hoovering up dozens of national and regional footy journos in recent months ahead of a UK launch in August.

As a result, Hay's coverage of the goings on at Elland Road will be freed from the YEP website's endless pop-up ads and clickbait about what child movie stars of the 1980s and 90s look like now, and sit behind a paywall.

Graham Smyth, the YEP's new chief football writer, has spent the past three years covering non-league Chesterfield for the Derbyshire Times. To paraphrase our former chairman/resident madhead Massimo Cellino, the Rangers-supporter has well and truly upgraded from a Fiat 500 to a Ferrari.

But driving a Ferrari around Leeds is risky business and Smyth has had a bumpy start to life in the LUFC Twittersphere. Rather than confirming Kalvin Philips had agreed a 50-year contract, or that we'd finally signed a centre-back, one of Smyth's first tweets after being

announced was about who could be between the sticks for Chesterfield next season.

A lack of transfer and injury news since then has left Leeds fans frustrated. But that's not Smyth's fault. Someone even created a fake @GrahamSmythYEP account to claim Leeds were about to splurge £25m on Italian striker Andreas Petagna at the end of July. "I'm holding this handle ransom until Graham provides us with some good news," said the fake Graham Smyth, before the account was suspended.

One of the key unanswered questions as the new season rears its head is about how Smyth will celebrate a Leeds goal on Twitter. Will he keep with tradition and ape his predecessors' joyous "GOOOOOOOAAAAL"? Or will our Graham stamp his own identity on every Leeds fans' favourite tweet, perhaps adding an emoji or two?

By the time you read this, we'll hopefully know, unless we were shooting blanks in our opening game. On that point, there's also the possibility that Hay was actually cursed, something he acknowledged when he parted ways with the YEP, meaning Smyth could be the lucky charm we desperately need to get over the line this season. And that certainly would be some good news.

YORKSHIRE EVENING POST - EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH





**Somewhere in the midst of
That Night there was an
incredible game of football**



MOURINHO

Words **Rob Conlon**

Photos **Lee Brown**



“I just hope it doesn’t end here.” My dad doesn’t really do touching moments of sincerity when it comes to the modern Leeds United. He grew up following the club’s greatest ever team under Don Revie but became something of a lapsed fan once work and three kids and general life started to take effect.

His interest has been rekindled over the last few seasons — it’s no coincidence that has happened now I can pay for my own ticket — but he still caught me off guard That Night by solemnly confessing, as *Marching On Together* began to ramp up inside Elland Road: “I just hope it doesn’t end here.”

I still can’t bring myself to watch any footage of That Night. Sometimes videos will crop up on my Twitter or Instagram timeline and I’ll have to scroll down in panic to make them disappear.

Photos of That Night, I don’t mind so much. The ocean of scarves bathed in the late-spring sunlight beforehand, tearful fans staring into the distance afterwards; even Frank Lampard celebrating like a pissed-up uncle, embarrassing himself at a wedding, I can handle.

Pictures evoke memories, whereas videos can make them tarnished and misshapen. It may sound strange, but even now, when we’re facing up to the reality of another 46-game slog in the Championship, I’m still determined to cherish my memories of Leeds United 2-4 Derby County.

There are a number of ingredients that can leave sporting events seared on your mind. That second-leg of our play-off semi-final had them all. Ultimately, it had to end in victory or defeat. That it came to the latter was sadly always out of our hands.

Like most aspects of life in northern England, the weather





**Ben got lost in
Holbeck and
started crying
down the phone
to his girlfriend**

tends to make a big difference. We could be forgiven for forgetting in recent years, but a hot and sticky May night in Leeds is a beautiful setting for football. Town was heaving, beer gardens were full, pre-match pints were sunk in a futile attempt to settle nerves.

The enormity of the occasion only really hit home at Elland Road. It has been almost a decade since Leeds United were promoted back to the second tier from League One. In the intervening years they have perfected mediocrity to such an extent that each campaign has been largely meaningless from around February onwards. No play-off campaigns, not even a decent relegation battle. Now here we were, at Elland Road in May, with a game that actually meant something, a game that mattered.

That's when I turned to my dad to remind him how unique, and how brilliant, it all was. That's when he replied: "I just hope it doesn't end here."

The atmosphere matched the enormity of the occasion. It's very easy to be cynical about the free scarves — and God knows we're a wonderfully cynical bunch — but that doesn't mean you can't step back and admit, you know what, they looked fucking ace. Such displays also encourage fans in sections of the ground that are usually quite 'passive' to actively take part in supporting the team. It had been a long

time since all four sides of Elland Road had sung *Marching On Together* with such fever.

And the game itself? Well, I've still not watched it back to try making sense of it all, but I'm not sure that would help anyway. Even in defeat, Marcelo Bielsa's Leeds United managed to find the most exhilarating way possible to go down fighting.

It wasn't until a week or so later that it dawned on me that we scored twice That Night. We'd also scored once in the first leg, so that must have meant... Derby scored four goals in the second leg? Was it really 4-2? It wasn't until listening to *The Square Ball's* post-match podcast that I comprehended that Derby levelled the scores on aggregate just forty seconds into the second half. For some reason it was that realisation more than any other that gave me an acute physical pain in my stomach like nothing else.

I'm still trying to work it all out now. I've just checked a match report to find Derby had Scott Malone sent off after Gaetano Berardi had already been given his marching orders for Leeds. Were there really two red cards?

In some ways I'm quite sad that I'll never watch back Stuart Dallas' second goal and relive the explosion it caused in the stands, but I experienced it there and then, and I can still feel a hint of the intoxicating kick of adrenaline whenever I think about the ball hitting the back of the net and the ensuing chaos.





Full-time, and defeat, didn't signal the end of the night. I was half tempted to toss away my scarf like many others, but I knew I'd need something to hold and twist and stretch and tear on my walk back into town.

There was no way I could head straight home and stare at a wall for the next eight hours until I had to go back to work, so I messaged a friend I had gone for a drink with before the match and arranged to meet back at the same pub.

Ben, to his eternal credit, at least managed to lift the mood by arriving to recount his journey out of Elland Road, in which he'd taken a wrong turn, got lost in Holbeck and started crying down the phone to his girlfriend in London. He has form for bursting into tears after football, and I'd love to be able to call him a 'fucking softlad' or words to that effect, but I can understand how that all happened to be honest.

It wouldn't surprise me if I'm the only Leeds fan nostalgically reminiscing about That Night. I had something of an epiphany on the day of the game, realising that the season as a whole had been far too much fun to not enjoy the biggest game Leeds had played for almost a decade by feeling sick with anxiety.

It's an attitude I'm determined to carry into this season, as it already seems forgotten Marcelo Bielsa's Leeds United were extraordinary for the majority of 2018/19, only to be ultimately let down by twelve minutes of madness against Derby.

We'll never know what would have happened if Leeds could have dealt with those twelve minutes differently. What we do know is if they can fix up those twelve minutes in 2019/20, we might be able to end this season on our own terms after all. Something we'll want to watch, again and again.

From among the clickbait headlines,
Leeds have pulled out a real talent.

BOGUSZ WONDERLAND

Words **David Guile**

Artwork **Josh Parkin**





t is a sad fact of modern football that every twelve year old with access to a laptop spends their school holidays concocting transfer rumours that stretch the boundaries of credibility. Leeds have had their fair share already this summer, and while it's easy (for most fans) to see holes in the stories linking us to the likes of Danny Welbeck and Thomas Vermaelen, it can be harder to debunk rumours about foreign wonderkids who turn out, on closer inspection, to be nothing more than figments of a pre-teen imagination.

I know, because I'm guilty of doing it myself. In the pre-Wikipedia days I once started a rumour on a popular website that Leeds were signing a Portuguese Under-21 international defender called Michael 'The Scientist' De Oliveira, that gained quite a scary amount of traction, much to the amusement of Michael De Oliveira himself, who was actually one of my mates, and had about as much chance of playing for Portugal U21s as he had of giving birth to a flying pig. Weirdly, all compulsion to make up rumours disappeared as soon as I lost my virginity.

So when I heard that Leeds were on the trail of a seventeen-year-old Polish wonderkid (they're always described as 'wonderkids' for some reason) I was sceptical. Not only was this wonderkid bossing the midfield for Ruch Chorzów, he was doing so with such panache that they had already entrusted him with their

number 10 shirt. He sounded too good to be true, not least because his name sounded like it had been made up on the spot by some teenage japester. Take the only Polish first name known to every single Leeds fan, add a surname that literally means 'fake', tack an extra 'z' on the end for authenticity and what do you get? Mateusz Bogusz, teenage wonderkid and the next saviour of Leeds United. You wouldn't know him, he goes to another school. In Poland.

But Mateusz Bogusz turned out to be very real indeed, and signed for Leeds as January drew to a close. Sadly he didn't show up to his unveiling wearing oversized glasses and a fake nose, which would have been a perfect postscript to the Spygate revelations. He came across as polite and reserved, with a trace of



Bogusz appears tailor-made for Bielsa

Bielsa demands a team of protagonists, and in that respect Bogusz appears tailor-made for his style of football. Blessed with a low centre of gravity, magnetic close control and an eye for a long range piledriver, he constantly demands the ball and makes things happen. Now firmly integrated within the first team squad, he scored his first senior goal for the club against Guiseley, finishing an intricate team move with a volley as crisp and precise as the parting in his hair. A second followed on the Australia tour; Western Sydney Wanderers sparked some Leeds nostalgia by naming a Yeboah in their side but it was Bogusz who crashed a howitzer into their net, via the underside of the crossbar. The great man himself would have been proud.

Blooding young players always carries an element of risk. Some freeze in the spotlight, while some try too hard to prove themselves or become overly rash. Bogusz seems different. When I watch him I see a player mature beyond his years, assured rather than cocky, patiently awaiting his moment. Critically, he appears to have the trust of his senior colleagues, and his compatriot, Mateusz Klich, hasn't been shy about talking up the youngster.

"It's not like I can give him any advice," said Klich, when asked how he was helping Bogusz to settle in. "He's 17 and he's probably going to be better than me".

Further scrutiny is coming for this impressive young man as he transitions to first team football, but he's passed every test posed to him in his short career. In this age of fake news, Bogusz looks to be the real deal.

Aapo Halme-esque geekiness thrown in. If the traditional egotism of a playmaker was within his character he kept it well hidden. I suspect I'm not the only one who couldn't wait to find out what kind of player he was going to be.

I don't like the lazy cliches about wizardry that are often applied to flair players, particularly the one about having a 'wand of a right foot'. But something about Mateusz Bogusz awakens my inner Harry Potter geek, right down to that incredible side parting that could have been cauterised into his scalp by a blast of unfriendly magic. He's less of a Harry Potter and more of an Eastern European Draco Malfoy, fair haired and possessed of arrogance in his technique that belies his youth. I'll stop now, as I sense that I might be endangering my street cred here, but you get the idea.



INSANITY ON REPEAT

What's more fun than breaking
your heart every season?

Words **Steve York**

Photos **Lee Brown**

They say that insanity is repeating the same action and expecting a different outcome. If there's one thing that Leeds United can safely be accused of, it's insanity. Whether that's directed at our fans for travelling to literally the other side of the planet to watch Patrick Bamford and some nine year olds run laps, or at Marcelo Bielsa for tirelessly analysing Leeds' inability to convert chances or deal with problems in our box, and seemingly assuming they'll fix themselves.

There's a timeless quality to our transfer policy, too. We've long criticised Leeds for having a Thanos-like mentality of ensuring the side is perfectly balanced — in mediocrity. If someone starts to shine they need to be sold in order for balance to be restored. Lewis Cook departs, Matt Grimes arrives. Balance is achieved.

Bielsa's philosophies are slightly harder to map against transfer policy as he takes a less subjective view of performance, relying instead on analysis and statistical insight to justify how the squad is operating. So he takes solace in Patrick Bamford's incredible expected-goals rating from the 2018/19 campaign, knowing that he's doing the hard bit successfully and getting in the right positions. But what the rest of us see is Bamford repeatedly wasting certain chances.

But I've made peace with our attacking options. The addition of Helder Costa looked very deliberate and I'm content with him being suitably high quality to augment what we lacked last year. It's the defensive part of Leeds' game where I'm finding myself sweaty of palm and moist of brow.

Any attempt at humour when looking at our defensive frailties is done in a continued attempt to gloss over the crushing disappointment of the play-offs, so don't accuse me of being callous; I'm still wounded. But I do find myself looking at a

I DON'T
THINK
ANYONE
FEARS LIAM
COOPER
MORE THAN
LEEDS
FANS DO

Jansson-less Leeds United and wondering “is this actually worse?”

Not that I’m debating the club’s decision to sell the giant Swede — much as I liked him — if there were attitude issues behind the scenes (and it’s perhaps telling that he wasn’t attracting £15m offers from Southampton and other Premier League suitors) then it’s obviously for the best. What is making me profoundly uncomfortable is the absence of a like-for-like replacement in an area I already thought lacked depth in quality.

Ben White was brought in ahead of Pontus’ departure and carried a few similar traits, given his propensity for breaking out of defence with the ball and charging through into midfield. But a 21-year-old of distinctly average height with barely double-digit games in League One behind him last season doesn’t make me immediately think he was intended to be Jansson’s successor. A great arrow in our quiver, sure, but a first-team regular from the opening day?

You see, for me, something successful clubs manage to do is have a particularly domineering centre-back clattering people should they dare get within striking distance of goal. Tyrone Mings, for example. Hell, even Daniel Ayala does this well (despite being someone I’d happily handcuff to a bear). I think the risk Leeds are taking is having a particularly ‘nice’ defensive line.

I’m consciously at risk of going a bit Richard Keys here, and perhaps being brought up on stories of Norman Hunter is to blame, but I still believe that successful sides often have a big horrible bastard in there somewhere. Sergio Ramos for example: an absolute bastard. Even looking at the Championship last season: Tyrone Mings, absolute bastard. But they add so many dimensions to the club’s defensive play.

Luke Ayling and Barry Douglas are friendly faces, and I don’t think anyone fears Liam Cooper defensively more than Leeds fans do. Pontus occupied our ‘big bastard’ role and while he wasn’t a perfect player, I do feel that someone who could head away any cross and frustrate forwards is a valuable asset. I can’t criticise Ben White while knowing so little about him, but from the limited game-time I’ve observed I wouldn’t say he’s going to Pepe his way into the opposition’s nightmares.

Is it a mistake that we’re quietly hoping that Kiko Casilla will shake off his wobbles and become an unbeatable league-leading stopper? I cannot say that I’m comforted by thinking that our goalkeeping position will autonomously improve.

Is it a mistake that after we famously struggled with depth at the back last season, we have elected to sell one of our best









centre-backs and replace them with a fairly unproven young lad? Is it a mistake to not add more players in this problem position? Is it a mistake that we haven't even taken heed of the myriad of injury problems we endured last season? With Kemar Roofe and Luke Ayling already injured and Gaetano Berardi suspended, it does rather feel like Groundhog Day before a ball has even been kicked.

So if insanity is the process of repeating actions and expecting different results, are we insane? Perhaps it's fitting that El Loco is our head coach because to anyone else none of this would make sense.

It doesn't need to make sense for me to love the club, either. If anything, one of our most endearing qualities is how unlovable we continually try to be towards ourselves. We're becoming incredibly accomplished at seeing how close we can get to victory before self-destructing. It's like playing chicken with the Premier League. We'll run at the Premier League and we'll see how late we can leave it before veering off wildly and breaking countless hearts.

Whether that's under Ken Bates, ensuring that we sell key players after narrowly missing out on the play-offs, where even the tiniest investment could have tipped us over the line. Whether that's looking certain under Monk that we'll get to the play-offs, only to fade at the last minute.

I must admit, 2018/19 Leeds aspired to take things to the next natural level by playing chicken harder than we've seen them try before. We managed to break several records by falling from grace in the manner we did. No one had been top at Christmas and not been promoted before, until we did it. No one had won the away leg of the play-off semi-finals first and failed to get promoted, until we did it. This perennial game of chicken we're intending to play seems to go on indefinitely.

And we're back to tinkering with transfer policy, electing not to strengthen in obvious and noteworthy areas to keep the game of chicken exciting.

If supporting Leeds is insanity on repeat, at least we're all guilty of it.

OLD SCHOOL

EDDIE GRAY

Words **Moscowwhite**

Artwork **Dan Marsham**

When Brian Clough started on Eddie Gray, telling him his injuries were becoming so bad if he was a racehorse he'd shoot him, that was the finish for many of Gray's teammates. Gray was 26, but he was still the baby brother of Don Revie's formidable family, and while Norman Hunter didn't give a fuck what Clough said about him — and told him so — the elder players wouldn't let him pick on young Edwin.

Gray crossed paths with Clough again in 1977/78, the season Nottingham Forest returned, with their new manager, to Division One. Leeds beat them early in the season, Ray Hankin scoring while Gray was an unused sub. Gray scored against them in the first leg of the League Cup semi-final, but there was no stopping Forest by this time; they won that game 3-1 and the second leg 4-2.

The pressure won on Leeds at the City Ground in April, with Jimmy Armfield needing UEFA Cup qualification to keep his job. What he didn't need were injuries; David Stewart recovered in time to delay a debut for 'boy keeper' John Lukic, but Allan Clarke wasn't fit, so Eddie Gray kept his place as a stand-in striker alongside Hankin.

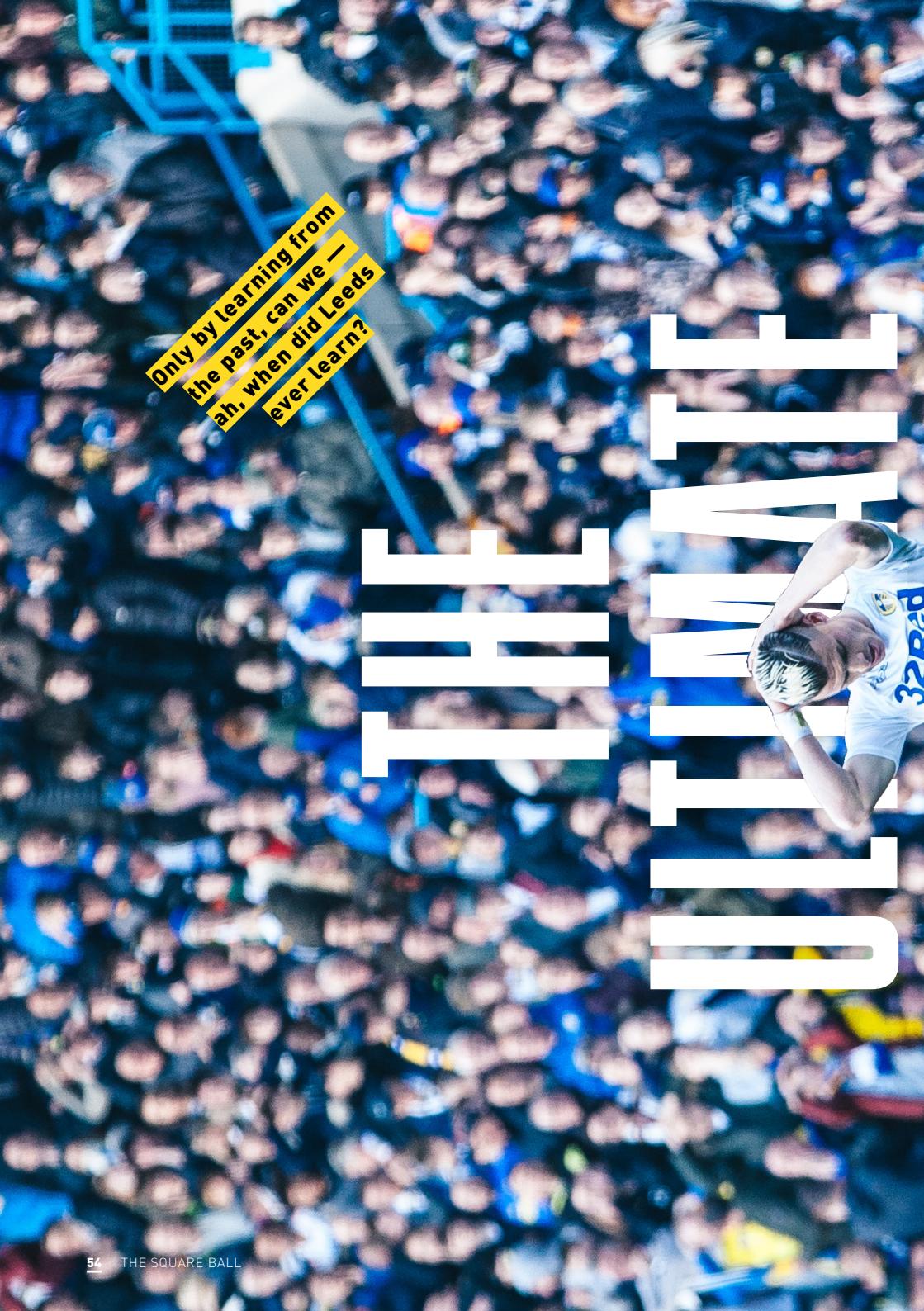
Leeds at this time were 'different' to their glory days, the Yorkshire Evening Post's Terry Brindle wrote; "demonstrably less effective, arguably better to watch, but definitely different." What they retained, Brindle said, was "robust competitiveness" when pride was at stake, and Leeds proved that with a 1-1 draw, Frank Gray opening the scoring with a penalty after brother Eddie was fouled, Peter Withe equalising.

According to Clough, one player could be proud of his performance. "There is a bloke in their dressing room called Eddie Gray," he said. "And he has five kids. He's just taken about £80 home to his bairns if I remember their bonus scheme aright, and I am delighted for him. He certainly gave nothing away; by his standards he had a hell of a game."

As always there was a thorn in the roses; Leeds fans knew Gray had higher standards than Clough gave him credit for. Also, Clough could afford to be magnanimous now. For his cruelty to Gray, along with everything else, Leeds had sacked him. Now, on his return to Division One, after beating Leeds he'd won the League Cup, and in a couple of weeks his team would be league champions. But Clough hadn't beaten Eddie Gray, and he knew it.



EDDIE GRAY



Only by learning from
the past, can we –
ah, when did Leeds
ever learn?

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PLAYING BY THE RULES



Words **Phil Fraser**

Photos **Lee Brown**

Close season. Nothing to do. I turn on my TV and start to channel surf. On some never-watched lesser known TV channel the noise suddenly blares, 'Coming next on this channel, come and join in the new gameshow for all the Leeds United family — yes, it's the BLAAAAAAAME GAAAAME!' Cue cheesy theme tune as the even cheesier host enters, via a faux players' tunnel TV set.

It's not a reality show. It's just reality. It's not 'coming next', it's the game we've all been playing since Fat Frank auditioned for Come Dancing on our hallowed turf back in May. Some claim to have been playing it since the Wigan debacle, others since Chris Wilder's smash and grab, others even earlier.

So come and join me and let's play The Ultimate Blame Game, spinning the wheel of [mis]fortune and taking a closer look at all the myriad reasons why we failed last season. In no particular order, I give you:

1) THE SQUAD WAS TOO SMALL

A point raised very early on, if not before the season started. All the cliches were trotted out by the experts: 'it's a long season', 'Saturday, Tuesday, Saturday', 'wait until injuries and suspensions kick in'. But we were told very early that Marcelo Bielsa likes a small squad supplemented by youth team players. That's exactly how it played out. In many ways, Bielsa proved us all wrong, with each youth team player that came in proving their worth and none of them ever letting us down. Unfortunately the unprecedented list of injuries (see below) brought the downside sharply into focus, particularly a play-off semi final bench made up of kindergarten attendees.

2) INJURIES

It started with Adam Forshaw's toe and ended with Ezgjan Alioski's meniscus, taking in Patrick Bamford's knees, Gaetano Berardi's thigh and Jamal Blackman's leg among many, many others. An endless stream of broken, torn and damaged muscles and bones that started early and was a constant theme throughout the season. The stats are frankly astounding. Around forty different injuries. Almost 200 games missed. Never a full squad to select from. Add the absurd Izzy Brown situation and you have a scenario that no size of squad could ride out. Was Bielsaball the cause? Pure bad luck? Whatever it was, it had a huge effect on our season.

3) PISS POOR FINISHING

Leeds controlled the first twenty minutes but couldn't convert their numerous chances. They then let one in with the opposition's first opportunity of the game'. Sound familiar? We simply couldn't convert our chances. Way back in September, after the draw at Sheffield Wednesday, Bielsa was bemoaning our profligacy in front of goal. It was a theme that eventually cost us. You can point the finger at our violin-playing posh boy, but everyone was to blame. Each game's stats looked the same: 15/20/30+ chances created, single figures on target. Not enough goals. Bielsa claimed most teams averaged three chances per goal, while we were on six. Simply not good enough.

4) THE JANUARY TRANSFER WINDOW, AKA THE DAN JAMES AFFAIR

On January 1st 2019 we were top of the table. Perfectly placed to reinforce the squad as we headed for home. A striker to solve the profligacy in front of goal? A new number ten to replace Samu Saiz? Maybe an extra centre-back to help the defence? Either out of choice, budget or simple incompetence, we only bought a goalie. In addition we were made fools of by Swansea pulling the plug on a deal for jet-heeled Dan James. Would he have been the final piece of the jigsaw? Maybe. But whatever the cause, failing to strengthen properly really does, in hindsight, seem a dreadful mistake.







5) THE WIGAN GAME

April 19th. Joint 2nd place with Sheffield United with a game in hand and four games to go. Home to bottom three side Wigan. After fourteen minutes they have a player sent off. Three minutes later Bamford scores. With a minute to go to half-time we were just three-and-a-half games from promotion. Stop reading. Read that again. Please. Three. And. A. Half. Games. From. Promotion. That's how close we were to the dream. The promised land. How we fucked it up from there I will never ever know. 36 shots. 30 chances created, 77% possession. At the final whistle, despite still being 3rd on goal difference, everyone knew. That was the day the dream died. From then on in it was a case of preparing for the dreaded play-offs.

6) POOR LOAN RECRUITMENT

Of our four loanees only Jack Harrison made any impact, and that wasn't huge. Lewis Baker proved to be ineffectual, while recruiting a crooked Izzy Brown and then not playing him was both bizarre and never fully explained. Jamal Blackman was simply unlucky. Comparing the effect that Frank-Lampard's Derby's™ loanees had to ours brings our pathetic use of the loan system into stark contrast. Blame Victor.

7) THE PLAYERS BOTTLED IT

'Leeds, Leeds are falling apart, again'. While the song is annoying, you have to say it has an element of truth. The players, seemingly, couldn't handle the pressure, particularly in contrast to the way both Sheffield United and Norwich did. I've long suspected that we as fans contribute to this. Our passion, and desperation, adds something that other teams don't have to deal with. Are we, potentially the cause? We buckled under the weight of expectation. A sports psychologist acquaintance of mine recently said, "Premier League research says a minimum of 25% of sport is psychological. What does it look like when a team 'chokes'? It's basic errors, daft sendings off, inexplicable pieces of lack of concentration." Sound familiar?



WE WERE
THREE-AND-
A-HALF
GAMES FROM
PROMOTION

8) MARCELO BIELSA

What? What the actual fuck? You're blaming Bielsa? The man is a living god, you can't do that! If you listen hard enough you will hear people talking about 'burnout', or saying we became one-dimensional and predictable and thus easy to play against, or that he didn't rotate the players enough, thus contributing to worn out players, or that his game management (Nottingham Forest away, Sheffield United home etc) was lacking. While what Bielsa has done to our players is close to a miracle, you could say that some of the criticisms leveled at him has a modicum of truth — although the stats disprove burnout.

9) LACK OF INVESTMENT

'Radz is a skint chancer', or so the doubters and naysayers would have you believe. Okay, so the Dan James deal could have been done if we coughed it all up front. We didn't strengthen in January. The squad was light when we started. Every team needs 'a couple more'. Seemingly we didn't have the money, or more likely Bielsa didn't want 'a couple more'. I'm not exactly sure what more we could have thrown at it, bearing in mind FFP, and we always have the ghost of Publicity Pete rattling his Marlow-esque chains in the back of our minds. But still.



10) CASILLA/COOPER/BAMFORD/BERARDI*

Delete where applicable and pick your own scapegoat. You can point the finger at individual players and, yes, Bamford 'missed chances', and Kiko Casilla 'can be unreliable', and Liam Cooper 'always has a mistake in him' and Berardi 'is a liability'; or you could add your own names. Conversely, remember Bamford's goals, Kiko's saves and Cooper and Berardi's defensive heroics. Simply put, at the end of the day, as a team, as a collective, we weren't good enough. You cannot simply blame one player.

11) SPYGATE

The biggest storm in a teacup for many a year. Derby chairman Mel Morris pointed out that our stats were poorer after it than before. It was a distraction, but did it really affect the team? I'm not sure it did, but it was a real drag while the media witchhunt was in full flow.



12) SKY TV

The Mighty Whites featured 24 times last season. With dates and kick-off times moving all over the place, it can't be good for players' preparation, both physically and mentally. The ridiculous situation of Leeds playing four games in a row after Sheffield United at such a crucial part of the season seemed unfair, and ramped the pressure up a couple of notches even higher, to a point where we couldn't cope.

13) NOT REPLACING SAMU SAIZ

While we know why he left, not replacing him seemed a huge oversight. We became less creative and more one dimensional. We lacked the ability to unpick the many ten-behind-the-ball defences we faced that Saiz, on his day, could open up. It laid too much creative responsibility on Pablo Hernandez, and he eventually capitulated under the weight.

And finally:



14) BECAUSE WE'RE LEEDS UNITED, IT'S WHAT WE DO

Histon, Sutton, Doncaster, Sunderland — the list is endless. No team has ever been top at a Christmas and not gone up? Hold my beer.

QPR, seven league defeats in a row? Hold my beer. Birmingham, no wins in eight? Hold my beer. Stoke, one win in five? Hold my beer. Wigan, the worst away record in the league? Hold my beer.

No team has ever won the away leg first in a play-off semi-final and not gone through? HOLD. MY. FUCKING. BEER.

OLD SCHOOL

JOHN HELM

Words **Moscowhite**



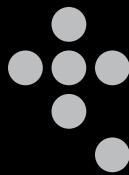
Socrates still, trying to get the opening, oh! Socrateeeeees, woooooah! What a goal!" Before we interviewed him for *The Extra Ball* podcast, I hadn't heard John Helm's commentary on Socrates scoring at the World Cup that Helm says was his favourite, Spain '82. But it has everything that's good about John Helm as a television commentator, and everything good about football commentary in general. It's a bloke from Baildon yelling "Woooooah!", but that's what everyone watching in Baildon, and everywhere, was yelling too.

"Look at that for a shot from the Brazilian captain!" says Helm when the replays start, and this is what Helm is good at. Perhaps because he didn't come up through radio, he always remembers that you can see what he can see, and can make your own mind up about it; he just needs to make sure you're looking at the right part of the screen. "Look how sweetly he strikes that one!" Then, if there's something off-screen you can't see, he'll tell you: "And all around us the Brazilian commentators are saying, 'Gooooooooooooool' — that's they way they celebrate!"

Helm's restraint and reliance on what's visible contrasts with Jonathan Pearce, who began by filling up the air on radio, and sucked the joy from this summer's Women's World Cup, although his refusal to leave no trivia unspoken also spoiled the 2018 World Cup for me. Germany shot from a free-kick and Pearce announced it was, "So close by the man of the match in the World Cup final four years ago!" treating it like a quiz question. Three replays later, as he droned on about irrelevancies, I still didn't know who took the shot.

Contrast that with the commentary for which Helm will always be remembered in Leeds. He captures Gordon Strachan's goal against Leicester not by asking impossible questions about who scored it — imagine Pearce, 'A goal by the Edinburgh-born winner of the 1983 Cup Winners' Cup!' — but by joining with us watching, asking questions that provoke our emotions. "Here's Strachan again! Have you ever seen a better goal?" Well, sure, rationally I've seen loads, but Helm understands nobody is feeling rational right now. "And have you ever seen one better timed?" When you put it like that, no, no I haven't. You're right, John. What a goal!

Listen to *The Square Ball* talking to John Helm for nearly two hours with a month's free trial of *The Extra Ball* Podcast: sign up at thesquareball.net/podcasts



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What a rare interview from the 1990s tells us about
Marcelo Bielsa and Pontus Jansson

INDEPENDENT ATTITUDE

Words **Tom Woodhead**

@julianbrico

- 1990 Campeón del torneo Apertura
- 1991 Campeón del torneo Unificación
- 1992 Campeón del torneo Clausura
- 1992 Subcampeón copa Libertadores



Remember summer 2018? Heady, mysterious days. Klich and Vieira played centre-back. Squads were split, and rejoined. Yosuke Ideguchi communicated via laptop, his very own Larry Middleman. Those who returned chubby were whipped into shape quick-smart, or shipped out the door even quicker. We didn't learn much, all of this being behind closed doors, with only clips of bibs doing shuttle-runs, or bobbing, dumbbells grasped, to give us any clue. We had the friendlies, yes, but Klich and Vieira played centre back.

One thing we did learn was that Marcelo Bielsa doesn't do one-on-one interviews. He'll answer whatever you want, as fully as you want (often, for certain 'journalists', much more comprehensively) but only within the press room. You'll sit down, and listen, and ask him questions one-by-one.

It therefore came as some surprise to hear that he will be interviewed, for the first time in over twenty years, in Take Us Home, the forthcoming documentary chronicling the 2018/19 campaign.



The same week we heard that news an old television interview, filmed between Bielsa's stints at Club América and Vélez Sarsfield, was translated and uploaded by Bielsa enthusiast Juani Jimena.

Here, through the static, tinged with VHS-green, we see a much younger man: less calcified, more malleable. Also more confident. There's a clear aspiration, a vision of unconquered land — something of the prospector about him, the evangelical zealot. He smiles more. He seems more at ease with himself and the world around him.

You get the sense he's tried his damn best to rein in all these characteristics as the years have passed, and as the finals have slipped away.

That transformation, however nascent, is underway here. We have moved on from the untethered, unfiltered Marcelo, grasping the shirt of Newell's and screaming, lost in rapture. He has tasted failure, and failure has changed success. "If I ever succeed again, I will not celebrate as much as I did when I was successful before. Because now I learned that this changes very fast."

“My aspiration is to have players that I do not have to invade”

Angus, cancel the choppers.

This is the kind of programme we don't really get anymore, or if we do it's a podcast hosted by thirty-somethings, not a midnight Mexican TV special. The host is half-Newsnight, half Abe-Simpson-yelling-at-cloud. Imagine Paxman complaining, they don't play ruggers like we did, before professionalisation. A panel of bucktoothed pseuds, at least one of whom is probably banging his teenage student, ask their questions with all the pompous air of a parliamentary select committee.

You do sense that Bielsa misses the back-and-forth. He tries it, occasionally, with jobbing hacks in press conferences, mostly unsuccessfully. Here he's in his element, coming back with sharp retorts ("Sure, but it's easy to say that the coaches became important because of the players"), having a conversation, not just sermonising.

Early in the interview Bielsa says, on the subject of 'talent' vs 'muscle': "I think they compliment each other and they need each other. Eleven talented players will surely need the help of a sacrificed version. And eleven sacrificed will be orphans of creativity. They will miss the talented."

Ah, Gjanni Alioski, feral orphan of creativity: a lab-bred collection of sinew and endeavour, who knows all the tricks but never when to use them. And Samuel Saiz, who surely needs his help.

That Saiz was binned off, and Gjanni remains, should tell you everything about where the faultlines and thresholds lie.

Someone else was binned off this summer. Everyone has an opinion on Pontus Jansson. Back in the 1990s Marcelo Bielsa, reaching forward through time, gave us this:

"There are players who claim prominence. Those players must then, on the field, have attitudes that justify the role they aspire to. If the player aspires to be independent he must have, on the field, appropriate attitudes to deserve that independence.

"When you see Raúl play, let's not take away his independence. Because he needs independence and he deserves it. The same with Ronaldo. But there are players who demand the assistance of the coach. The coach's wisdom is to assist those who claim assistance — to give resources that they cannot generate on their own — and free those who deserve independence ... My aspiration is to have players that I do not have to invade. But when I see that there is a player who deserves to be invaded..."

The words string together quickly now.

"...there are also many players who ask for freedom, but they do not deserve it."

I'm sure it's happened dozens of times since. Players who deserve to be invaded, stubbornly resisting. Can you really blame Bielsa, so defined by his work, his way of working, for giving up on that particular territory?

Jansson was my favourite player back when he was the free spirit inside a spluttering, faulty machine. You won't find anyone more ready to defend his pirouettes on the edge of the box than me. He doesn't follow instructions, and that used to be amazing. But now, in the almost complete, almost perfect machine, do we really want a dissident cog that's pulling in random directions?

If this interview shows us the passage of time, everything that's changed, it also shows what has stayed the same. What will always be. Our host inquires: "Bielsa, is he perfect or perfectable?"

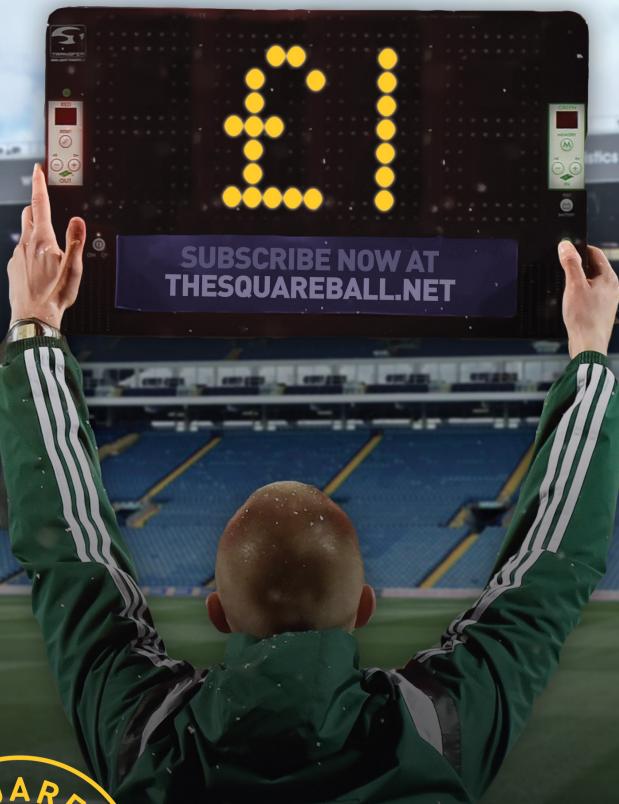
Bielsa replies: "Imperfect."

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THE LAST WORD

**You Cannot
Be Serious**

Words **Matthew Knowles**

Too often in the past Leeds United has had an owner that takes the piss. Coins in the money, doesn't spend it and tries to luck into success or promotion while not giving a monkey's about the fans.

I really thought the current owner was different. Hiring Marcelo Bielsa was a masterstroke. Retaining him might be all we need. The enhanced outreach to the fans has been brilliant. The social media work has been top class for the most part. Last season was one of wonder, leaving aside the final episode. It was a hell of a ride. Leeds United was back, my Leeds United was back.

When will I ever learn? This summer appears to have seen us move back into the bad old days.

Our squad was too thin last season, lacked depth, lacked goals and struggled defensively at times. So what have we done? Sold more than we have brought in, including our best defender and a young goalkeeper, at cut prices that look silly compared to fees paid elsewhere for similar or inferior players. Our play-off run ended with a calamity between our goalkeeper and centre half, both of whom have been retained as central parts of the team for the new season. Liam Cooper should be a good option off the bench, not first choice defender. Kiko Casilla may only be here because we can't find anyone to take him on but we've now sold his young, developing understudy for a joke of a fee. We've replaced one centre-back with another when we needed an extra one.

We've still not signed a goalscorer and we're still relying on loans while selling some of our young players. It's like Ken Bates never left.

Apparently Pontus Jansson was an issue. If Bielsa is as good a coach as we all think he is, couldn't he have sorted that out rather than significantly weakening the team? If a decent fee wasn't available, and certainly not from a division rival, then he should still be here. Beggars can't be choosers when we have an international defender on the books, no plans for a replacement, no ability to get a better one and no decent fee on the table.

Don't give me Financial Fair Play or budgets or any of it. Do you want to get promoted or not? We do. Does the owner? It doesn't appear so. We fell at the final hurdle last year as the small squad couldn't manage with injuries and suspensions. We don't appear to have learned and will have a weaker team this year, again relying on U23s stepping up. We run the likely risk of a similar outcome when the league is a little softer this year, when we should be going for it that bit more than last year. Not breaking the bank, but keeping the squad together and adding a little bit to it.

So we start the season weaker than last year when we should be full of hope. If you are, good for you, but I fear you're being tricked. This is a similar plan to previous owners, just with a better PR department.

And don't get me started on that abomination of an away kit in our centenary year...



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