

# Newsletter May Week 1

## Overview of Week

### Football

The first week of May is almost at an end and what a week it has been on the Football front.

The week has been packed with action and talking points from the Champions League semi-final first legs and the final games of the season in the English lower leagues.

Starting with the Champions League Spurs suffered a 1-0 home defeat against a very impressive young Ajax side and now face an uphill struggle to qualify for the final next week in Amsterdam.



Donny van de Beek scored the winning goal for Ajax, who are now favourites to reach the final. But the main news was dominated by the clash of heads that left Jan Vertonghen with blood pouring from his nose and the decision to allow him to continue, albeit for a very short period. Player safety must take priority.

In the other semi-final, once again it was the magic of Messi. The little Argentine genius scored 2 on the night, including a wonder free kick to condemn Jurgens' troops to the reality of semi-final exit. He now has 600 goals for Barcelona. This comes just days after Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 600th club career goal on the 27th April for Juventus.

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The Europa League semi-finals saw both Arsenal and Chelsea move closer to an all English Europa League final.

It is the second last round of Premiership fixtures with the main focus being the Title and the titanic battle for a top 4 finish. All the contenders seem to be intent on throwing it away. Spurs were first up away to a Bournemouth team who have struggled of late. Spurs ended up with 9 men and a potentially costly defeat. It could have been much worse as Eric Dier should have seen red in the first half and was subbed at half time.

United yet again were a shadow of the team built by Fergie and their faint top 4 hopes were eventually ended at Huddersfield with a 1-1 draw.

Arsenal went ahead at the Emirates in the 8th minute knowing nothing less than victory would keep their top 4 hopes alive. As has been the theme over the past few weeks, they blew it and a 1-1 home draw means they have to win the Europa League or spend a 3rd consecutive season out to the Champions League. Chelsea However cemented their position with a comfortable win at home to Watford and have now secured Champions League football for next season.

This should be the last season that the big clubs benefit from contentious decisions from the referees with VAR in place next season.

Since the inception of the Premier League in 1992, the eventual Champions and perceived "Bigger" clubs have always seemed to benefit from refereeing decisions. Referees could be in the pockets of the games governing bodies who strive to have successful clubs in major European competitions. They want the big clubs to be competing and winning at this elite level. Is it therefore any surprise to see the smaller clubs always bemoaning decisions that have gone against them? The comments often lead to fines and touchline bans and form part of the spectacle. This directly questions the integrity of the referees and by inference the integrity of the parent associations. Furthermore, it questions whether referees are also influenced by home crowds. Penalty stats are quite interesting as they would fall into such a category. Over the last 6 seasons the big 6 (Manchester United, Manchester City,

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Liverpool, Arsenal, Chelsea and Spurs have averaged 6.5 penalties per season, whilst the remaining 14 teams have averaged under 4. The only season that saw the lower teams average more penalties than the big 6 was 2015/2016 and Leicester City won the title. Next season will see VAR ensure that important match changing decisions are correct in the majority of cases and level the playing field for the smaller clubs. Although not full proof, it will address the issues of offside, red cards, penalties (interesting to see on field penalties for diving) and mistaken identity. Add this to goal line technology and we should see the correct result on the day ensuring proper points allocation.



.In Golf It was announced that Masters champion Tiger Woods will visit the White House in Washington on Monday where he will be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by US President Donald Trump. The question on everyone's mind, is will Tiger wear his green jacket to the White house?

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In Cricket, Alec Hales fails a drug test and that provokes England one day captain Eoin Morgan to hit out at Hales for his conduct and lack of respect to his colleagues and his position.

This weekend saw the 2000 and 1000 Guineas take place at Newmarket and the start of the Derby and Oaks pointers in Ernest. Aidan O'Brien took the 2000 Guineas but not with Ten Sovereigns as widely anticipated. Instead Donnacha O'Brien romps home on Magna Grecia to make it back to back 2000 Guineas for the young Irishman.

At Newmarket on Sunday Aidan O'Brien made it a double by landing the 1000 Guineas with Hermosa ridden by Wayne Lordan. .

The Snooker World Championship is also nearing it's conclusion with Judd Trump trying to gain revenge on John Higgins who beat him in the 2011 final.



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## Preview Week Ahead

### Football

This Tuesday and Wednesday is crunch time for Liverpool and Spurs with both clubs with mountains to climb to get to the Champions League Final. The 2 clubs have contrasting form with Liverpool continuing to grind out results in their pursuit of a first top tier title since 1990, whilst Spurs are struggling for any sort of form. First up is Liverpool who have to score at least 3 goals and at the same time keep "Messi" quiet: Surely a step too far but football is a funny old game. Spurs travel to Amsterdam on Wednesday and an early away goal could turn this cup tie around. They will have to do this without top scorer Harry Kane.



Thursday sees the Europa League also conclude the semi-final stage with Arsenal travelling to Valencia with a 3-1 advantage. Hot off the back of a disastrous Sunday in the Premiership, the Europa League represents their only chance of Champions League football next season. Valencia have an all important away goal and any early advantage for the Spaniards will surely mount enormous pressure on the Gunners.

Chelsea have a home tie against Eintracht Frankfurt and already have an away goal in the bag and will surely feel confident of reaching the final. Already assured of Champions League football next year they can concentrate on winning the competition without pressure.

All the speculation regardless of Champions League Football next season is the Eden Hazard will be off to Real Madrid with Christian Erickson next season.

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### Cricket

This Wednesday sees the first of 5 one day 50 over Internationals between England and Pakistan. England have just won the one off 20/20 game and Eoin Morgans team will feel confident of a series win prior to the Cricket World Cup in June.