THE OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

ARSENAL

BENFICA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021 ▪ 5.55PM ▪ £3.50

Emirates
Official Partner
Arsenal

Travel with
PEACE OF MIND

FLY BETTER

There's no hiding our smiles, even with our masks on. Some things may have changed, but our warm welcome is still the same. Fly with us to your next destination with peace of mind knowing our highly trained cabin crew are there to look after your comfort and safety all the way.

Fly safer with Emirates

Emirates

CONTENTS

05 THE MANAGER
Last year is a warning

08 THE CAPTAIN
Will history repeat itself?

12 VOICE OF ARSENAL
A very unusual fixture

18 ANALYSIS
Arsenal v Portugal: full record

20 BENFICA REPORT
Action from the first leg

23 STRONG YOUNG GUNNERS
Joel Lopez is our Young Gun

35 IN FOCUS
Some classic Arsenal hat-tricks

52 GABRIEL MAGALHAES
The Brazilian's ambitions

58 ARSENAL V BENFICA
Our previous meetings

62 VISITORS
Giants of the Portuguese game

68 CEDRIC SOARES
Our Portuguese inside man

74 ARSENAL WOMEN
Want to join the Gunners?

77 THE BREAKDOWN
Spotlight on Ceballos

82 TEAMS
Squads and officials

EDITOR Andy Exley **DEPUTY EDITOR** Josh James **DESIGN MANAGER** Simon Wallis **DESIGNERS** Liam Warr, Owen Pinch, Edward Wilkinson **PHOTOGRAPHY** Stuart MacFarlane, David Price **CONTRIBUTORS** Aidan Small, Joanne Harney, Mike Hammond, Michael Cox, Michael Donlevy, Jon Spurling **THANKS TO** Fred Ollier **PRINTERS** Bishops Printers
COVER *It's Arsenal v Benfica in the Round of 32*

@AFCProgramme

Cadbury FC | Arsenal

FIND A LEGEND
WIN A LEGEND

UNWRAP IAN WRIGHT'S SHIRT IN-PACK TO JOIN HIM FOR A VIP ARSENAL FC EXPERIENCE!

WRIGHT 8

Cadbury DAIRY MILK
THE CLASSIC CREAMY TASTE

PLUS 1000s MORE PRIZES TO BE WON AT LEGENDS.CADBURYFC.COM

18+, UK & ROI. 04/01/2021 – 31/03/2021. Visit legends.cadburyfc.com for full T&Cs. Legend featured is for illustrative purposes only.

MIKEL ARTETA

We were expecting a tough game on Sunday, and it got even tougher after two minutes.

That was so frustrating because we talked about it beforehand, that we had to come out of the box really strongly, really convincingly. But we didn't and we allowed them some time around the box.

Collectively if you allow Sterling to score a header in the middle of the box – you can't beat City like that. After that we tried to react in the best possible way. I think we matched them up, we had some really good moments, we created some great opportunities but we lacked the quality around the box to find the right pass and the right man to score the goal.

Against that opponent, everything has to be perfect. I was pleased with the personality of the team after we conceded though. To show that courage, and to match them the way we've done, is really difficult. I've seen many other games in the last few months of theirs. It's something to be positive about but obviously we are disappointed because we got nothing from the game.

That was all down to the first ten minutes. During that time we didn't do something that we had talked about in our preparation, of what to do at times when we would suffer in the game – and they used it against us a couple of times and we were exposed. After that, we corrected it and looked much better and much more comfortable.

It's true though that there was some fatigue, and you could see that in both teams at the end. The boys are playing a lot of minutes right now, they are working ▸

extremely hard, so we cannot demand too much more of them.

It was a difficult game to have in the middle of these Benfica matches, but we have been fully focused back on Europe since the final whistle on Sunday.

We have just come out of a tough game – it was full gas from the beginning – so of course we will need to make some changes again tonight.

Obviously we need a fresh team and we need fresh legs as well because decision-making and everything becomes better when you are fresh.

With the schedule that we have right now, it is really demanding. We have no time to recover and little time to prepare. Against City for example, we could not prepare for the game on the field because we didn't have enough time. But we have to get used to it and we had an extra day for this game. Then straight away we go to Leicester. It's the same for most teams at the moment.

But the players want to be the best that they can and prepare in the best possible way for every single match and that's what they are doing.

"THE BIG LESSON IS THAT YOU HAVE TO PLAY EVERY SINGLE MINUTE OF THE COMPETITION WITH A HIGH FOCUS"

The Europa League is really important for us. It's one of the ways we can get back into Europe, and every defeat in the league puts us in a much more difficult position there.

We have to take it game by game and we need a run of good results. I think we have a big run of performances, but we've lost three games now in different ways and it's not what we want.

But we are very excited about this competition. We've been on a really strong run this season in the Europa League and we have a good opportunity to make another step forward tonight.

It's strange to be playing a home game in Athens, and very unusual, but I believe we have to try to maintain the integrity of the competition as much as we can.

The only way to do that at the moment is to play at different venues, but at least it's played over two legs with the away goals rule always present, so not too

much has changed.

We have good memories of playing here. We beat Olympiacos 1-0 in this stadium last season, even if we went out in the second leg.

That's a reminder for us though – the way we went out of the competition last year is our warning.

The tie was in our hands, but then we conceded in the last minute of extra-time. We still had a massive chance with Auba to go through, but the big lesson there is that you have to play every single minute of the competition with a high focus.

Every detail matters and every situation has to be handled, and it's about being able to manage the game in the way it's required because it's over two legs. The goal difference is very important and that has to be in the back of your mind, and you have to be able to control your emotions and as well be able to change the game when you need to, to take it to your territory when the tie is in your hands.

I hope that defeat to Olympiacos can be another motivation for us. It was a really tough experience for all of us with the way it happened because we deserved to go through. But also that created more hunger for this season to go and do more. We haven't gone through yet, so let's put more energy, more passion and more commitment into this competition to make sure we get it done.

We know you will be getting right behind us tonight, whether you are watching back in London or wherever you are, and we appreciate that support always.■

PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG

Playing Benfica in the Europa League brings back memories for me of when I played against them for Borussia Dortmund in 2017.

It was in the Champions League knock out stages, and I had a bad game in the first leg. I didn't just miss a penalty, I missed all of my chances that first game! The whole way through the game, I was missing a lot of chances. I remember I had three clear opportunities to score and then the penalty as well. Ederson was actually the Benfica goalkeeper at that time and I remember that I came back into the dressing room afterwards and I was really upset. Honestly, I think I cried a little bit about my performance and when I went back to Dortmund on the plane. Just before we flew I called my family to talk about the game.

I said to them that I'm going to do everything to try to qualify my team in the second leg and I will do it for you, I promise. And then, in the end, I scored three goals at home in the second leg to send us through. I think in Dortmund, when you play at home in the second leg, it's really different and you can change everything in that environment because the fans are unbelievable and they give you this incredible power.

This is what happened that night, it was a really great day to score those three goals.

I hope something similar can happen tonight. I missed a couple of chances in the first leg last week as well. I should have scored and that would have put us in a stronger position for this game. But we have another 90 minutes to play tonight to get the job done.

The difference to that game for Dortmund of course is that we are not at home tonight, and we won't have our fans with us.

To be honest it's really, really strange to see what's happening with this round. We played against Benfica in their home game last week in Rome, which was unusual too, for them and for us. Now are playing 'at home' in Athens in Greece, but at least we know this stadium. We played here last season against Olympiacos, and we won that night.

The same score again tonight will be enough for us to go through.

So as I say, it's very strange for us, but these are the ▸

WINTER COLLECTION

EXPLORE THE RANGE AT ARSENAL DIRECT

Arsenal

"I SAID I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING TO TRY TO QUALIFY MY TEAM IN THE SECOND LEG AND I WILL DO IT FOR YOU"

things you face, you have to deal with it and once we are on the pitch it's down to us like it is in any other game.

Anyway, we have got used to playing without crowds over the last year. But even when it's empty, I much prefer playing at the Emirates than in away games. It's always good to play there because you have your routines, you can prepare and you know everything about the pitch and where you are. It's really different to not be there for this as a home game – then there is all the travel too.

As I said though, you have to deal with it, and that's part of wanting to do well and wanting to win trophies. We had to deal with it last season too and we did really well to win the FA Cup. Our target is to do the same in the Europa League this time.

We all want the competition to continue, so this is what we have to do.

One thing we need to remember is the away goals rule, because we are still using that for these games. But for me personally, it's okay because I don't think it matters. We are all used to the away goals rule, we all know it, and we have to deal with it. We don't need to focus too much on it, we just need to try and win the game.

It would have been better to go into this game after a good result at the weekend, but Manchester City were just too strong for us on Sunday.

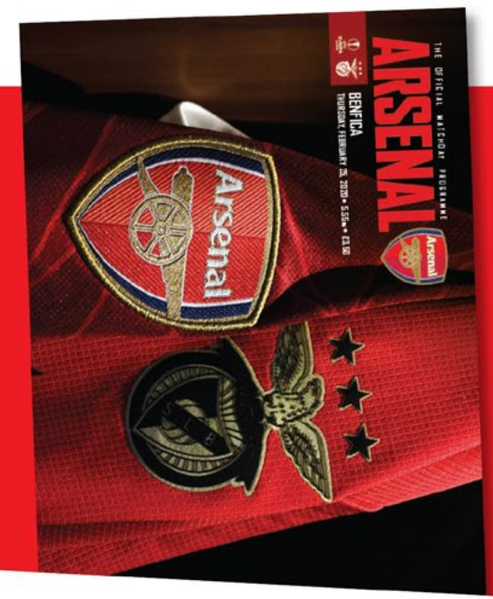
The really frustrating thing for us was that I thought we matched them up for most of the game, had a few chances ourselves, and could have got something for it. But after you concede in the first two minutes, obviously everything becomes much more difficult – especially against a team like City.

We showed our personality after that goal though, we kept playing and believing we could get something.

We need to show that same attitude tonight for the whole match against Benfica. If we can do that, and impose our game on them, I'm sure we can get the win. We'll be trying everything because it's another huge match for us.

Thanks for your support.■

VOICE OF ARSENAL



WHEN IS AN AWAY PROGRAMME A HOME PROGRAMME?!

Our records suggest that today's match is the fourth time in Arsenal's history that we have produced a 'home' matchday programme for a match played outside of the UK.

On May 14, 1959 the Gunners travelled to Turin to play the mighty Juventus, reciprocating the Italians trip to Highbury earlier that season on November 26, 1958 – when Arsenal triumphed 3-1. The programme was predominantly in Italian but produced in a very familiar Arsenal style for a match in which the tables were turned with Juve claiming a 3-1 win this time.

In May 1966, Arsenal travelled to Turkey to play two games against Besiktas, the first a 2-0 defeat in Istanbul on May 21, the second four days later in Ankara, which ended 0-0. A single programme was produced for both matches in a classic Arsenal design.

On the Gunners' pre-season tour to Australia in 2017, the club created a souvenir programme for the two fixtures against Sydney FC (won 2-0) and Western Sydney Wanderers (won 3-1), on July 13 and July 15 respectively. Both matches were played at Stadium Australia in Sydney. This programme was created in-house in the UK by the programme team but printed in Sydney.

In addition, relatively recently, the club produced six programmes for 'home' games played at Wembley in our Champions League campaigns for seasons 1998/99 and 1999/00.

Finally, the programme produced by the Arsenal programme team for the visit of Farnborough for an FA Cup fourth round tie on February 13, 2003 was technically an away programme, due to Farnborough opting to move their home draw to Highbury.

The issue featured manager's notes and player interviews with representatives of both clubs.■

With thanks to Andy Kelly

MEMBERS VIRTUAL QUIZ

Reckon you know your Aliadieres from your Aubameyangs? There's a brilliant Virtual Members Quiz taking place on March 3 and if you prove to be the ultimate Arsenal anorak, you could win yourself amazing prizes, including:

- A football signed by our Arsenal legend in attendance
- An Arsenal shirt signed by the 20/21 men's first team
- £100 Arsenal Direct voucher
- A ball signed by the men's first team

The quiz will be hosted on Zoom and start at 7.30pm. Participants will submit their answers via the Kahoot! App. And we'll let you into a little secret, the fiendish questions have been devised by the matchday programme team – so it must be good!

Register your interest now to take part. There are limited spaces available on a first come, first served basis. If you have been successful, you'll receive an email to RSVP after registration.

Go to the News section of Arsenal.com to enter.■

RESCHEDULED GAMES

Three Premier League matches have been rescheduled.

Burnley v Arsenal
Saturday March 6, 2021
Kick-off: 12.30pm (originally 3pm)
Live on: BT Sport

Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur
Sunday March 14, 2021 (originally Saturday, March 13)
Kick-off: 4.30pm
Live on: Sky Sports

West Ham United v Arsenal
Sunday, March 21, 2021 (originally Saturday, March 20)
Kick-off: 3pm
Live on: Sky Sports■

AWAY GOALS RULE IN PLACE

If today's game ends in a 0-0 draw, Arsenal will progress to the next knockout round on the away goals rule. Any scoring draw of 2-2 or higher will see Benfica advance. If the match ends 1-1, two 15 minute periods of extra-time will ensue. Away goals will count double in extra-time. If it remains 1-1 after extra-time, penalties will determine the winner.■

DRAW FOR THE NEXT ROUND

The winners of this Round of 32 tie will go into the Round of 16 draw, which takes place tomorrow in Nyon, Switzerland at midday UK time.

The two-legged Round of 16 games will take place on March 11 and March 18.

For this draw, there is no seeding or country protection.■

Rob receives treatment on Sunday

HISTORIC HEADACHE FOR ROB!

Rob Holding became Arsenal's first ever concussion substitute when he was replaced by David Luiz on 82 minutes of the game against Manchester City on Sunday. After an accidental knee to the head from City's Joao Cancelo, Rob was subbed with a 'green form' meaning David wasn't part of the Gunners' three substitute allocation.

The concussion substitution meant that Pep Guardiola's team were allowed an extra sub, which they didn't utilise.

The new ruling, which is being trialled by the Premier League until the end of the season, also allows for a second concussion substitution if required, with the opposition then accruing a fifth substitution option.

Mikel Arteta confirmed that Rob would miss 'a few days training' following the concussion but at the time of writing no decision had been made with regards to selection for the game today.■

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE
FedEx
Heineken 0.0
KIA
enterprise RENT-A-CAR
HANKOOK

ARSENAL REMEMBERS

THOMAS JAMES MASHARI
Beloved son of Jason & Rebecca was born sleeping on January 23, 2021. Jason held his son whilst they watched the Arsenal v Southampton match. Thomas will always be remembered. Love the Baynes family

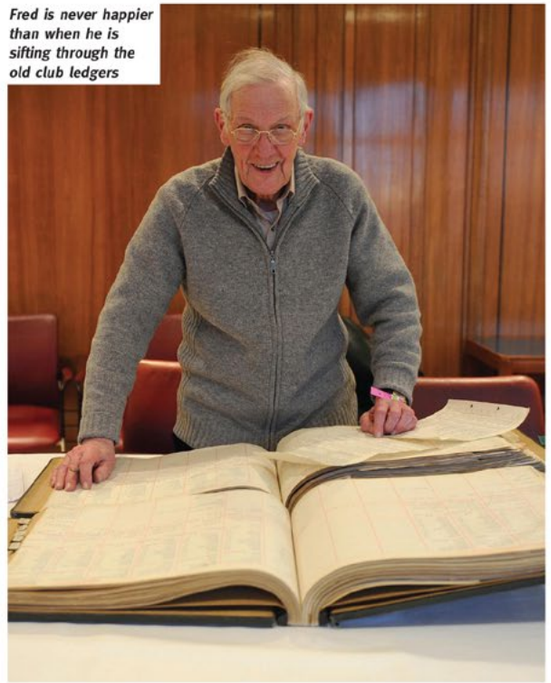
BRIAN STIBBONS
Who passed away on January 29, 2021 aged 69. A lifelong fan who was a season ticket holder (Clock End) for many years. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him and forever loved by his family

GEORGE OLD
Aged 76. George leaves behind a lifetime of happy memories for both his beloved family and more friends than any one man has the right to have. A lifelong Gooner, a true gent and we miss you terribly, dear friend

LAURENCE CONSIDINE
May 28, 1959 – December 28, 2020. A loving father, grandfather, friend to many and a true Gooner. He will still be watching them with us, we will just be in different seats. Forever in our hearts. Roberta & Francesca

CHARLES BARNES
Chas, Baba, Herbert. A life-long Gunner who passed away on February 7, 2021. Still watching every game. Reunited with his Verna

GARETH BRYANT
1954 – 2021. Loving husband to Fely, amazing father to Irene & Meg and beloved grandfather to Lauren, Ethan and Anthony. On match days he would be found in his Arsenal hat, scarf, shirt and jacket. A gentle giant who will be sadly missed by all who met him.
Rest in Eternal Peace■


Fred is never happier than when he is sifting through the old club ledgers

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FRED

Everyone at Arsenal Football Club, especially the programme team, would like to wish Fred Ollier a very happy 90th birthday tomorrow.

Fred is an Arsenal Historian of great repute. The author of Arsenal – A Complete Record, he also provides a valuable service by poring over every matchday programme and corroborating all the statistics for the first team and academy sides. His help on the programme has been invaluable over many decades.

Thank you Fred, your work for Arsenal Football Club has been – and remains – hugely appreciated.

Here's to many more games coming under your scrutiny in the years to come!■

Bjorn books Robert Lewandowski in 2013 as Mikel looks on

REF WATCH

Dutch referee Bjorn Kuipers is a very experienced official and has been taking charge of Champions League and Europa League matches since 2009.

This is the 47 year old's first Europa League assignment with the Gunners, but he did take charge of our 1-0 win away in the Champions League against Borussia Dortmund on November 6, 2013.

Aaron Ramsey headed the only goal of the game for an Arsenal team that included Per Mertesacker and Mikel Arteta – the latter was booked! Dortmund included ex-Gunners Henrikh Mkhitaryan and Sokratis and, young striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang came on in the 74th minute.

Bjorn is the owner of a number of supermarkets and a hair studio in his home town of Oldenzaal.■

PROGRAMME ITK

Four players have played in European competitions for BOTH Arsenal and Benfica.They are Stefan Schwarz, Michael Thomas, Jose Antonio Reyes and David Luiz.■

LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
1930/31, 1932/33, 1933/34, 1934/35, 1937/38, 1947/48, 1952/53, 1970/71, 1988/89, 1990/91, 1997/98, 2001/02, 2003/04

FA CUP WINNERS
1930, 1936, 1950, 1971, 1979, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2020

LEAGUE CUP WINNERS
1986/87, 1992/93

CHARITY/COMMUNITY SHIELD WINNERS
1930, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1938, 1948, 1953, 1991 (shared), 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2020

FAIRS CUP WINNERS
1969/70

EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS' CUP WINNERS
1993/94

FA YOUTH CUP WINNERS
1966, 1971, 1988, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2009

ARSENAL FOOTBALL CLUB
75 Drayton Park, London, N5 1BU
020 7619 5000

WEBSITE
www.arsenal.com

EMAIL
programme@arsenal.co.uk

TWITTER
@AFCProgramme

DIRECTORS
Lord Harris of Peckham, Stan Kroenke, Josh Kroenke, Tim Lewis

SECRETARY
David Miles

LIFE PRESIDENT
Ken Friar OBE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Vinai Venkatesham

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Edu

MANAGER
Mikel Arteta

Sportsbet.io

2 This is only our second ever competitive tie against Benfica, following our meeting in the 1990/91 European Cup

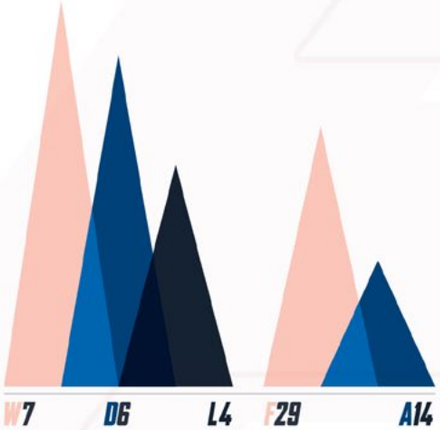
5-2 We did meet in the 2017 Emirates Cup though, and won 5-2

'17 Chris Willock left Arsenal for Benfica in 2017, but is now at QPR

ARSENAL V PORTUGAL

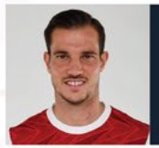
ARSENAL V PORTUGUESE TEAMS

PLAYED 17



ARSENAL TIES V PORTUGUESE TEAMS

PORTUGUESE GUNNERS

		APPS	GOALS
	LUIS BOA MORTE (1997-99)	39	4
	CEDRIC SOARES (2020-21)	24	1
	AMAURY BISCHOFF (2008-09)	4	0
	RUI FONTE (2008)	1	0

ARSENAL V PORTUGUESE TEAMS - GAME BY GAME

SPORTING LISBON 0-0 ARSENAL	**Scorers** None	1969/70 FAIRS CUP
ARSENAL 3-0 SPORTING LISBON	**Scorers** Radford, Graham 2	1969/70 FAIRS CUP
SL BENFICA 1-1 ARSENAL	**Scorer** K. Campbell	1990/91 EUROPEAN CUP
ARSENAL 1-3 SL BENFICA	**Scorer** Pates	1990/91 EUROPEAN CUP
ARSENAL 2-0 PORTO	**Scorers** Hleb, Henry	2006/07 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
PORTO 0-0 ARSENAL	**Scorers** None	2006/07 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
ARSENAL 4-0 PORTO	**Scorers** Adebayor 2, Van Persie 2	2008/09 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
PORTO 2-0 ARSENAL	**Scorers** None	2008/09 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
PORTO 2-1 ARSENAL	**Scorer** S. Campbell	2009/10 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
ARSENAL 5-0 PORTO	**Scorers** Bendtner 3, Nasri, Eboue	2009/10 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
ARSENAL 6-0 BRAGA	**Scorers** Fabregas 2, Chamakh, Arshavin, Vela 2	2010/11 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
BRAGA 2-0 ARSENAL	**Scorers** None	2010/11 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
SPORTING LISBON 0-1 ARSENAL	**Scorer** Welbeck	2018/19 EUROPA LEAGUE
ARSENAL 0-0 SPORTING LISBON	**Scorers** None	2018/19 EUROPA LEAGUE
ARSENAL 3-2 VITORIA	**Scorers** Martinelli, Pepe 2	2019/20 EUROPA LEAGUE
VITORIA 1-1 ARSENAL	**Scorer** Mustafi	2019/20 EUROPA LEAGUE
SL BENFICA 1-1 ARSENAL	**Scorer** Saka	2020/21 EUROPA LEAGUE

1

PIZZI 55 PEN

1

SAKA 57

EUROPA LEAGUE ROUND OF 32, FIRST LEG

8pm • Thursday, February 18 • Olympic Stadium, Rome

FIRST HALF

We returned to European action after the winter hiatus for the first leg of the Round of 32 match against Benfica, and though this was counted as the away leg, the match was played in neutral territory due to travel restrictions. We started the game well in control, dictating the tempo of the game, and we should have taken the lead after 20 minutes. Hector Bellerin sprinted away on the right, slid the ball across goal for Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang unmarked at the far post, but on this occasion our captain's aim was lacking, and his shot went the wrong side of the upright. We were nearly punished for our missed chances late in the half when Grimaldo pounced on a loose Granit Xhaka pass, but Dani Ceballos got back well to block.

SECOND HALF

Benfica took the lead from a penalty award for an Emile Smith Rowe handball. Pizzi duly tucked home from 12 yards. We had scored in each of our previous 22 Europa League games, and we kept the run going. Cedric got in behind the defence to latch on to a Martin Odegaard pass, and centred for Saka to convert from close range. A valuable 'away goal' in this most unusual of European ties. We were back on the front foot and Aubameyang shot just wide shortly afterwards and Hector Bellerin had a shot blocked on the edge of the area but we were unable to find the winner, and need to complete the job in Athens.■

Bukayo Saka tucked home a crucial equaliser

MATCH STATS

6	TOTAL SHOTS	7
4	SHOTS ON TARGET	2
3	CORNERS	4
0	OFFSIDES	10
10	FOULS	10
41	POSSESSION %	59

BENFICA

77 LEITE
4 VERISSIMO (85)
5 VERTONGHEN
30 OTAMENDI
3 GRIMALDO
17 CONCALVES
21 PIZZI (64)
28 WEIGL
49 TAARABT (77)
9 NUNEZ (64)
10 WALDSCHMIDT (46)

SUBSTITUTES

SILVA (46), EFEROVIC (64), SOARES (64), PIRES (77), MACHADO 85), JUNIOR, SVILAR, CERVI, DA SILVA, TAVARES, FERREIRA, VLACHODIMOS

ARSENAL

1 LENO
2 BELLERIN
23 DAVID LUIZ
6 GABRIEL
17 CEDRIC (64)
34 XHAKA
8 CEBALLOS (90)
7 SAKA
11 ODEGAARD (90)
14 AUBAMEYANG (77)
32 SMITH ROWE (77)

SUBSTITUTES

TIERNEY (64), MARTINELLI (77), PEPE (77), WILLIAN (90), ELNENY (90), LACAZETTE, HOLDING, CHAMBERS, MARI, NKETIAH, RYAN, HEIN

The assured Martin Odegaard provided a constant attacking threat

10% OFF RETAIL
ONLINE AND IN-STORE

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
ARSENAL.COM/MEMBERSHIP/RETAILDISCOUNT

EXCLUSIVE
MEMBERSHIP PACK

ALWAYS AHEAD OF THE GAME

JUNIOR GUNNERS

ALWAYS AHEAD OF THE GAME

ACCESS TO
ONLINE EVENTS
REGULAR UPDATES
THE CHANCE TO WIN
PRIZES AND REWARDS
AND MORE!!!

ARSENAL.COM/MEMBERSHIP

DEVELOPING STRONG YOUNG GUNNERS

IN THIS ISSUE...

24 YOUNG GUN
Joel Lopez

27 MATCH REPORTS
A dramatic late win

28 NEWS
Omari – King of assists

30 REMEMBER
Robbie Burton

31 STATS
Results and fixtures

@ArsenalAcademy

YOUNG GUN

JOEL LOPEZ

TALKING TO Aidan Small

BORN
Spain, March 31, 2002

POSITION
Left back

SIGNED FOR ARSENAL
August 2018

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT
1.80m and 70kg

BOOTS
Adidas Copa

When Arsenal came calling, it was an opportunity that I just couldn't turn down. Barcelona was all I'd ever known, but I knew straight away that this was the club for me.

I loved growing up in Barcelona. As a kid, maybe five years old, I remember playing with my brother and dad in the park, and we'd spend hours practicing passing, dribbling and skills. Anything really, as long as the ball was at my feet. We had a park just outside our apartment in Barcelona and it was really nice to grow up in an environment like that. My family taught me everything.

Obviously, I was lucky enough to watch some of the greatest Barcelona teams of all time too. It was a real golden era of the club.

When I was really young, I remember going to Camp Nou for the very first time and Ronaldinho was on the pitch. I was just blown away because he was like nothing I'd ever seen before. When you're a kid, it almost felt like he was an alien or something from out of this world, and then a little kid called Lionel Messi came along! It was an amazing handover between two of the greatest we've ever seen.

Once I realised that playing football is something I enjoy, my family signed me up to a team in the local area and I loved it right from the start. We played together for a while, but I remember that in my final season we played some amazing football and had the chance to play Barcelona, and this is where it all started. I played really well on the day and that's when Barcelona offered to sign me!

I joined them aged nine and I've got nothing but good things to say about my time there. It was an amazing experience and they taught me so much. At Barcelona, football is all about having the ball, appreciating the ball and education, so that taught me a lot about the game from a very young age.

"I REALISE HOW BIG IT IS THAT I WAS ABLE TO LEARN AT LA MASIA AS A KID OF BARCELONA"

I played with a lot of very talented players during my time at La Masia too. I played with Robert Navarro, Iliax Moriba and Pablo Moreno, plus loads of other really good players. We were a very good generation and it really boosts your development when you're surrounded by talent like that.

I didn't realise as a kid, because I was just taking everything in my stride, but now that I'm older, I realise how big it is that I was able to learn at La Masia as a kid of Barcelona. I've realised how much they taught me about football and how certain values and beliefs are ingrained into me. They taught me about tactics and the art of the game, and I think as you get older, you realise more and more just how much they taught you.

The first time I heard from Arsenal, it was during my last season in Barcelona. I was 15 at the time and Barcelona wanted to keep me, but the first time I heard from Arsenal, I couldn't believe it. I was with my parents, brother and agent at the time, and I just couldn't stop laughing! I was so happy! I wasn't sure if it was going to happen at the time, but I had such a good feeling about the move. When a club like Arsenal calls your name, it's different. It feels amazing. From there, it was stuck in my mind. I had a vision I wanted to achieve, and in the end, I obviously made the move to north London.

For me, it was the history and class of the club. Not only their history of playing beautiful football and winning trophies, but their history in the academy too. With the projection that this club provides to young players, it was a massive incentive for me to sign.

I think the fact that players like Hector and Cesc followed this path gave me confidence in my decision too. They left Barcelona at a similar age to me, and Hector is someone I really admire. Not only as a player, but as a person too. He's someone I've always appreciated. Hector has been amazing to me ever since I joined the club, but it's honestly not just me in the academy. He tries to help everyone and he's such a good influence in training. I don't need to say anything about Hector on the pitch because we all know how important he is. It's easy to forget that he's still only 25 too because he burst onto the scene at such a young age.

I've been here at Arsenal for three years now and I've loved every minute of it. I remember when I first joined, I was shocked at the physicality of the game compared to Spanish football, but I adapted really well to Arsenal's style of play. I couldn't believe how much everyone was running during my first game! It was such a new experience to me – they were so passionate and physical! But I realised straight away that I needed to step up and I now believe I'm a much more physical and aggressive player.■

JOEL LOPEZ

LOWDOWN

Earliest memory of football Playing in the park with my brother and Dad

Got me into playing football Dad and brother

First footballer I looked up to Ronaldinho (right)

Favourite football shirt owned Ronaldinho and Messi Barca shirts

My football memorabilia I've worn my shin pads since I was nine

Supported as a child Barcelona

Best goal I've scored Versus West Ham Under-18s away

Best performance The final of an U-16 tournament against Espanol

Favourite training drills Rondos

RATE YOURSELF

SPEED	88
SHOOTING	61
DRIBBLING	75
STRENGTH	69
PASSING	75
DEFENDING	70

Best piece of skill I've done in a game Elastico

Best moment of my career so far Signing for Arsenal

One type of goal I'd like to score Volley from outside the box

A player to score a one-on-one to save my life Neymar

If I could completely change position I'd play at No. 10

Best friend in football Karl Hein

Other sports I'm good at Tennis and basketball

Ambitions this season off the pitch Good grades in A Levels

The important non-playing attributes for young footballers Ambition, humility and confidence

Biggest lesson I've learnt off the pitch at Arsenal Adapt to different scenarios and situations in life

ME

Favourite footballer of all-time Lionel Messi

Most played Spotify artist Michael Jackson

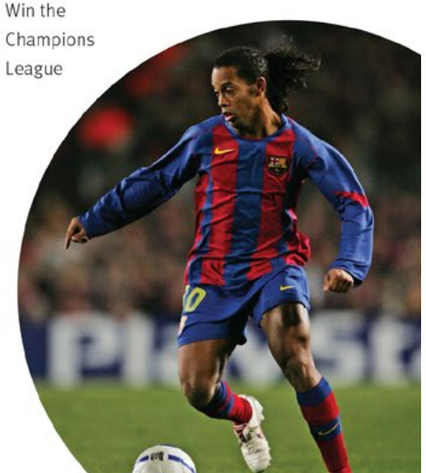
Favourite musician Travis Scott

Favourite trainers Black Yeezy

Best football attribute Speed

One thing I need on an away day Music

One thing I want to do in my football career Win the Champions League



U-18 Premier League South
Tuesday, February 16
London Colney

ARSENAL U18 Graczyk, Norton-Cuffy, Foran, Monlouis, Ogungbo, Henry-Francis (Bandeira 74), Sweet, Cirjan, Hutchinson, Butler-Oyedeji, Ideho (Edwards 64)

SUBS NOT USED Kovacecic, Awe, Jeffcott

Khayon Edwards scored a dramatic last-minute winner as our under-18s secured a valuable 1-0 victory over West Ham.

Catalin Cirjan starred in the No 10 role, while Joel Ideho made his second start of the season, replacing Kido Taylor-Hart. There was also a familiar face in the Hammers' starting XI, as Levi Laing featured as a trialist.

Keen to bounce back from our 3-2 defeat at Crystal Palace last week, we started strongly with Cirjan playing a delightful lofted pass to Ideho, who cut inside from the left and fired just over the bar. Mazeed Ogungbo's instinctive effort from a corner was then tipped behind by Kristin Hegyi, before the visitors carved out their first opportunity, with Jayden Fevrier forcing Hubert Graczyk into a fine save at full stretch.

The Hammers finished the first half as the stronger side, but we bounced back after the restart with some encouraging passing moves.

With Omari Hutchinson, Cirjan and Ideho combining inside the area, the latter created a yard of space and fired at goal from 20 yards, but his low effort bounced back off the post. Hutchinson then failed to convert the rebound. We continued to push on in search of a winner, though, and with one final searching delivery from a Hutchinson set-piece, substitute Khayon Edwards was on hand to convert at the far post and secure all three points.

The result sees Ken Gillard's side climb up to fifth in the U-18 Premier League south table with 22 points at the halfway mark of the season.■

Khayon Edwards made the crucial contribution

Catalin Cirjan pulled the strings at No 10

ACADEMY

NEWS

NEW SAINTS DATE

We have received confirmation that our upcoming Premier League 2 clash with Southampton has been rescheduled.

The fixture was originally due to take place on Sunday, March 7, but will now be played as under:

Southampton U23 v Arsenal U23
Friday, March 5, 2021
Kick-off: 2pm
To be played at AFC Totton

HUTCHINSON HELPS OUT

Omari Hutchinson's fine form continued last week as he became the top assister in the U-18 Premier League.

The youngster provided a match-winning assist to Khayon Edwards via a curling free-kick delivery, securing a 1-0 victory over West Ham and taking his tally up to seven for the season.

A creative and technical young midfielder, Omari is capable of playing in the centre, as a No 10 or even the wing. He's also scored twice for our under-18s this season, bagging against Leicester and Tottenham in back-to-back fixtures.

Keep up the hard work, Omari!

Omari Hutchinson looks to play another perfect pass

LEFT
Robbie announced in Dinamo's team for a game earlier this month against NK Lokomotiva

BELLOW
In action for the Gunners last season

ACADEMY

ALUMNI

Catching up with former Arsenal Academy players as they continue their pro careers away from Emirates

ROBBIE BURTON

Wales youth international midfielder Robbie is currently starring in the Croatian top flight for Dinamo Zagreb.

Gravesend-born Robbie joined the Hale End Academy at Arsenal when he was just six years old, and became a full-time scholar in 2016, as part of the same cohort as Reiss Nelson, Emile Smith Rowe and Dan Ballard.

He soon established himself as a key member of our under-18 side, and played in all eight FA Youth Cup games in our run to the final in 2017/18. He progressed to play for the under-23s and captained the team in 2019/20.

An attack-minded central midfielder with wonderful technique, he was selected as part of the first-team pre-season tour to USA in 2019, but did not make a competitive first-team appearance before he left the club in February 2020.

He initially played for Dinamo's reserve side, but progressed to the first team and made his debut at the start of the current season. He has since been regularly involved, helping Dinamo to the top of the table, and also made his Europa League debut in November, shortly before turning 21. The ex-Gunner was on the substitute's bench for Dinamo's 3-2 away win against Russian side Krasnodor in the first leg of their Europa League Round of 32 match last week.

Maybe see you in the last 16, Robbie!■

@ArsenalAcademy

THE BREAKDOWN

YOUTH STATS

UNDER-23 FIXTURES

Fri Sept 11	**Southampton**	**H**	**1-2**
Fri Sept 18	Brighton & HA	A	2-2
Sat Sept 26	**Tottenham Hotspur**	**H**	**0-1**
Sun Oct 4	Chelsea	A	0-3
Fri Oct 16	**Manchester United**	**H**	**3-3**
Sat Oct 24	Manchester City	A	1-4
Fri Oct 30	**Liverpool**	**H**	**0-1**
Fri Nov 6	Blackburn Rovers	A	6-0
Fri Nov 20	**Everton**	**H**	**1-0**
Fri Nov 27	**Derby County**	**H**	**3-1**
Fri Dec 18	**Leicester City**	**H**	**2-1**
Fri Jan 22	**Brighton & HA**	**H**	**5-0**
Fri Jan 29	Tottenham Hotspur	A	1-1
Fri Feb 5	**Chelsea**	**H**	**2-2**
Fri Feb 12	Manchester United	A	0-3
Fri Feb 19	**Manchester City**	**H**	**0-2**
Sat Feb 27	Liverpool	A	3pm
Fri Mar 5	Southampton	A	2pm
Fri Mar 12	**Blackburn Rovers**	**H**	**7pm**
Sun Mar 21	Everton	A	1pm
Mon Apr 12	Derby County	A	7pm
Mon Apr 26	Leicester City	A	7pm
Fri Apr 30	**West Ham United**	**H**	**7pm**
Fri May 7	West Ham United	A	7pm

PREMIER LEAGUE 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Manchester City	15	9	4	2	45	22	23	31
Blackburn Rovers	15	8	4	3	33	27	6	28
Tottenham Hotspur	15	7	4	4	29	25	4	25
Manchester United	15	7	3	5	42	39	3	24
Chelsea	14	7	2	5	30	23	7	23
Derby County	16	7	2	7	28	35	-7	23
Everton	15	6	4	5	25	18	7	22
Liverpool	14	6	2	6	28	31	-3	20
Arsenal	**16**	**5**	**4**	**7**	**27**	**26**	**1**	**19**
Brighton & HA	15	5	4	6	24	32	-8	19
Southampton	14	4	3	7	21	25	-4	15
Leicester City	16	5	0	11	27	41	-14	15
West Ham United	14	2	2	10	18	33	-15	8

UNDER-18 FIXTURES

* = won on penalties

Sat Sept 12	**Southampton**	**H**	**4-2**
Sat Sept 19	Tottenham Hotspur	A	0-2
Sat Sept 26	**Crystal Palace**	**H**	**3-2**
Sat Oct 3	West Ham United	A	2-3
Sat Oct 17	**Brighton & HA**	**H**	**0-5**
Sat Oct 24	West Bromwich Albion	A	3-1
Sat Oct 31	**Norwich City**	**H**	**5-1**
Sat Nov 21	**Fulham**	**H**	**0-0**
Sat Dec 5	**Leicester City**	**H**	**2-1**
Sat Jan 23	**Tottenham Hotspur**	**H**	**4-1**
Sat Jan 30	Crystal Palace	A	2-3
Tue Feb 16	**West Ham United**	**H**	**1-0**
Sat Feb 20	Brighton & HA	A	2-3
Sat Feb 27	**West Bromwich Albion**	**H**	**12pm**
Sat Mar 13	Norwich City	A	11am
Sat Mar 20	**Reading**	**H**	**11am**
Sat Apr 10	Fulham	A	12pm
Sat Apr 24	Leicester City	A	11am
Sat May 1	Chelsea	A	11am
Sat May 8	**Aston Villa**	**H**	**11am**
TBA	Reading	A	TBA
TBA	**Chelsea**	**H**	**TBA**
TBA	Aston Villa	A	TBA
TBA	Southampton	A	TBA

EFL TROPHY FIXTURES

Tue Sept 8	Ipswich Town	A	2-1
Tue Oct 13	Crawley Town	A	2-1
Tue Nov 10	Gillingham	A	1-1*
Tue Dec 8	AFC Wimbledon	A	0-3

UNDER-18 PREMIER LEAGUE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Crystal Palace	14	10	0	4	28	23	5	30
Fulham	15	9	2	4	37	22	15	29
Aston Villa	12	8	3	1	25	14	11	27
Tottenham Hotspur	15	7	5	3	33	21	12	26
Brighton & Hove Albion	15	7	3	5	40	26	14	24
Arsenal	**13**	**7**	**1**	**5**	**28**	**24**	**4**	**22**
Chelsea	12	6	2	4	34	20	14	20
Norwich City	14	6	1	7	36	32	4	19
West Bromwich Albion	15	5	3	7	31	35	-4	18
Reading	13	3	2	8	25	40	-15	11
West Ham United	13	3	2	8	17	34	-17	11
Leicester City	13	2	2	9	20	45	-25	8
Southampton	12	1	2	9	18	36	-18	5

FA YOUTH CUP FIXTURES

Tue Dec 15	Rotherham United	A	2-1
TBA	Blackburn Rovers	A	TBA

@ArsenalAcademy

THE BREAKDOWN

YOUTH APPEARANCES

PLAYER	PL2	EFLT	U18	FAYC	PLIC	TOTAL
Ben Cottrell	15(4)	4	-	-	-	19(4)
Tim Akinola	14+1	3+1	-	-	-	17+2
Folarin Balogun	14(6)	2(1)	-	-	-	16(7)
Ryan Alebiosu	12+1	3	-	-	-	15+1
Nicolaj Moller	11(5)	1	-	-	-	12(5)
Joel Lopez	9+1	3	-	-	-	12+1
Jonathan Dinzeyi	7+3	1	-	-	-	8+3
Catalin Cirjan	7+2(1)	3+1(1)	2	-	-	12+3(2)
Karl Hein	7	1	-	-	-	8
Miguel Azeez	6+4(1)	2+1(1)	-	-	-	8+5(2)
William Saliba	6	2	-	-	-	8
Daniel Oyegoke	5+2	1	-	-	-	6+2
Arthur Okonkwo	5	1	-	-	-	6
George Lewis	4+2	1(1)	-	-	-	5+2(1)
James Olayinka	4(1)	2	-	-	-	6(1)
Jordan McEnuff	3+3	2(1)	-	-	-	5+3(1)
Alex Kirk	4+1	+1	8(1)	1	-	13+2(1)
Charlie Patino	4(1)	-	9	1(1)	-	14(2)
Kido Taylor-Hart	3+4(1)	1+1	9(6)	1	-	14+5(7)
Brooke Norton-Cuffy	3+1	+1	9	1	-	13+2
Emile Smith Rowe	3(3)	1	-	-	-	4(3)
Calum Chambers	3(1)	1	-	-	-	4(1)
Reiss Nelson	3(2)	-	-	-	-	3(2)
Tolaji Bola	3	1	-	-	-	4
Joseph Olowu	3	-	-	-	-	3
Daniel Ballard	2	-	-	-	-	2
Harry Clarke	2	1	-	-	-	3
Matt Macey	2	1	-	-	-	3
Pablo Mari	2	-	-	-	-	2
Salah-Eddine Oulad M'hand	1+1	1	-	-	-	2+1
Joel Ideho	1+1	+1	3+1	-	-	4+3
Zach Awe	1	-	6+3	-	-	7+3
Hubert Graczyk	1	-	8+1	-	-	9+1
James Hillson	1	-	-	-	-	1
Levi Laing	1	+2	6+1	-	-	7+3
Mark McGuinness	1	1	-	-	-	2
Sokratis Papastathopoulos	1	1	-	-	-	2
Cedric Soares	1	-	-	-	-	1
Joe Willock	1	-	-	-	-	1
Mazeed Ogungbo	+3	-	8(1)	1(1)	-	9+3(2)
Trae Coyle	+1	-	-	-	-	+1
Khayon Edwards	+1	-	5+6(4)	-	-	5+7(4)
Taylor Foran	+1	-	5+2	-	-	5+3
Zane Monlouis	+1	1	8+1(1)	1	-	10+2(1)
Gabriel Martinelli	-	1	-	-	-	1
Matt Smith	-	1	-	-	-	1
Omari Hutchinson	-	-	13(4)	1	-	14(4)
Mauro Bandeira	-	-	10+2	-	-	10+2
Marcelo Flores	-	-	7+2(3)	1	-	8+2(3)
Luke Plange	-	-	6+3(4)	-	-	6+3(4)
James Sweet	-	-	5+2(2)	1	-	6+2(2)
Nathan Butler-Oyedeji	-	-	5+2	1	-	6+2
Ovie Ejeheri	-	-	4	1	-	5
Jack Henry-Francis	-	-	4+3	-	-	4+3
Henry Jeffcott	-	-	1+1	-	-	1+1
Remy Mitchell	-	-	1	-	-	1
Billy Vigar	-	-	+3	-	-	+3
Jason Sraha	-	-	+1	-	-	+1
Own goals	(1)	-	(2)	-	-	(3)

Hubert Graczyk

It's Time To Step Up Your Cyber Protection

Get #CyberFit with Acronis

LEARN MORE

Arsenal | Acronis

OFFICIAL PARTNER OF ARSENAL

MY

STORY

Morsale Ghafooryar

The work of The Arsenal Foundation and the partners and initiatives it supports have touched the lives of a great number of people in a variety of ways

The Arsenal Foundation's emergency Covid fund has helped the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association (ACAA) run a helpline for refugees and asylum seekers during the pandemic. Morsale Ghafooryar, 22 and from London, tells us how the service helped vulnerable people and communities...

A meeting of the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association

I have been at ACAA for almost nine months now after graduating with a law degree from the London School of Economics. I'm the daughter of two Afghan refugees myself, and my work feels especially rewarding because I feel a personal connection with each client. I believe passionately in supporting refugees to help give them strong foundations upon which to build a life. Everyone should have equal opportunity to be happy and prosperous, as well as to provide a stable upbringing for their children so they can thrive and follow their passions.

I started as the outreach officer to expand the charity's services to vulnerable communities nationwide during the lockdown so that people could receive vital help remotely. I also managed our Covid-19 Telephone Helpline Service, providing direct help and advice or referring callers to other departments within the charity or to local organisations that could offer specialist support, for example with mental health issues. One of our key aims was to identify those at risk of developing depression or loneliness during lockdown.

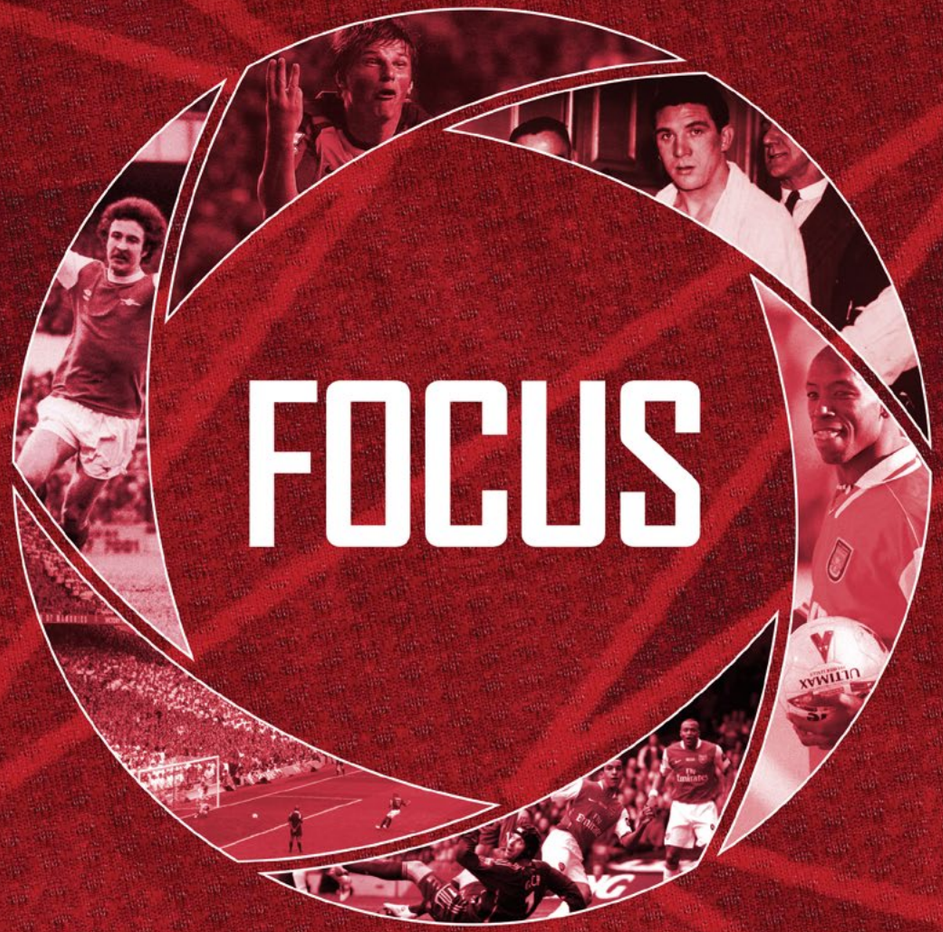
The helpline ran for 24 hours a day, initially for three months from June to August 2020, yet it remains open now. I established a two-way referral network with local organisations in each city, which enabled me to both receive referrals and refer callers to support organisations. That meant, for example, I could arrange for food bank and clothing deliveries, which was a big help for those struggling to get help because there was a language barrier.

The target audience was vulnerable communities including refugees, asylum seekers and BAME minorities who were disproportionately affected by the lockdown. The Arsenal Foundation helped to buy a new office mobile phone, including its bills, to ensure all calls would be answered during the day, as well contributing to my salary, with which I also bought a phone to keep operational 24/7.

Help with housing was a frequent request. This may be a compound effect of the struggle for housing refugees face ordinarily alongside the government's effort to temporarily house the homeless during the quarantine period. We also received calls about welfare and social engagement, and mental health issues were common – a reflection of the increased pressure on families caused by the lockdown, but also a promising increase in confidence for refugees and asylum seekers to seek help over tensions in their homes.

We are very grateful for Arsenal's support. I believe affluent organisations are important in supporting grassroots organisations to stabilise the lives of vulnerable communities. Ultimately, the benefits of helping refugees, ethnic minorities and vulnerable people to achieve their goals are universal, because with the right support everyone is capable of becoming someone great.

For more info visit acaa.org.uk



THE HAT-TRICKS

ASTON VILLA 1, ARSENAL 7
DECEMBER 14, 1935
Ted Drake with the matchball after scoring all seven goals in our 7-1 Division One match at Villa Park. It remains an English football record.

ARSENAL 4, WIGAN ATHLETIC 2
MAY 7, 2006
Thierry Henry scores the last goal ever at Highbury, to complete his hat-trick and ensure he left the famous stadium as its all-time top marksman

ARSENAL 4, BOLTON W 1
SEPTEMBER 13, 1997
Ian Wright broke the club's all-time leading scorer with a hat-trick at Highbury, taking him past Cliff Bastin's total of 178.

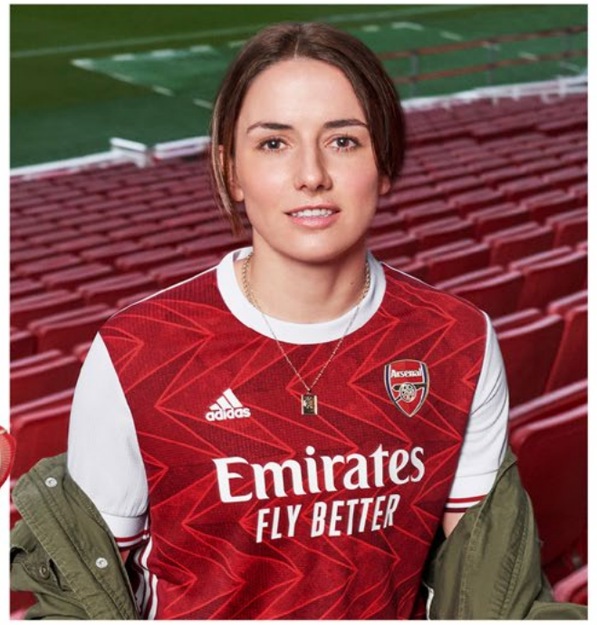
CHELSEA 2, ARSENAL 3
OCTOBER 23, 1999
Kanu fires home from a near-impossible angle to complete his 15-minute hat-trick – and the Gunners' comeback from two goals down – to seal a stunning win at Stamford Bridge

LIVERPOOL 4, ARSENAL 4
APRIL 21, 2009
Andrey Arshavin celebrates his third – he was soon to add another – on a night of high Premier League drama at Anfield

ARSENAL 6, AUSTRIA MEMPHIS 1
SEPTEMBER 18, 1991
Back in Europe after a nine-year hiatus, Alan Smith marked our return with four goals in a thumping first leg win in the European Cup first round at Highbury

LEICESTER CITY 3, ARSENAL 3
AUGUST 27, 1997
His team-mates pay homage after witnessing Dennis Bergkamp score one of the all-time classic Premier League hat-tricks, in a dramatic draw at Filbert Street

TOTTENHAM 0, ARSENAL 5
DECEMBER 23, 1978
Alan Sunderland scores the first of his three goals at White Hart Lanes – the last time a hat-trick was scored in the north London derby

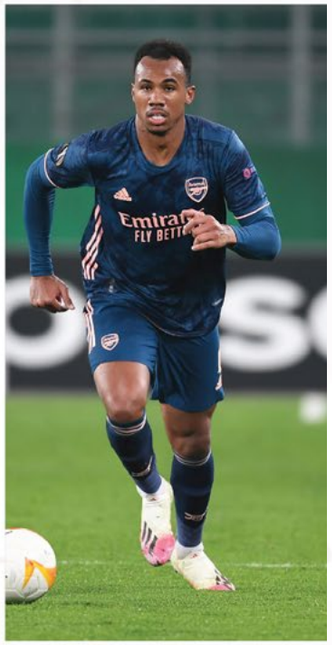


NEW 20/21 HOME KIT
ON SALE IN-STORE & ONLINE

FORWARD

GABRIEL

Arsenal Football Club prides itself on always looking forward, so we're asking our players to gaze into the future to see what's on the horizon.



How far forward do you look at the fixture list?
I always try to focus on the game ahead, so if we're playing against Manchester City next month, for example, I don't keep thinking about Manchester City. I always think game after game, because if I start thinking about Manchester City, tomorrow I might play against another team that might also do us harm, so I always try to think about one game at the time.

At which stage of the week do you start thinking about your next game?
I start thinking about a game on the first day of the week. I start thinking about the game, about what I need to do – what I need to do to help the team, to mark a player and so on. So, I start working on it at the start of the week.

Do you get nervous before the games?
You do get butterflies in your stomach, it's normal. You can ask any player. But I'm really chilled. Once I get on the pitch and touch the ball, I feel a lot calmer.

How do you feel on the night before a game?
Before, when I was younger, I used to get a little nervous the night before, but it doesn't happen quite as much these days. Now I get more nervous just before the game, when we're warming-up. You get butterflies in your stomach and worry about the match, especially if it's a big one, but it's a good feeling, because you want to be there.

What are your plans for the end of your career?
It's a difficult question. I have no idea about what I might want to do when I stop playing football yet.

Do you know what country or city you will you live in once you stop playing football?
This is also something I haven't thought about, but one place I really like is France. I have many friends there and the area where I lived is really good, so it's a place I would consider.

What other countries would you like to visit when we are able to travel again?
I don't have any specific countries I'd like to go back to. The only place I'd like to visit again, to enjoy the city, is Paris, because I like it a lot, but there isn't a specific country I've travelled to that I think "I'd like to go back to that country, because I like it there". There isn't one. Another place I would like to visit though is Miami. ▸

ARSENAL

IN A DREAM WORLD, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR NEXT...

MEAL

Fruit salad

NEW CAR

A Lamborghini Urus

TROPHY YOU WIN

The World Cup.

HOLIDAY DESTINATION

The USA, Miami.

PURCHASE

Clothes, a Dolce Gabbana outfit

What would you like to achieve in your playing career?
My main goal is to make it to the Brazil national team. It's every Brazilian's dream, and I hope I can wear the main shirt soon. This is my biggest dream.

"MY MAIN GOAL IS TO MAKE IT TO THE BRAZIL NATIONAL TEAM. IT'S EVERY BRAZILIAN'S DREAM"

Looking further ahead, who is the next big thing in Brazilian football?
There's a player I really like called Claudinho. He plays for Red Bull Bragantino. He's a kid that is having a great season, and he's really young too. I think he's almost my age. He's a kid that played for a big team, then moved to a smaller team and is doing really well. I think he'll grow a lot in his career. I'm sure you will hear a lot about him soon!

Is there anything you enjoy doing aside from football, anything you would like to do the day you stop playing?
It's hard to say, because I play football since I was little and I've never considered anything else, if I didn't have the opportunity to be a player. I've played since I was little and all my life has been around football. It's difficult to say but I still want to work within football when I stop playing. I don't know which area, but I do want to work with football.

Would you like to go into coaching, or maybe the media?
I wouldn't be a commentator, but I think I'd like to be an assistant manager. ▸

Would you say you are an organised person away from football? How are you at planning birthdays for family members, kids, partners etc?
Yes, for sure. In fact, my family left today – my siblings, my girlfriend, my uncles... My dad and my mum are here, but yes, we do have a menu for what we'll eat during the week.

And do you help organise it?
My mum is the one who usually organises everything.

Have you ever made any new year's resolutions? Is this a habit you have?
We always have objectives and goals, not for the whole year, but I do think about the next two or three months. One thing I have put in my head is that I need to be speaking English practically fluently within the next five months. So I don't set myself that many goals, but I do have some things that I plan, things I think about in order to achieve my goals.

And how is your English going?
Right now, I am not taking lessons. I did do them before, but right now I'm not doing them. But I'm good at learning languages on my daily life, so I'm practicing with my team mates. I'm trying to speak, which is really important, and I'm getting there. Some of the guys get quite surprised and say "wow Gabi! Your English is pretty good!" So, I'm learning day by day, like I did with French. I never studied French, but I speak fluent French now. I'm good at picking up languages, so I'm trying to learn and I am improving.

Are you working on any project at the moment aside from football? Studies etc?
No, no. The only thing I really like to do is play video games. I get home and have my family here, and what I like most is to play video games and play cards.

Finally, you are told there's a spare seat on the next trip to the International Space Station – do you go?
No! Oh no! Things are really good here thanks!■

Credit goals? Count on the experts

You wouldn't have much to celebrate if one of our credit geeks was trying to score at football, but when it comes to crunching the numbers, you can count on the MBNA team.

Whether you're looking to squish existing balances together or just need a back-up for when things get stretched, you'll find a great range of credit card options with us.

Find out more at: **mbna.co.uk**

mbna | Arsenal

Official Partner of Arsenal

MBNA Limited. Registered Office: Cawley House, Chester Business Park, Chester CH4 9FB. Registered in England and Wales under company number 02783251. Any credit agreement and borrowing amount is subject to an assessment of your personal circumstances. You must be a UK resident aged 18 or over to apply. Correct as of July 2020.

900174

THROWBACK FOUR

Arsenal historian Jon Spurling looks at a quartet of interesting games between Arsenal and Benfica

6

GRAHAM 2, ROBERTS, ARMSTRONG, RADFORD, STOREY (PEN)

2

JORGE, DIAMANTINO

Champions Challenge Match
August 4, 1971

After suffering a 2-0 reverse in Lisbon five days earlier (Batista and Portuguese superstar Eusebio scored the Eagles' goals), Double winners Arsenal were keen for revenge in London on a warm summer's evening. The Gunners, who'd opted out of competing in the annual Charity Shield clash at Wembley due to having arranged a series of prestigious international friendlies, set about the Portuguese League Champions from the off. Defender John Roberts nodded in a cross by left back Sammy Nelson, striker John Radford headed in a George Armstrong cross in the 34th minute, and then Armstrong made it 3-0 just before half-time. After an out of sorts Eusebio was substituted at half-time, Benfica clicked into gear, and Jorge netted a diving header in the 53rd minute, and Diamantino fired a cracking shot past Geoff Barnett in the 73rd minute. The (now) nervous 44,244 crowd saw Benfica mount attack after attack, but Arsenal regained their two goal lead when George Graham fired home after a Frank McLintock free kick. To show that this was rather more than an international friendly, Benfica players swarmed around referee Norman Burtenshaw (who'd refereed the FA Cup final back in May), claiming that Graham was offside. Due to the ferocity of the Benfica team's complaints, the Norfolk official reported the whole team to the Football Association. Peter Storey (from the penalty spot) and George Graham (with his second) added late goals to round of a memorable Highbury evening.■

The Arsenal wall stands firm in a prestige friendly at Highbury

The legendary Eusebio is sent flying

1

ISAIAS

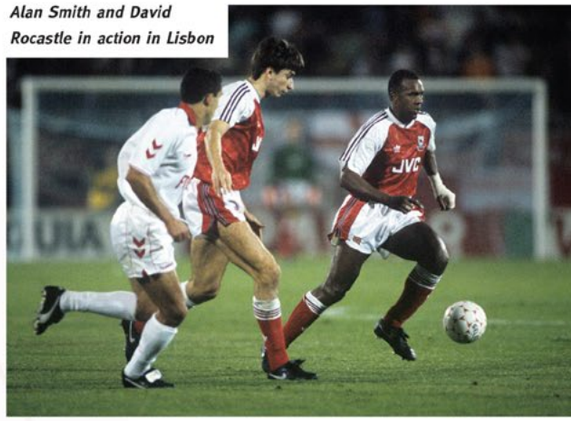
1

CAMPBELL

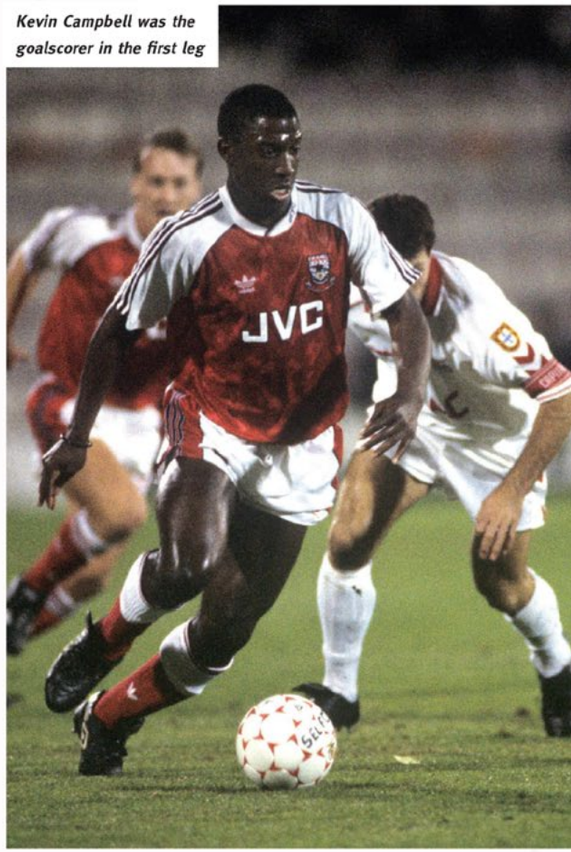
European Cup
Second round first leg
October 23, 1991

Having safely navigated their way past Austria Vienna in the opening round of the European Cup, George Graham professed himself to be "over the moon" when Arsenal drew Benfica as they participated in Europe's leading club competition after a 20 year gap. "They're one of Europe's historic glamour teams, and the European Cup is all about nights like this," he enthused. Arsenal had goalkeeper David Seaman to thank after leaving the gigantic Estadio Luz with a draw. In front of a vociferous crowd, George Graham's team initially acquitted themselves well, taking the lead when Kevin Campbell finished superbly after an exquisite through pass from David Rocastle. But Benfica fought back, and the lively Brazilian forward Isaias netted the home side's equaliser. Gunners manager George Graham was less than impressed, criticising his team for "backing off too much after Benfica scored, and not closing down their strikers quickly enough." Graham warned his charges that in the Highbury return: "We'll have the advantage of the away goal, but will need to guard against carelessness and loss of concentration."■

Nigel Winterburn tackles Benfica's Russian star Vasili Kulkov



Alan Smith and David Rocastle in action in Lisbon



Kevin Campbell was the goalscorer in the first leg

1

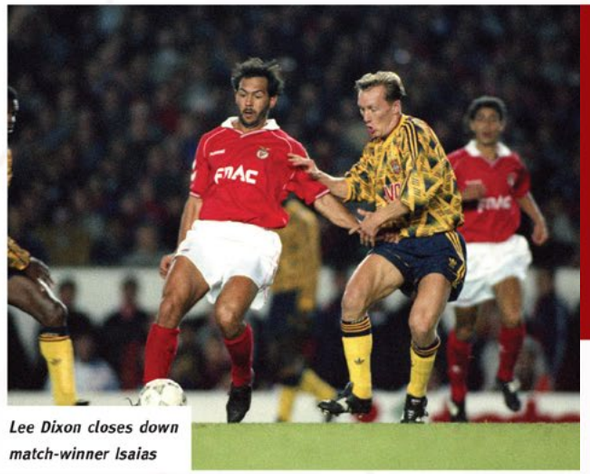
PATES

3

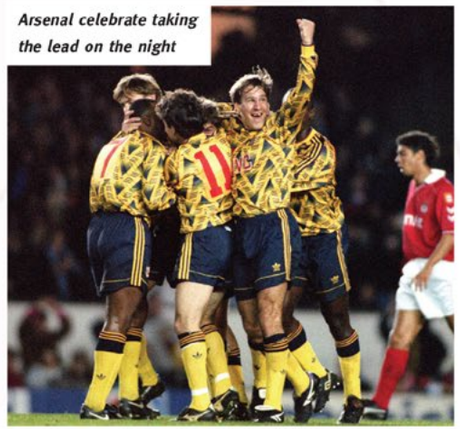
ISAIAS 2, KULKOV

European Cup
Second round second leg
November 6, 1991

In the second leg, Arsenal – playing in their now iconic bruised banana away shirt – set about Benfica with gusto. Watched by a Highbury crowd of 35,815, the early signs were that the side's forward thrust would act as a wrecking ball to the visitor's fragile looking defence. Central defender Colin Pates swivelled and thumped home the opener – and Graham's side should really have plundered more goals. Kevin Campbell and Tony Adams both hit the Benfica woodwork, and Alan Smith skied his shot into the North Bank – a chance he'd usually have buried. But the night unravelled after Isaias – Arsenal's torturer in Lisbon – lashed home Benfica's equaliser. George Graham later castigated his side's "helter-skelter football. The key to playing in Europe is patience and guile, and not to panic. Once Isaias equalised, we collapsed." On two occasions, Benfica's Swedish ball winner Stefan Schwarz fed Isaias and Russian Vasili Kulkov killer balls, and Arsenal exited the competition on a night of frustration. In the aftermath of the loss, the Gunners' league form suffered, and Graham criticised midfielder Paul Davis for defying his instructions and venturing too far forward. In the long term, Davis would return to spearhead Arsenal's successful Cup Winners' Cup campaign in 1993/94, but only after a lengthy spell out in the cold.■



Lee Dixon closes down match-winner Isaias



Arsenal celebrate taking the lead on the night

Dejection for Rocky at Highbury

5

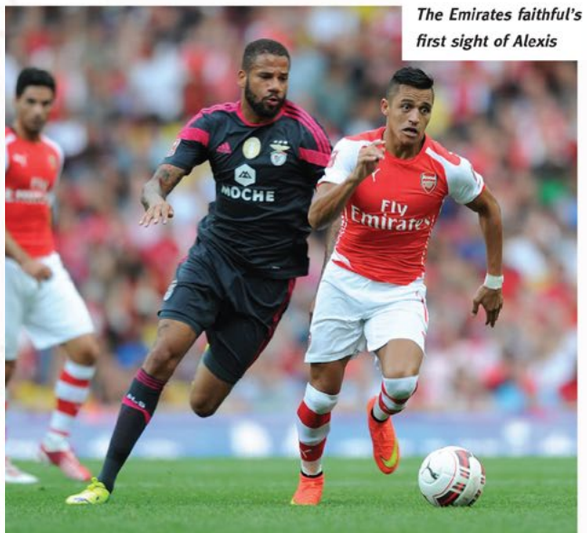
SANOGO 4, CAMPBELL

1

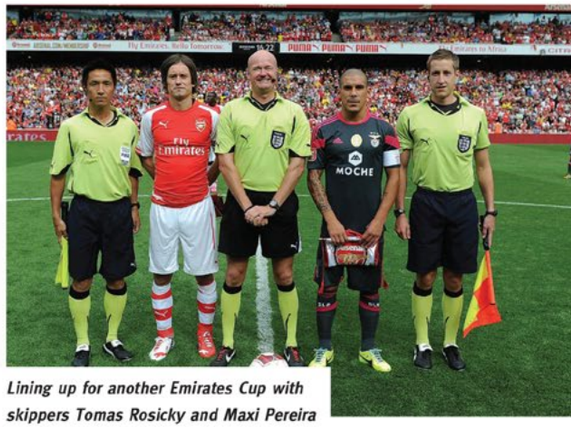
GAITAN

Emirates Cup
August 2, 2014

"We played the way we want to play. Our game is based on movement, technical skill and togetherness in the final third and that's what we did," enthused Arsenal manager Arsène Wenger after watching his side thrash Benfica in the pre-season tournament. A crowd of almost 60,000 at the Emirates Stadium saw Calum Chambers make his first-team bow, Nacho Monreal fill in at centre back, and new signing Alexis Sanchez appear in the 71st minute, but by the time the Chilean star entered the fray, Arsenal were in complete control of the match. French striker Yaya Sanogo, without a goal in the previous season, netted his first from close range after being set up by a fine turn and cross by Aaron Ramsey. In the 40th minute Joel Campbell placed the ball into the bottom corner from 15 yards. The Costa Rican then teed up Sanogo to make it 3-0 in the 44th minute. With Benfica capitulating, Sanogo completed his hat-trick on the stroke of half-time, stabbing home a cross from Kieran Gibbs from five yards out. Sanogo netted his fourth goal just after half-time, tapping in after Benfica goalkeeper Artur failed to hold Ramsey' shot. The biggest cheer of the afternoon may have been reserved for the appearance of a not yet match fit Sanchez late on, but the afternoon belonged to Sanogo.■



The Emirates faithful's first sight of Alexis



Lining up for another Emirates Cup with skippers Tomas Rosicky and Maxi Pereira

Yaya Sanogo with an awesome foursome

Darwin Nunez in the first leg last Thursday

SL BENFICA

By: Mike Hammond

FORMED
February 28, 1904 as Sport Lisboa

NICKNAME
As Aguias (The Eagles), Os Encarnados (The Reds), O Glorioso (The Glorious One)

STADIUM
Estadio da Luz **(64,642)**

HONOURS
Primeira Liga winners
1935/36, 1936/37, 1937/38, 1941/42, 1942/43, 1944/45, 1949/50, 1954/55, 1956/57, 1959/60, 1960/61, 1962/63, 1963/64, 1964/65, 1966/67, 1967/68, 1968/69, 1970/71, 1971/72, 1972/73, 1974/75, 1975/76, 1976/77, 1980/81, 1982/83, 1983/84, 1986/87, 1988/89, 1990–91, 1993/94, 2004/05, 2009/10, 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2018/19
Taca de Portugal winners
1940, 1943, 1944, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1959, 1962, 1964, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1993, 1996, 2004, 2014, 2017
European Cup Winners **1961, 1962**

PRESIDENT
Luis Filipe Vieira

SOCIAL FOLLOWERS
Twitter **1.3M**
Instagram **1.7M**
Facebook **3.6M**

One of the most recognisable names in international football, Benfica are the record champions of Portugal, with 37 league titles, and a club of considerable continental pedigree. European Cup winners in 1961 and 1962, the Eagles of Lisbon have participated in eight further UEFA finals – but, remarkably, lost them all, including back-to-back Europa League deciders in 2013 (2-1 against Chelsea in Amsterdam) and 2014 (on penalties after a 0-0 draw against Sevilla in Turin).

The man who led Benfica to those two Europa League finals, Jorge Jesus, returned to the club as head coach last summer, after five years away, but there was a major disappointment for the Lisbon giants soon after his return when they lost their opening European game of the season, a UEFA Champions League third qualifying round tie in Greece against PAOK Salonika, the 2-1 defeat ending the club's unbroken ten-year run in the Champions League group stage and sending them instead into the Europa League equivalent, where they had only competed once before, in the inaugural 2009/10 campaign.

It is a curiosity that although Benfica have only appeared in two Europa League group stages, they have played more matches in the competition's knockout rounds than any other club, this being their 42nd. As in 2009/10, when they won home (5-0) and away (2-0) against Everton, the Eagles soared through their group this season, but although they emerged unbeaten, three wins and three draws were only good enough to qualify them as runners-up behind Rangers, with whom they shared the points in both Lisbon (3-3) and Glasgow (2-2) before finishing above both Standard Liege and Lech Poznan.

Last week's 1-1 draw against Arsenal in Rome not only preserved Benfica's unbeaten run in this season's Europa League but also stretched their undefeated home record in the competition – despite the temporary move from the Estadio da Luz to the Stadio Olimpico – to a record 26 matches. Now, like the Gunners, they must do battle again on foreign soil, making a return trip to Greece, as they endeavour to make it six round of 32 qualifications out of seven, the only failure having come last season when they were knocked out by Shakhtar Donetsk.

Runners-up to double-winning FC Porto in both Portuguese league and cup last season, Benfica seem unlikely to regain the Primeira Liga crown they last won in 2018/19, having fallen a long way behind local rivals Sporting, who beat them 1-0 with a stoppage-time winner in a pressure-packed derby at the start of February, but they are more than halfway towards securing a return to the final of the Portuguese Cup, having won the first leg of their last-four duel with Estoril 3-1 away. The second leg takes place next Thursday – the night after the conclusion of the other semi-final, in which Braga and Porto meet at the Estadio do Dragao level-pegging at 1-1 after the first leg.

MUTUAL ADMIRATION

STEFAN SCHWARZ played just a single season for Arsenal, in 1994/95, but his excellent contribution left many supporters thinking 'what might have been' when he headed to Fiorentina in the summer of 1995, after what was a tumultuous season for Arsenal Football Club. The Swedish central midfielder played 49 games, scoring four goals, two of which came in the Gunners' run to the European Cup Winners Cup final, when he played the full 90 minutes against Real Zaragoza.

He joined Arsenal after starring for Sweden in the 1994 World Cup, where his team finished third, prior to that Stefan had spent three seasons with Benfica whom he had joined from Malmo in his homeland. He won the Portuguese Cup in 1993 followed by the league title in his final season at the Estadio da Luz and became recognised as one of the leading central midfielders in Europe. His strength in the tackle and distribution skills, persuaded Arsenal to pay £1.8m for his services.

5 THE FAMILIAR FACE (1)
JAN VERTONGHEN
DEFENDER

BORN Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, 24/4/87
PREVIOUSLY Ajax, RKC Waalwijk (loan), Tottenham
After eight seasons in north London with Tottenham, during which he made 315 appearances for the club in all competitions, Jan left last summer for Benfica, where he has established himself as a first-team regular, starting all seven Europa League group games and scoring in the 4-0 home win against Lech Poznan. The sturdy left-footed defender is Belgium's record cap-holder, with 123 international appearances, and is set for a fourth successive major tournament at this summer's Euros.

30 THE FAMILIAR FACE (2)
NICOLAS OTAMENDI
DEFENDER

BORN Buenos Aires, Argentina, 12/2/88
PREVIOUSLY Velez Sarsfield, Porto, Valencia, Atletico Mineiro (loan), Manchester City
Nicolas is another former Premier League stalwart who has embedded himself in the heart of the Eagles defence following a move south last summer. The 33-year-old Argentina international, who won the 2010/11 Europa League – and three domestic league titles – with Portuguese rivals Porto, joined Benfica after five seasons in England with Manchester City, with whom he scooped seven major trophies. He was sent off in the 3-3 draw at home to Rangers on Matchday Three.

9 THE SHARPSHOOTER
DARWIN NUNEZ
ATTACKER

BORN Artigas, Uruguay, 24/6/99
PREVIOUSLY Penarol, Almeria
An impressive 16-goal campaign in Spain's Segunda Division last season with Almeria persuaded Benfica to make this previously unheralded 21 year old Uruguayan striker their club-record signing at a reported cost of £21.8m. On his first European start the 'new Edinson Cavani' scored a hat-trick in Benfica's 4-2 away win at Lech Poznan on Matchday 1 and also grabbed a last-minute equaliser against Rangers that preserved the club's unbeaten home record in the Europa League.

14 GRANIT'S MATE
HARIS SEFEROVIC
ATTACKER

BORN Sursee, Switzerland, 22/2/92
PREVIOUSLY Grasshoppers, Fiorentina, Neuchatel Xamax (loan), Lecce (loan), Novara (loan), Real Sociedad, Eintracht Frankfurt
A Swiss international team-mate of Granit Xhaka, Haris has scored 19 goals in 70 games for his country and appeared at the last three major tournaments. A thrusting left-footed striker with a powerful shot, he played in Italy, Spain and Germany before joining Benfica from Eintracht Frankfurt in 2017. He was the 2018/19 Primeira Liga's top scorer with 23 goals when the Eagles won the league that season and was subsequently named 2019 Swiss Footballer of the Year.

27 THE SPEEDSTER
RAFA SILVA
MIDFIELDER

BORN Forte da Casa, Portugal, 17/5/93
PREVIOUSLY Feirense, Braga
A winner of both Euro 2016 and the 2019 UEFA Nations League with Portugal, for whom he has 18 caps but has never scored, the 27 year old attacking midfielder has long been noted for his pace and dribbling skills. Rafa has been a Benfica player since 2016, when he won the Portuguese Cup with Braga, and has added three further major honours (two league titles, one cup) with the Lisbon giants, starring in particular with a 17-goal contribution to their 2018/19 Primeira Liga triumph.

21 THE SKIPPER
PIZZI
MIDFIELDER

BORN Braganca, Portugal, 6/10/89
PREVIOUSLY Braganca, Braga, Ribeirao (loan), Covilha (loan), Pacos Ferreira (loan), Atletico Madrid, Deportivo La Coruna, Espanyol (loan)
With seven goals in this season's Europa League, including last week's penalty in Rome, Pizzi is the competition's joint top scorer, making it the most productive of his seven European campaigns with Benfica. A creative central midfielder with 17 caps for Portugal, the 31 year old made his 300th appearance for the Eagles in December and has won four league titles one Primeira Liga Player of the Year award.

28 THE ORCHESTRATOR
JULIAN WEIGL
MIDFIELDER

BORN Bad Aibling, Germany, 8/9/95
PREVIOUSLY 1860 Munich, Borussia Dortmund
A defensive midfielder who first sprang to prominence with Borussia Dortmund in a brilliant 2015/16 debut season that concluded with his selection for Germany's Euro 2016 squad, Julian subsequently struggled with injuries before pursuing his career in Portugal. A £20m purchase in January 2020, the 25 year old's natural habitat is just in front of the defence, where he serves as the team's' main distribution hub. He is one of two Germans in the Benfica squad.

77 BETWEEN THE POSTS
HELTON LEITE
GOALKEEPER

BORN Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 2/11/90
PREVIOUSLY Ipatinga, Criciuma, Botafogo, Sao Caetano (loan), Boavista
Two impressive Primeira Liga seasons with Boavista earned this Brazilian goalkeeper a five-year contract with Benfica, where he arrived last summer ostensibly as the back-up to Odysseas Vlachodimos. However, the 30 year old, who made his European debut at Rangers on Matchday 4, has been selected in preference to his Greek rival in recent matches, including last week's first leg.

THE BOSS
JORGE JESUS
HEAD COACH

BORN July 24, 1954 in Amadora, Portugal
PREVIOUSLY Amora (1990-93), Felgueiras (1993-96, 1997-98), Uniao Madeira (1998), Estrela da Amadora (1998-2000, 2002-03), Vitoria Setubal (2000-02), Vitoria Guimaraes (2003-04), Moreirense (2005), Uniao Leiria (2005-06), Belenenses (2006-08), Braga (2008-09), Benfica (2009-15), Sporting Lisbon (2015-18), Al-Hilal (2018-19), Flamengo (2019-20)
An eccentric, demonstrative coach who has over 30 years of experience in the role, Jorge Jesus scaled a career peak in November 2019 when he led Flamengo to victory in the Copa Libertadores. He returned to Benfica, where he had enjoyed a productive first spell from 2009 to 2015, last year.

REMEMBER KIT WELL

Benfica home kit sponsors
1983-87 – SHELL
1987-92 – FNAC
1992-94 – CASINO ESTORIL
1994-96 – PARMALAT
1996-2000 – TELECEL
2000-01 – NETC
2001-05 – VODAFONE
2005-08 – PT
2008-12 – TMN/COCA COLA
2012-15 – MEO
2015-21 – FLY EMIRATES

Mark Pembridge

REALLY?!?

Adel Taarabt first played against Arsenal in 2007, in **Tottenham's** 2-1 defeat at Emirates Stadium. He also played for **QPR** and **Fulham** against the Gunners, scoring for the Rs in a 2-1 win at Loftus Road on March 31, 2012. The following season, he played in a 1-0 defeat for QPR at Emirates, the goalscorer – **Mikel Arteta!**

Adel Taarabt and Mikel Arteta

When Switzerland reached the semi-final of the 2009 U19 European Championships, Benfica forward **Haris Seferovic** was leading the attack. Being supplied from midfield by Granit Xhaka.

The then 18 year old **Luca Waldschmidt** played his first game of professional football in the Bundesliga for Eintracht Frankfurt away to Borussia Dortmund on April 25, 2015. It was a 2-0 defeat for Frankfurt thanks to goals form Shinji Kagawa and... **Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang**. Haris Seferovic was also in the Frankfurt team that afternoon.

SCOUTING REPORT

BY Michael Cox

Benfica manager Jorge Jesus deployed a 3-5-2 system in last week's 1-1 draw in the first leg. This was both a surprise, because he hadn't previously fielded that shape this season, and also not a surprise, because he's chopped and changed formations regularly in recent weeks, searching for the right combination of player after Benfica's form has tailed off alarmingly.

Perhaps the most notable feature of last week's game was the high defensive line used by Jesus, which was a very brave move against Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang. It was especially bold considering that Jan Vertonghen and Nicolas Otamendi aren't the quickest these days, although Lucas Verissimo performed well and made a fine tackle on Aubameyang when he otherwise appeared through on goal.

It's also worth pointing out that Aubameyang was caught offside four times, so the approach clearly worked in some respects, although Arsenal did seemingly find it easy to push a full back in behind before playing a square ball across the goal, which happened both for Aubameyang's early miss, and the equaliser, which Cedric Soares teed up for Bukayo Saka.

Jesus' wing-backs in the reverse fixture were the speedy Alejandro Grimaldo, one of Benfica's most impressive performers this season and comfortable playing at left back, and Diogo Goncalves, more of a surprise selection as he'd only made his first start of the season in the weekend draw against Moreirense. Grimaldo stayed wide and crossed, while Goncalves tended to make more direct runs towards goal.

In midfield, Julian Weigl sits deep and pulls the strings – he played 67 passes last week, 22 more than any other Benfica player. A hugely talented midfielder who found his Dortmund career ruined by injury, Weigl is still working his way back towards his best form, but his quality on the ball is obvious. Last week, he was deployed alongside Adel Taarabt, a familiar player because of his history at Tottenham and QPR, who created four chances for teammates, but the real star is captain Pizzi, capable of playing quick one-twos on the edge of the box, linking midfield and attack.

Up front, Jesus fielded two strikers, Darwin Nunez and Gianluca Waldschmidt. Nunez is a proper all-round No 9 and considered the next great Uruguayan striker in the mould of Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani, and has been linked with a move to one of Europe's major leagues. He's likely to start again here, although Waldschmidt was sacrificed at half-time and has been a rotation option this season.

Jesus has plenty of other attackers to choose from. Rafa is a speedy winger, generally fielded on the right but capable of playing almost anywhere, Haris Seferovic plays up front and runs the channels well, potentially making him a good option away from home on the counter, while intelligent forward Everton – who won the Copa America Golden Boot in 2019 – hasn't entirely settled at Benfica in his first year since leaving Gremio, but is nevertheless very much capable of scoring goals. ■

ABOVE
Pizzi (right) celebrates with Diogo Goncalves after scoring the first goal last week

TOP RIGHT
Dani Ceballos takes on Adel Taarabt

RIGHT
Captain Pizzi scores from the spot

CEDRIC

One man in the Arsenal squad knows more than most about facing this evening's opponents Benfica

Experienced Portugal international Cedric grew up in the youth academy at Benfica's city rivals Sporting Lisbon, spending 17 years there before his move to Southampton in 2015.

He played in many editions of the 'Derby de Lisboa' while there, and was able to put his local knowledge to good use in the first leg of this tie, albeit being played at a neutral venue away from Benfica's Stadium of Light home.

But Cedric was suitably inspired by facing his old adversaries, and sent in the cross for our equalising – and potentially valuable – away goal scored by Bukayo Saka.

That was on Cedric's eighth consecutive start for the side, the last seven of which came at left back, and the versatile defender exclusively told the matchday programme all about his recent run in the side last week.

You've been filling in at left back lately which you did previously with Southampton and Inter Milan. How have you found it here?

Of course it's very different to playing on the right for me, but I can always adapt to new positions and I will always adapt for what the coach needs. I will be ready for anything that the coach and the club needs me to do. If he needs to play left back then I can guarantee that I will give my best, 100 per cent.

What did the coach say to you about playing at left back?

Well, obviously because I am right footed it's something different in terms of the spaces you try to occupy and maybe the profundity that you can give to the team from one side to the other can change a little bit in some situations. But you have other stuff as well that can actually sometimes be beneficial in terms of playing with a right-footed player on the left. The coach gives me the freedom but of course, I still need to follow the game plan. But I feel that he trusts me and I feel his confidence. That makes me want to give that back by giving him good performances and to try my best for the team.

Tonight we face Benfica again, and as somebody who grew up with Sporting Lisbon, you must have a lot of memories of playing against them?

Yes, I played so many times against Benfica! It was always a difficult game because they're derbies for us. It was always huge. I don't want to just mention one game because they were all really special moments to me in my memory, 100 per cent.

How heated and passionate do the Lisbon derbies get?

They are so very, very passionate. Every game is important but when it comes to the Lisbon derbies it is something more. Everyone is trying to be in the stadium, everyone is talking about the game all week in the week before and in the week after too. It's normal for these games to make you feel that way. As a player, you always feel a little bit more pressure when it is Benfica against Sporting because everyone in the squad wants to be playing in these games. It's what football is all about really, so for me, it was always very nice to be able to play in these games against Benfica and I think every footballer wants to be involved in those occasions. ▸

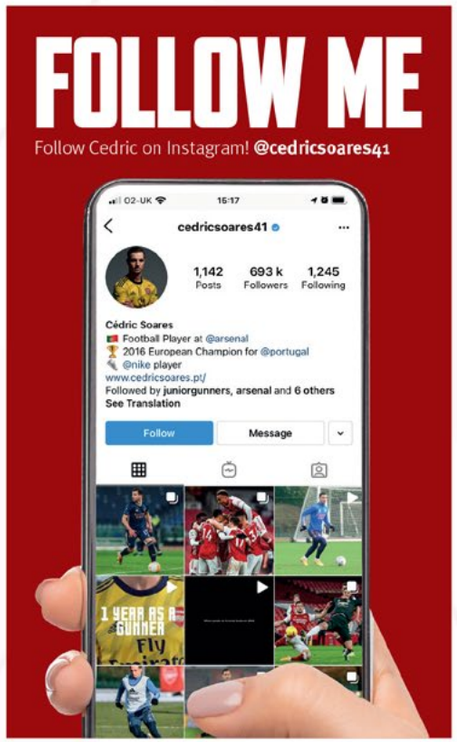
BORN Singen, Germany, August 31, 1991
JOINED ARSENAL (permanently) from Southampton on July 1, 2020
PREVIOUS CLUBS Sporting Lisbon, Academia (loan), Southampton, Inter Milan (loan)
DEBUT v Norwich City (h) Premier League, July 1, 2020 (won 4-0)
FIRST GOAL v Norwich City (h) Premier League, July 1, 2020 (won 4-0)
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS 2016 UEFA European Championship winner with Portugal

Do you still keep a close eye on Portuguese football?
Yes, I watch it a lot. I also watch a lot of Premier League games but I always watch a lot of Portuguese football. They're normally on at different times so I can watch them both and I follow it very closely. I think the standard of the league is quite good.

"THERE IS A LOT OF TALENT COMING OUT OF THE PORTUGUESE LEAGUES"

What can you tell us about Benfica?
Benfica is a very strong team. It's normal for them to be one of the strongest teams in Portugal so it's no surprise, but we need to make sure we are ready for it. They have some great players and they normally have individuals who are very technically talented and have a lot of skills. They're quite organised at the moment and in Portugal it's always been a big club. Of course, we need to respect them in this competition but at the same time we cannot fear them. I have 100 per cent trust in my teammates at Arsenal that we will do our absolute best in these games to get the victory.

How strong is Portuguese football in general at the moment?
It's always been a league that's growing as a championship. I would definitely use the word growing.



I think also if you look around Europe then you can see that there is a lot of talent coming out of the Portuguese leagues and Portugal in general. There are actually quite a lot of Portuguese players playing in the Premier League for example and they are having some success. So I think it's a signal that the league in Portugal is also becoming more competitive and will keep getting more competitive. Of course, I still think that the Premier League is the best league in the world and it's where everyone wants to be, but at the same time the Portuguese league is a strong league and is becoming more important in terms of how it is seen in comparison to other European leagues.

The first leg was in Italy, and this one is in Greece, it's a very different experience isn't it?
Yes, it's quite strange! I've never lived a situation like this. Actually, maybe when I played in my national team I had something similar, because I remember a game that we played one time in Switzerland. It was Portugal against Egypt, I think, so that was quite different. But at that moment in time, the stadium was open and that helped. Right now, playing in Italy and Greece, it will be a strange feeling but in another way because the fans are not here, the game doesn't have this influence from the outside in terms of the crowd and who the crowd is supporting. We know it will be a tough game and we must be ready for it.

Do you think maybe in the future that teams will play one game, in a country that neither team is from and maybe that's the future of European football?
I didn't see this question coming! I don't know, I really don't know, but what I can say is that I honestly believe it is still really important that you get to play in your own stadium and then you play away. It still has quite a big influence on the game in these European cup competitions. ▸

ARSENAL APPEARANCES

SEASON	START	SUB	TOTAL
Premier League	9	3	12
Europa League	6	1	7
FA Cup	2	0	2
League Cup	2	0	2
Community Shield	0	1	1
Total	19	5	24

Is there anything that you've learned during the pandemic or something that you can take forward when we do have fans back in?

Of course. In the beginning it was quite strange. We were so used to the fans and I think they are such an important part of the game. But it's important that even if they are not there, we know that they are following us and they are with us, even if it just has to be through the TV. But it's really important for us to keep our concentration levels up because sometimes when you don't have fans you may actually lose a little bit of concentration in the game and I think that this has been improved because we are now playing every week like this, with nobody in the stadiums.

"WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE FANS YOU MAY ACTUALLY LOSE A LITTLE BIT OF CONCENTRATION IN THE GAME"

Is concentration the biggest difference to having crowds in then?

I love crowds. Honestly, I love the crowds. Personally, I would love to be playing with fans and I have always loved that feeling of a crowd. It makes the game so much more emotional and I am an emotional person. I like it a lot when the game has this atmosphere and this environment surrounding it and the pressure that it brings. At the end of the day, this pressure is the thing that can really take you to another level and it can make you give even more than you thought you could give because the fans just help you and you want to give them the victory. I think right now, all of the teams are getting used to playing without fans and in the beginning it was of course different. Nowadays, we are used to it and I think we are getting better with the levels of concentration.

Do you think not having the fans in is actually helping you in terms of coaching? Not just in terms of the manager but as a defence, with your goalkeeper and all of your teammates because there is no competing noise level?

In terms of communication, yes it is definitely easier. You can hear everything but don't forget, the opponent also hears you and your coach. So of course when our coach wants to pass a message, it passes much quicker to all of us but that means every player on the pitch, even the opposition. It makes it much easier for us to talk to each other during the game. I remember back to during the Euros, I couldn't even talk to the player next to me. He was only five metres or so away but you just couldn't really talk to your teammate because of the noise of the fans, which made it quite hard in terms of communication. But like I said, this is part of football and I love it. I would much prefer to lose part of our communication to have the fans back in! ■

ARSENAL WOMEN

News and reports from England's most successful women's football team

WE ARE RECRUITING!

The Arsenal Women FC WSL Academy aims at supporting talented footballers within an elite player pathway to make the step from U16s RTC/Academy football into our Arsenal Women's first team.

The WSL Academy ensures that all players are able to develop their football as well as continuing with their education to ensure that players have a dual career pathway. The programme prepares female players for the next step in their football journey, providing them with the opportunity to fulfil their football potential while ensuring they also commit to an education or work-related training programme.

Players within the WSL Academy Programme play within the FA WSL Academy League Programme & FA WSL Academy Cup Competition with fixtures against other WSL teams.

As well as our WSL Academy Programme, we also provide an alternative 16-19 college education programme in association with Oaklands College. This enables players of varying levels to also be involved in a full-time football education programme delivered by Arsenal Women FC while studying at Oaklands College. Players who are not yet considered to be at the level required to play in the WSL Academy, will be offered an opportunity to trial for our Oaklands College Women's Football Academy Programme.

Please go to the Arsenal Women section of Arsenal.com where you will be able to complete an application form.■

Academy grads Leah & Lotte

2020/21 FIXTURES

SEPT 6	READING	6-1
SEPT 12	WEST HAM UNITED	9-1
SEPT 26	TOTTENHAM (FA CUP QF)	4-0
OCT 1	MAN CITY (FA CUP SEMI-FINAL)	1-2
OCT 4	BRISTOL CITY	3-1
OCT 7	CHELSEA (CC)	1-4
OCT 11	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION	5-0
OCT 18	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	6-1
NOV 4	LONDON CITY LIONESSES (CC)	4-0
NOV 8	MANCHESTER UNITED	0-1
NOV 15	CHELSEA	1-1
NOV 18	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (CC)	2-2*
DEC 6	BIRMINGHAM CITY	3-0
DEC 13	MANCHESTER CITY	1-2
DEC 20	EVERTON	4-0
JAN 17	READING	1-1
FEB 7	MANCHESTER CITY	1-2
FEB 10	CHELSEA	0-3
FEB 28	ASTON VILLA	A
MAR 7	BIRMINGHAM CITY	A
MAR 17/18	MANCHESTER UNITED	H
MAR 27/28	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	A
APR 3/4	BRISTOL CITY	A
APR 24/25	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION	H
MAY 1/2	EVERTON	A
MAY 8/9	ASTON VILLA	H
TBA	WEST HAM UNITED	H

*Arsenal won on penalties

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE (AT FEB 23)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
CHELSEA	15	12	2	1	47	8	39	38
MANCHESTER CITY	14	10	3	1	46	11	35	33
MANCHESTER UNITED	15	10	2	3	32	16	16	32
ARSENAL	13	7	2	4	40	14	26	23
EVERTON	13	5	4	4	23	19	4	19
READING	15	4	7	4	19	24	-5	19
BRIGHTON	15	4	3	8	11	30	-19	15
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	12	3	3	6	13	23	-10	12
BIRMINGHAM CITY	11	3	2	6	10	16	-6	11
ASTON VILLA	12	3	1	8	11	30	-19	10
WEST HAM UNITED	13	2	2	9	14	30	-16	8
BRISTOL CITY	14	1	3	10	10	55	-45	6

LAVAZZA
My Way

A COFFEE MACHINE FOR **JUST £1**?

CLICK HERE

TO DISCOVER ALL THE BENEFITS

LAVAZZA TORINO, ITALIA, 1895

Official Coffee of Arsenal FC

0

1

STERLING 2

PREMIER LEAGUE MATCHDAY 25

4.30pm • Sunday, February 21 • Emirates Stadium

FIRST HALF

An early goal from Raheem Sterling put us on the back foot immediatley against the leage leaders. After just two minutes Sterling drifted between our centre backs to direct his header past Bernd Leno after Riyad Mahrez delivered a cross from the right. Sterling almost added a second moments later but Rob Holding nicked the ball off his toe. Then Mahrez beat Pablo Mari but his shot was deflected wide. We survived further damage and were far more competitive after the opening ten minutes. We looked dangerous whenever Bukayo Saka ran at City in central-left positions, and his link-up with Kieran Tierney was especially productive. Tierney supplied regular crosses but City dealt with them all. One cut-back from the Scotsman did allow Saka to get a shot in, but the ball hit Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

SECOND HALF

Saka was a threat after the break too, one slaloming run ending with a blocked shot. At the other end Leno was at full stretch to keep out Ilkay Gundogan's precise effort. City were still seeing more of the ball but we reached the final 20 minutes still very much in the game – and almost levelled in bizarre circumstances. Joao Cancelo's attempted clearance turned into a wild backpass and Ederson, not wanting to handle the ball, volleyed straight to Elneny. His first-time effort had power but flew wide.■

	MATCH STATS	
7	TOTAL SHOTS	15
1	SHOTS ON TARGET	3
1	CORNERS	3
1	OFFSIDES	3
11	FOULS	9
45	POSSESSION %	55

ARSENAL

1 LENO
2 BELLERIN
16 HOLDING (82)
22 MARI
3 TIERNEY
34 XHAKA
25 ELNENY (86)
7 SAKA
11 ODEGAARD (73)
14 AUBAMEYANG
19 PEPE (73)

SUBSTITUTES
SMITH ROWE (73), LACAZETTE (73), HOLDING (82), ELNENY (86), GABRIEL, CEDRIC, MARTINELLI, WILLIAN, RYAN

MANCHESTER CITY

31 EDERSON
3 RUBEN DIAS
5 STONES
27 CANCELO
8 GUNDOGAN
11 ZINCHENKO
17 DE BRUYNE (63)
20 SILVA
25 FERNANDINHO
7 STERLING
26 MAHREZ

SUBSTITUTES
JESUS (63), WALKER, LAPORTE, MENDY, RODRI, AGUERO, TORRES, FODEN, STEFFEN

Kieran Tierney was a bright spark on the left

THE BREAKDOWN CHALKBOARD

SILKY CEBALLOS

In the absence of Thomas Partey, Dani Ceballos has stepped up with two dominant midfield performances at a crucial stage of the season.

Marcelo Bielsa attributed our 4-2 victory over Leeds United last week to the Spaniard's influence, and just four days later he delivered an all-action display in the Europa League against Benfica as well.

In both of those fixtures, we lined up in a 4-2-3-1 formation with Ceballos alongside Granit Xhaka – but unlike his midfield partner, our No 8 has greater freedom to take risks during the build-up phase and push forward into the final third.

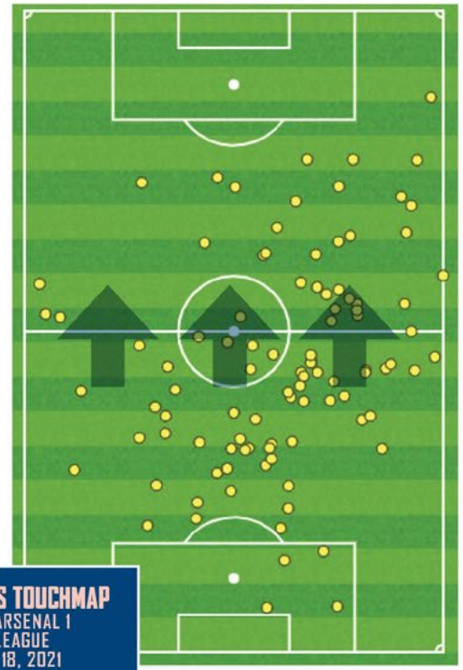
A composed and technically gifted midfielder, Ceballos toyed with Benfica all night long, dancing around their midfield and playing a number of incisive passes behind their three-man defence.

In fact, our greatest chance of the evening was almost single-handedly created by Ceballos, who threaded a stunning pass behind Benfica's defence to release Bukayo Saka into the penalty area. The only thing missing was the finishing touch from our captain at the far post.

The numbers certainly back up the quality of Ceballos' performance too. Our No 8 registered the third highest number of touches (98) at Stadio Olimpico, in addition to attempting 80 passes at a success rate of 92.5 per cent.

Ceballos also registered eight ball recoveries, three interceptions, two tackles, and won five of his 10 duels. To gain a greater understanding of Ceballos' influence on the game, take a look at his heap map and touch map, which perfectly illustrate his desire to contribute in all phases of play.■

DANI CEBALLOS HEATMAP
BENFICA 1, ARSENAL 1
EUROPA LEAGUE
FEBRUARY 18, 2021



DANI CEBALLOS TOUCHMAP
BENFICA 1, ARSENAL 1
EUROPA LEAGUE
FEBRUARY 18, 2021

Sportsbet.io

FIXTURES, RESULTS & LINE-UPS

Green = 1st sub
Gold = 2nd sub
Blue = 3rd sub
Burgundy = 4th sub
Pink = 5th sub

● = Win
● = Draw
● = Loss
+ = Won on pens

= Premier League
= UEFA Europa League
= Carabao Cup
= Emirates FA Cup
= Community Shield

Bold fixture = Scorer
Bold player = Goal scored
= Goal
= Penalty

* = Own Goal
CAPS = Captain
= Yellow card
= Red card
= Played at Wembley Stadium

	DATE	OPPOSITION	F-A		POS /RND	ATT/KO	STARTING XI												SUBSTITUTES												REFEREE
SEPTEMBER	Sat 29	Liverpool	1-1+	●	CS	BCD #	Martinez	Bellerin	Holding	David Luiz	Tierney	M-Niles	Elneny	Xhaka	Saka	Nketiah	**AUBAMEYANG •**	Cedric(59)	Nelson(82)	Willock(82)	Kolasinac(83)	Saliba	Smith Rowe	John-Jules	Olayinka	Leno					A. Mariner
	Sat 12	Fulham	3-0	●	1	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	**Gabriel •**	Tierney	M-Niles	Elneny	Xhaka	Willian	**Lacazette •**	**AUBAMEYANG •**	Pepe(75)	Ceballos(78)	Nketiah(87)	Saka	Willock	Kolasinac	Macey							C. Kavanagh
	Sat 19	**West Ham United**	**2-1**	●	**2**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Gabriel	Kolasinac	Saka	Ceballos	Xhaka	Willian	**Lacazette •**	AUBAMEYANG	Pepe(64)	**Nketiah •** (77)	David Luiz(89)	M-Niles	Elneny	Willock	Macey							M. Oliver
	Wed 23	Leicester City	2-0*	●	CC3	BCD	Leno	M-Niles	Holding	DAVID LUIZ	Kolasinac	Saka	Elneny	Willock	Pepe	Nelson	**Nketiah •**	Willian(72)	Ceballos(78)	Bellerin(87)	Saliba	Lacazette	Xhaka	Runarsson							P. Bankes
	Mon 28	Liverpool	1-3	●	5	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	David Luiz	Tierney	M-Niles	Elneny	Xhaka	Willian	**Lacazette •**	AUBAMEYANG	Ceballos(60)	Pepe(68)	Nketiah(74)	Gabriel	Saka	Kolasinac	Runarsson							C. Pawson
OCTOBER	Thur 1	Liverpool	0-0+	●	CC4	BCD	Leno	Cedric	Holding	Gabriel	Kolasinac	Saka	Willock	XHAKA	Ceballos	Pepe	Nketiah	Elneny(68)	Lacazette(82)	M-Niles(86)	Tierney	David Luiz	Nelson	Runarsson							K. Friend
	Sun 4	**Sheffield United**	**2-1**	●	**4**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	David Luiz	Gabriel	Tierney	**Saka •**	Elneny	Ceballos	Willian	Nketiah	AUBAMEYANG	**Pepe •** (58)	Xhaka(81)	M-Niles(87)	Willock	Holding	Lacazette	Runarsson							L. Mason
	Sat 17	Manchester City	0-1	●	5	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	David Luiz	Gabriel	Tierney	Saka	Ceballos	Xhaka	Pepe	Willian	AUBAMEYANG	Lacazette(69)	Nketiah(83)	Partey(83)	Elneny	M-Niles	Runarsson								C. Kavanagh
	Thur 22	Rapid Vienna	2-1	●	MD1	3,000	Leno	Cedric	**David Luiz •**	Gabriel	Kolasinac	**Saka**	Elneny	Partey	Pepe	LACAZETTE	Nketiah	Aubameyang(61) •	Bellerin(61)	Tierney(84)	Willock(84)	Nelson(90)	Mustafi	M-Niles	Xhaka	Runarsson	Macey				P. Kralovec
	Sun 25	**Leicester City**	**0-1**	●	**10**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	David Luiz	Gabriel	Tierney	Saka	Ceballos	Partey	Xhaka	Lacazette	AUBAMEYANG	Mustafi(49)	Pepe(65)	Nketiah(81)	Elneny	M-Niles	Willock	Runarsson							C. Pawson
	Thur 29	**Dundalk**	**3-0**	●	**MD2**	**BCD**	Runarsson	Cedric	XHAKA	Mustafi	Kolasinac	M-Niles	Elneny	**Willock •**	Nelson	Pepe •	**Nketiah •**	Ceballos(61)	Willian(62)	Tierney(74)	Balogun(74)	Gabriel	Saka	Partey	Aubameyang	Bellerin	Lacazette	Leno	Hein		F. Glova
	Sun 1	Manchester United	1-0	●	8	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Gabriel	Tierney	Saka	Elneny	Partey	Willian	Lacazette	**AUBAMEYANG •**	Nketiah(76)	M-Niles(86)	Mustafi(87)	Xhaka	Pepe	Ceballos	Runarsson							M. Dean
NOVEMBER	**Thur 5**	**Molde**	**4-1****	●	**MD3**	**BCD**	Leno	M-Niles	David Luiz	Mustafi	Kolasinac	**Willock •**	Ceballos	XHAKA	Willian	**Pepe •**	Nketiah	Cedric(64)	Saka(64)	Elneny(80)	Tierney(80)	Lacazette	Gabriel	Bellerin	Aubameyang	Partey	Holding	Runarsson	Macey		H. Meler
	Sun 8	**Aston Villa**	**0-3**	●	**11**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Gabriel	Tierney	Saka	Elneny	Partey	Willian	Lacazette	AUBAMEYANG	Ceballos(46)	Pepe(65)	Nketiah(65)	M-Niles	David Luiz	Xhaka	Runarsson							M. Atkinson
	Sun 22	Leeds United	0-0	●	11	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Gabriel	Tierney	Xhaka	Ceballos	Willock	Pepe	Willian	AUBAMEYANG	Nelson(46)	Saka(57)	M-Niles(90)	Lacazette	Mustafi	Nketiah	Runarsson							A. Taylor
	Thur 26	Molde	3-0	●	MD4	600	Runarsson	Cedric	David Luiz	Mustafi	M-Niles	Xhaka	Willock	**Nelson •**	**Pepe •**	Nketiah	LACAZETTE	Holding(46)	Ceballos(62)	Tierney(75)	Smith Rowe(75)	**Balogun •** (82)	Cottrell	Azeez	Bellerin	Macey	Hein				I. Peljto
	Sun 29	**Wolves**	**1-2**	●	**14**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	David Luiz	**Gabriel •**	Tierney	Xhaka	Ceballos	Willock	Willian	Saka	AUBAMEYANG	Holding(46)	Nelson(65)	Lacazette(80)	Cedric	Nketiah	Elneny	Runarsson							M. Oliver
	Thur 3	**Rapid Vienna**	**4-1**	●	**MD5**	**2,000**	Runarsson	Cedric	**Mari •**	Mustafi	Kolasinac	M-Niles	Elneny	Nelson	Saka	**Nketiah •**	**LACAZETTE •**	**Smith Rowe •** (63)	Ceballos(63)	Willian(63)	Chambers(70)	Balogun(81)	Tierney	Saka	Holding	Willock	Azeez	Macey	Leno		R. Petrescu
	Sun 6	Tottenham Hotspur	0-2	●	15	2,000	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Gabriel	Tierney	Xhaka	Partey	Saka	Willian	Lacazette	AUBAMEYANG	Ceballos(45)	Nketiah(75)	Mustafi	Elneny	Willock	M-Niles	Runarsson							M. Atkinson
	Thur 10	Dundalk	4-2	●	MD6	BCD	Runarsson	Cedric	Mari	Chambers	Mustafi	M-Niles	**Elneny •**	**Willock •**	Smith Rowe	Pepe	**Nketiah •**	Ceballos(62)	**Balogun(62) •**	Cottrell(77)	Azeez(83)	Holding	Saka	Hein	Macey						I. Bebek
DECEMBER	**Sun 13**	**Burnley**	**0-1**	●	**15**	**2,000**	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Gabriel	Tierney	Xhaka	Elneny	Saka	Willian	Lacazette	AUBAMEYANG	Ceballos(60)	M-Niles(74)	Nketiah(77)	Willock	Smith Rowe	Mustafi	Runarsson							G. Scott
	Wed 16	**Southampton**	**1-1**	●	**15**	**BCD**	Leno	M-Niles	Holding	Gabriel	Tierney	Ceballos	Elneny	Saka	Pepe	Nketiah	**AUBAMEYANG •**	David Luiz(65)	Willock(67)	Cedric(85)	Willian	Lacazette	Mustafi	Runarsson							P. Tierney
	Sat 19	Everton	1-2	●	15	2,000	Leno	M-Niles	HOLDING	David Luiz	Tierney	Ceballos	Elneny	Saka	**Pepe •**	Willian	Nketiah	Willock(64)	Martinelli(71)	Lacazette(76)	Cedric	Bellerin	Smith Rowe	Kolasinac	Mustafi	Runarsson					A. Marriner
	Tue 22	**Manchester City**	**1-4**	●	**QF**	**BCD**	Runarsson	Cedric	Mustafi	Gabriel	Kolasinac	Ceballos	Elneny	M-Niles	Willock	Martinelli	**LACAZETTE •**	Pepe(49)	Smith Rowe(66)	Balogun(77)	Mari	Tierney	Nketiah	Leno							S. Attwell
	Sat 26	**Chelsea**	**3-1**	●	**14**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Mari	Tierney	**Xhaka •**	Elneny	**Saka •**	Smith Rowe	Martinelli	**LACAZETTE •**	Willock(65)	Pepe(71)	Mustafi(90)	Ceballos	Aubameyang	Cedric	Nketiah	M-Niles	Runarsson					M. Oliver
	Tue 29	Brighton & HA	1-0	●	13	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Mari	Tierney	Xhaka	Elneny	Saka	Smith Rowe	Martinelli	AUBAMEYANG	**Lacazette •** (63)	Ceballos(81)	M-Niles(89)	Willock	Cedric	Mustafi	Pepe	Nketiah	Runarsson					M. Atkinson
	Sat 2	West Brom	4-0	●	11	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Mari	**Tierney •**	Xhaka	Ceballos	**Saka •**	Smith Rowe	**Lacazette**	AUBAMEYANG	M-Niles(54)	Willian(71)	Willock(77)	Pepe	David Luiz	Elneny	Martinelli	Nketiah	Runarsson					M. Atkinson
	Sat 9	**Newcastle United**	**2-0**	●	**R3**	**BCD**	Leno	Cedric	David Luiz	Mari	Tierney	Willock	Elneny	Nelson	Willian	Pepe	**AUBAMEYANG •**	**Smith Rowe •** (56)	Xhaka(66)	Saka(66)	Lacazette(105)	Balogun(120)	Chambers	Nketiah	Runarsson						C. Kavanagh
JANUARY	**Thur 14**	**Crystal Palace**	**0-0**	●	**11**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	David Luiz	M-Niles	Xhaka	Ceballos	Saka	Smith Rowe	Lacazette	AUBAMEYANG	Pepe(65)	Partey(69)	Nketiah(81)	Willock	Cedric	Gabriel	Willian	Chambers	Runarsson					A. Marriner
	Mon 18	**Newcastle United**	**3-0**	●	**10**	**BCD**	Leno	Cedric	Holding	David Luiz	Tierney	Xhaka	Partey	**Saka •**	Smith Rowe	Lacazette	AUBAMEYANG	Elneny(67)	Willian(79)	Martinelli(81)	Willock	Bellerin	Gabriel	Nketiah	Pepe	Runarsson					D.Coote
	Sat 23	Southampton	0-1	●	R4	BCD	Leno	BELLERIN	Holding	Gabriel	Cedric	Xhaka	Elneny	Willian	Pepe	Martinelli	Nketiah	Partey(57)	Saka(58)	Lacazette(72)	Willock	M-Niles	Chambers	David Luiz	Ryan	Runarsson					P. Bankes
	Tue 26	Southampton	3-1	●	8	BCD	Leno	BELLERIN	Holding	David Luiz	Cedric	Xhaka	Partey	**Saka •**	Smith Rowe	**Pepe •**	**Lacazette •**	Willian(72)	Elneny(78)	Willock(90)	Gabriel	M-Niles	Chambers	Nketiah	Martinelli	Ryan					K.Friend
	Sat 30	**Manchester United**	**0-0**	●	**9**	**BCD**	Leno	BELLERIN	Holding	David Luiz	Cedric	Xhaka	Partey	Martinelli	Smith Rowe	Pepe	Lacazette	Willian(46)	Odegaard(83)	Nketiah(90)	Gabriel	M-Niles	Chambers	Elneny	Willock	Runarsson					M. Oliver
	Tue 2	Wolves	1-2	●	10	BCD	Leno	BELLERIN	Holding	David Luiz	Cedric	Xhaka	Partey	Saka	Smith Rowe	**Pepe •**	Lacazette	Gabriel(46)	Aubameyang(61)	Runarsson(74)	Ceballos	Odegaard	Chambers	Elneny	Martinelli	Willian					C. Pawson
FEBRUARY	Sat 6	Aston Villa	0-1	●	10	BCD	Ryan	BELLERIN	Holding	Gabriel	Cedric	Xhaka	Partey	Saka	Smith Rowe	Pepe	Lacazette	Aubameyang(59)	Odegaard(65)	Willian(74)	Ceballos	Chambers	Martinelli	Elneny	Mari	Runarsson					C. Kavanagh
	Sun 14	**Leeds United**	**4-2**	●	**9**	**BCD**	Leno	**Bellerin •**	David Luiz	Gabriel	Cedric	Xhaka	Ceballos	Saka	Smith Rowe	Odegaard	**AUBAMEYANG •**	Willian(62)	Elneny(78)	Holding(89)	Pepe	Chambers	Lacazette	Mari	Martinelli	Ryan					S. Attwell
	Thur 18	Benfica	1-1	●	R32	BCD	Leno	Bellerin	David Luiz	Gabriel	Cedric	Xhaka	Ceballos	**Saka •**	Smith Rowe	Odegaard	AUBAMEYANG	Tierney(64)	Pepe(77)	Martinelli(77)	Willian(89)	Elneny(89)	Chambers	Lacazette	Mari	Nketiah	Ryan	Runarsson			C. Cakir
	Sun 21	**Manchester City**	**0-1**	●	**10**	**BCD**	Leno	Bellerin	Holding	Mari	Tierney	Xhaka	Elneny	Saka	Odegaard	Pepe	AUBAMEYANG	Lacazette(73)	Smith Rowe(73)	David Luiz(82)	Ceballos(86)	Gabriel	Willian	Martinelli	Cedric	Ryan					J. Moss
	Thur 25	**Benfica**			**R32**	**5.55pm**																									
	Sun 28	Leicester City				12pm																									
MARCH	Sat 6	Burnley				12.30pm																									
	Thur 10	UEL R16 L1			R16																										
	Sun 14	**Tottenham Hotspur**				**4.30pm**																									
	Thur 17	UEL R16 L2			R16																										
	Sun 21	West Ham United				3pm																									
APRIL	**Sat 3**	**Liverpool**																													
	Thur 8	UEL QF L1			QF																										
	S/S 10/11	Sheffield United																													
	Thur 15	UEL QF L2			QF																										
	S/S 17/18	**Fulham**																													
	Sat 24	**Everton**																													
	Thur 29	UEL SF L1			SF																										
MAY	S/S 1/2	Newcastle United																													
	Thur 6	UEL SF L2			SF																										
	S/S 8/9	**West Bromwich Albion**																													
	T/W 11/12	Chelsea																													
	Sat 15	Crystal Palace																													
	Sun 23	**Brighton & HA**																													
	Wed 26	UEFA Europa League Final																													

Benfica away game played in Rome, home game played in Athens

FIXTURES, RESULTS & LINE-UPS

FIRST-TEAM APPEARANCES (GOALS)

PLAYER	PL	UEL	FAC	CC	CS	20/21
Bernd Leno	24	3	2	2	-	31
Hector Bellerin	22(1)	1+1	1	+1	1	25+2(1)
Bukayo Saka	21+1(4)	2+1(1)	+2	2	1	26+4(5)
Rob Holding	20+2	+1	1	2	1	24+3
Granit Xhaka	20+1(1)	4	1+1	1	1	27+2(1)
Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang	19+2(8)	1+1(1)	1(1)	-	1(1)	22+3(11)
Kieran Tierney	18(1)	+5	1	-	1	20+5(1)
Alexandre Lacazette	16+5(8)	3(1)	+2	1+1(1)	-	20+8(10)
Gabriel	14+1(2)	2	1	2	-	19+1(2)
Willian	12+6	1+3	2	+1	-	15+10
Mohamed Elneny	12+3	4+2(1)	2	2+1	1	21+6(1)
David Luiz	12+3	4(1)	1	1	1	19+3(1)
Dani Ceballos	11+7	2+4	-	2+1	-	15+12
Emile Smith Rowe	10+1	1+3(1)	+1(1)	+1	-	11+6(2)
Nicolas Pepe	9+8(4)	6+1(3)	2	2+1	-	19+10(7)
Thomas Partey	9+2	1	+1	-	-	10+3
Cedric Soares	6+1	6+1	2	2	+1	16+3
Ainsley Maitland-Niles	5+6	5	+1	2+1	1	13+8
Pablo Mari	4	2(1)	1	-	-	7(1)
Eddie Nketiah	3+11(1)	6(3)	1	2(1)	1	13+11(5)
Gabriel Martinelli	3+2	+1	1	1	-	5+3
Joe Willock	2+5	4+1(3)	1	3	+1	10+7(3)
Martin Odegaard	2+2	1	-	-	-	3+2
Sead Kolasinac	1	4	-	3	+1	8+1
Mat Ryan	1	-	-	-	-	1
Shkodran Mustafi	+3	5	-	1	-	6+3
Reiss Nelson	+2	3+1(1)	1	1	+1	5+4(1)
Alex Runarsson	+1	4	-	1	-	5+1
Calum Chambers	-	1+1	-	-	-	1+1
Folarin Balogun	-	+4(2)	-	+1	-	+5(2)
Miguel Azeez	-	+1	-	-	-	+1
Ben Cottrell	-	+1	-	-	-	+1
Emiliano Martinez	-	-	-	-	1	1
Own goals	-	(2)	-	(1)	-	(3)

	P	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1. Manchester City	25	18	5	2	35	59
2. Manchester United	25	14	7	4	21	49
3. Leicester City	25	15	4	6	17	49
4. West Ham United	25	13	6	6	10	45
5. Chelsea	25	12	7	6	16	43
6. Liverpool	25	11	7	7	11	40
7. Everton	24	12	4	8	4	40
8. Aston Villa	23	11	3	9	11	36
9. Tottenham Hotspur	24	10	6	8	10	36
10. Arsenal	**25**	**10**	**4**	**11**	**5**	**34**
11. Wolves	25	9	6	10	-6	33
12. Leeds United	24	10	2	12	-3	32
13. Southampton	24	8	6	10	-9	30
14. Crystal Palace	24	8	5	11	-15	29
15. Burnley	25	7	7	11	-12	28
16. Brighton & HA	24	5	11	8	-5	26
17. Newcastle United	25	7	4	14	-17	25
18. Fulham	25	4	10	11	-11	22
19. West Brom	25	2	8	15	-36	14
20. Sheffield United	25	3	2	20	-26	11

As at Sunday, February 21

TRAINING RANGE

SHOP THE TRAINING RANGE AT ARSENAL DIRECT

ARSENAL

MANAGER MIKEL ARTETA

RED SHIRTS WITH WHITE SLEEVES, WHITE SHORTS AND SOCKS

P	S	SQ	
○	○	1	BERND LENO (GK)
○	○	2	HECTOR BELLERIN
○	○	3	KIERAN TIERNEY
○	○	6	GABRIEL
○	○	7	BUKAYO SAKA
○	○	8	DANI CEBALLOS
○	○	9	ALEXANDRE LACAZETTE
○	○	11	MARTIN ODEGAARD
○	○	12	WILLIAN
○	○	13	ALEX RUNARSSON (GK)
○	○	14	PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG
○	○	16	ROB HOLDING
○	○	17	CEDRIC SOARES
○	○	18	THOMAS PARTEY
○	○	19	NICOLAS PEPE
○	○	21	CALUM CHAMBERS
○	○	22	PABLO MARI
○	○	23	DAVID LUIZ
○	○	24	REISS NELSON
○	○	25	MOHAMED ELNENY
○	○	30	EDDIE NKETIAH
○	○	32	EMILE SMITH ROWE
○	○	33	MAT RYAN (GK)
○	○	34	GRANIT XHAKA
○	○	35	GABRIEL MARTINELLI
○	○	38	FOLARIN BALOGUN
○	○	41	BEN COTTRELL
○	○	66	MIGUEL AZEEZ

BENFICA

MANAGER JORGE JESUS

BLACK SHIRTS, SHORTS AND SOCKS

P	S	SQ	
○	○	1	MILE SVILAR (GK)
○	○	2	GILBERTO
○	○	3	ALEJANDRO GRIMALDO
○	○	4	LUCAS VERISSIMO
○	○	5	JAN VERTONGHEN
○	○	7	EVERTON
○	○	8	GABRIEL
○	○	9	DARWIN NUNEZ
○	○	10	LUCA WALDSCHMIDT
○	○	11	FRANCO CERVI
○	○	14	HARIS SEFEROVIC
○	○	17	DIOGO GONCALVES
○	○	19	CHIQUINHO
○	○	21	PIZZI
○	○	27	RAFA SILVA
○	○	28	JULIAN WEIGL
○	○	30	NICOLAS OTAMENDI
○	○	33	JARDEL
○	○	34	ANDRE ALMEIDA
○	○	38	PEDRINHO
○	○	49	ADEL TAARABT
○	○	71	NUNO TAVARES
○	○	75	BRANIMAR KALAICA
○	○	77	HELTON LEITE (GK)
○	○	82	JOAO FERREIRA
○	○	88	GONCALO RAMOS
○	○	99	ODYSSEAS VLACHODIMOS (GK)

MATCH OFFICIALS

(All from Netherlands)

REFEREE
Bjorn Kuipers

ASSISTANT REFEREES
Sander van Roekel
Erwin Zeinstra

FOURTH OFFICIAL
Danny Makkelie

VAR
Pol van Boekel

ASSISTANT VAR
Rob Dieperink

TODAY'S OTHER FIXTURES

Ajax (2) v Lille (1)

Shakhtar Donetsk (2) v Maccabi Tel Aviv (0)

Napoli (0) v Granada (2)

Hoffenheim (3) v Molde (3)

Villarreal (2) v Salzburg (0)

Rangers (4) v Antwerp (3)

PSV (2) v Olympiacos (4)

Leverkusen (3) v Young Boys (4)

D. Zagreb (3) v Krasnodar (2)

Roma (2) v Braga (0)

Leicester (0) v Sl. Prague (0)

AC Milan (2) v Red Star (2)

Man United (4) v Real Sociedad (0)

Club Brugge (1) v Dynamo Kyiv (1)

Helping young people fulfil their potential through education and sport

5 555000 178235