

Hints and Tips for Football Manager

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In the last couple of our games I've formed somewhat of an association with Cambridge City for no reason other than they're the closest Conference South club to my home town.

With this in mind this short guide is based around my initial game which began life using the FM beta build and is on-going using the latest patch.

The guide is aimed at helping ease people into managing a small club in the new version of Football Manager.

The usual disclaimer

I'm a games developer first and foremost and far from being the most accomplished author – apologies in advance for spelling mistakes, incorrect grammar and bad jokes which you might find in this document.

I knocked up the document while playing Beta builds of the game while commuting into work, so a big hello also to anyone who travels on the Kings Lynn to Kings Cross line, especially if they've seen me puzzling over tactics and player purchases during their journey :-D.

Index

HINTS AND TIPS FOR FOOTBALL MANAGER	1
The usual disclaimer.....	1
INDEX.....	2
Setting up a new game.....	5
Extra Detail.....	5
Game Start Date.....	6
Database Size.....	6
Load all players from	6
Use Real Players.....	6
Attribute Masking.....	6
Adding a New Manager.....	7
YOUR FIRST DAYS IN CHARGE	8
Assessing the club	8
Your backroom staff	8
Your playing staff.....	10
Offer to Clubs	10
Finding the right player	11
Searching for Players.....	12
Deciding a purchase price.....	12
Spotting Good youngsters.....	13
Negotiating Contracts	14
Purchasing players from big clubs a word of warning.....	14
Training.....	15
Basic Overview.....	15
Understanding the graphs	15
The coaches	15
The players	16
What affects what?	17
Whats a sensible training level?.....	17
Retraining players for position	17
Can a player learn a position by simply playing in that position	18
Your First Match.....	19
Choosing the right Tactic.....	19
Recommended basic Instructions	19
Playing people to their best advantage.....	20
Difference in tactics for home and away?.....	20
Things to watch out for during the match.....	20
Tactical Tricks	21
Team talks.....	24

ADVANCED GAME ASPECTS AND NUANCES.....	26
Handling and avoiding Injuries.....	26
Employing Good Physios	26
Not over-training players.....	26
Avoiding over-physical matches	26
Don't over-play people	26
Substitute players who pick up a knock.....	27
Developing Young players	28
Handling the press.....	29
Manager Mind Games	29
Release Media Story	30
Responding to transfer speculation.....	30
Keeping the squad happy.....	31
Individual Players	31
Ensuring that the player's squad status is appropriate	31
Possible types of unrest	33
The effects of morale	35
Manager To Own Player Interaction.....	37
Learn From Experienced Player:	37
Rest Player:.....	37
Recommend Signing:.....	38
Recommend Staff Role:.....	38
Recent Form:	38
Under Performing:	39
Hints & Tips - Manager To Other Player Interaction FM	39
Danger man:	39
Weakest Link:.....	39
Impressed By Last Performance:.....	40
Admire Player/Admire Youngster:	40
Declare Interest:.....	40
Keeping the board happy.....	41
Avoiding end of season slumps	43
Tired players	43
Injuries to critical players	43
Suspensions to players	43
Distractions from other competitions.....	43
Players getting cocky.....	44
Board Takeovers.....	45
Common Questions and Answers	47
Why does a player recover from flu faster with physio attention?	47
What is an 'old' age for a player?.....	47
What do all the situation indicators means?	48
How do I run the game in a wide screen resolution?	48
Chairman interaction bugs me – can I turn it off	49
Appendix A - Player attribute list	51

Goalkeeping (Goalkeepers only)	51
Technical	52
Mental	54
Physical.....	55
Appendix B – Game Configuration	58
Configuration Files	58
Game Command Line Options	59
Configuring Pictures within the game	60
Default Pictures	60
Configuring Player Portraits and Club Logos.....	60
Image Formats	61
Appendix C - Common Problems and Solutions	62
The game is too slow	62
Load/Save times are very slow	62
Game CD is not detected	62
Cannot Install Game Patch	62

Setting up a new game

When you fire the game up for the first time you'll find yourself sitting on the game entry screen, selecting the 'Create New Game' button will load the game database and take you to next stage.

Please note if you have more than one database installed (you may have if you've patched the game) then you will first see a dialog allowing you to select the database to start the game using.

This is helpful as it allows you to have several databases available to utilise depending upon your mood – for instance an up to date one with your clubs latest signing or one from the start of the season without him when you realise he's not as good as you hoped ;-)

By default there is a wizard displayed which will take you through a series of steps to help you start the game in a nice painless manner. If however you want more control over customising the games setup then hit the 'Advanced Options' button and you'll fall back into a more old FM2006 style league select screen.

From this screen you select the configuration of the game which you are about to start. This configuration is extremely important because you might be playing this game for six (real world) months and anything you setup now is set in stone and can't be changed afterwards.

To add the modelling of a countries competitions into your game simply tick the appropriate box in the left hand list of countries, this will cause the right hand panel to show the countries flag and an indication of the amount of leagues simulated within the country selected.

You can customise each nations leagues which you select by changing the amount of divisions modelled (the fewer the less affect on the speed of the game) and whether the league is modelled using 'Extra Detail' or not.

Extra Detail

This flag indicates whether nations leagues will be simulated in full depth or not. If this isn't selected then the league in question will run much faster however you won't be able to view highlights from matches in competitions in those nations unless you are actually managing a team which is active within the competition.

There are further options for the games configuration in the lower box on the right hand, these include Game Start Date, Database Size, Load all players from ..., Use Real Players and Attribute Masking.

Game Start Date

If you have more than one league selected then you will be able to select which leagues start date to align the game to. This is to allow people to indicate which leagues 'pre-season' the game should start at and is especially important if you have selected leagues which run at wildly different times of the year.

Database Size

This field determines how many players are retained in the game database when the game begins.

Because of this it can have a large effect on the speed of the game you're running.

If you have an impatient nature then I would heartily suggest using the Small database size and unless you are meticulous in your statto like approach to the game then I would suggest avoiding the 'Huge' option.

The game makes a judgement regarding your PC's capabilities when the game run and will select what it considers a sensible database size by default – if in doubt I'd suggest leaving this on its initial setting.

Load all players from ...

This option allows you to retain all players from a specific nation simply by selecting that nation from the drop down list. Selecting additional nations from the list will add them into it, reselecting an already selected nation will remove it from the list

Be warned this option can slow down the game a lot so don't get too carried away using it

Use Real Players

This option will determine whether the game uses real players or not. If this is turned off then the game will generate a whole new world of players. This makes the game much harder as you won't have heard of any of the people in it, however you might find that without the real-life reference points of players the game isn't so appealing to you, therefore configure it to your preference.

Attribute Masking

This option is also sometimes called the 'Fog of War' and if enabled means that you cannot initially see the attributes for all players in the game. Players who have their attributes 'masked' will remain invisible until you scout them or come

into contact with them via some other means (ie. Purchase the player or play against them in a match).

If this option is disabled then ALL players attributes will always be visible.

Once you have configured the various options to your desired settings please select “Start Game” from the left hand menu bar and after a short pause the game will take you to the Add Manager screen.

Adding a New Manager

To add in a manager simply fill in the details in the bottom left box and click ‘Add’ when you’re finished.

Once you’ve added in all the managers you want active its time to look at the team you’ve taken charge of.

Your First Days in Charge

Assessing the club

Once your initial club is chosen you'll be introduced to the club and chairman via a couple of friendly news items from the club. These will give you a feel for the personality of the chairman you're working under and also let you know important information such as the wage and transfer budget which you have available.

In the text from the chairman look out for keywords which might tell you about his personality. A less ambitious and more business orientated chairman will talk about staying within budgets, whereas a more ambitious chairman might concentrate his talk more upon winning silverware.

There is no such thing as a 'perfect' chairman, however business orientated chairmen tend to be fairly beginner friendly so long as you keep the clubs budgets as balanced as possible.

At most clubs you'll also receive an initial email which details the intake of new youth players to the club. Pay particular attention to any players who a coach might single out as a future prospect and consider making a note on their profile so that it reminds you to give their development special attention in the future.

Your backroom staff

Now you've met the chairman and have an idea of the budgets available it makes sense to meet your backroom staff who will be helping you to run the club. Click on the Club Name link under your manager name on the title.

This will take you to the main club area, in the main area of the screen you'll see listed all the players who are presently at your club, while to the left are various 'tree' links which allow you to navigate to other information about your club.

Click upon the staff link and this will present you with a short list of the various non-playing staff who are at your club currently.

If you plan to take the club places then I would suggest having a minimum of one assistant manager and four coaching staff on the books. These will help ensure that your players stay fit and improve under their watchful guidance.

If you select the "Player Search" option from the "Manager" menu on the main menu bar and then click on the 'Staff' link on the tree menu once the search screen appears you will see a list of all the staff in the world appear.

As a small club I'm afraid you probably won't be in a position to be too choosy regarding the calibre of staff to bring in so I'd suggest simply selecting Filter-Customise from the menu in the main playing area and filtering by the job you're

looking to fill and 'Employed is No' as options. This will give you a short list of various unemployed staff who might be interested in a job.

An alternative way to recruit staff for a club is to place an advert in the job center. You can do this by clicking on the Manager menu in the main menu area and selecting the 'Jobs' options. This will bring you to a screen displaying all advertised job vacancies at this time.

Upon the bottom left section of the tree menu you should see a 'place advert' button, if you click this and select the type of job to advertise it will place an advert for you in the job center.

Over the next few weeks your advert will be viewed by the various staff in the game world and hopefully you will at some point receive a message indicating that a number of them have applied for the position.

Once your coaching staff are sorted out I would suggest considering employing as competent a physio as you can afford. Physio's are very important to all clubs but especially so to smaller clubs where you are likely to have a compact squad which is much more susceptible to problems from injuries.

Having a competent physio will help minimise training injuries and also help players heal up as quickly as possible.

In FM2005 physio's automatically knew how long a player was going to be injured for. In FM physio's have to assess injuries and work out how long a player will be out of the game for. A competent physio will be able to give a more accurate assessment of the length of injury, while a less competent physio will give a more vague answer.

WARNING: CHEAT

There is 'cough' a cheat in the release version of FM which allows you to get around limits to the number of staff you are allowed to have at your team. Simply sign a player as an assistant manager at your club then offer him a contract as a coach – if he accepts (some will, if given enough of an incentive) then you will find this bypasses the coach limits set by your board because he was always employed at the club.

Your playing staff

Next stop is to assess your playing staff and decide who's going to stick around and who you want to move on. The club is left in the state at which your predecessor had things, that is you will most likely find a number of staff who are already transfer listed.

Take your time to go through the available staff and draw up a quick shortlist of who you think will be first team regulars and who are surplus to requirement. As a rule of thumb for a Conference North/South club I'd recommend a squad of no more than twenty five players in total, above that and you'll find the club has nose dived in a dire financial state pretty quickly.

There are various quick ways to get a feel for your club which people use, I'll list a few of them below. They're all reasonable methods of getting to grips with your squad quickly but nothing beats actually looking at each player in turn and making an informed decision if you're not in a hurry.

- **Sort by Value.**

The theory here is simply that each players value should indicate to a reasonable extent how good a player is. This generally works reasonably well, but there are always a few players who might be over-rated or indeed under-rated using this method (for example the aging ex-star who's really not motivated to perform anymore or the hot youngster that no ones heard of yet).

- **Sort by Squad Status**

The idea with this is that your predecessor had indicated to each player the role they would play in the squad and that being a reasonable manager his assessment would make a reasonable guideline.

This again works reasonably well, however the style of player he liked may not match identically with your playing style so bear that in mind if using this method to assess the squad.

- **Look at Assistant Manager report**

When this option is selected the assistant manager will select what he believes if your best lineup with the currently chosen formation.

With Cambridge City I pretty much agreed with my predecessors assessments and left the players he'd transfer listed where they were, although I dropped the asking prices down to zero and told the players they were on their way out (set their squad status as "Not Needed") before asking the club secretary to tell the Football League of their availability (Offer to clubs option from the players menu)

Offer to Clubs

This option is extremely useful and faxes details of the player in questions availability to all the other clubs in the game world who are likely to be interested

in the player.

You can exclude rival clubs from these offers if you want by selecting ‘the relevant tick box.

It is also important to note that by default no such offers will be made to other human managers, you can however include them in such offers by adding them individually into the offer.

Finding the right player

Once you’ve attempted to dispose of the players you have deemed surplus to requirements its time to look for new players to bring into the club.

Chances are your budget is somewhat restricted (or non-existent in the case of Cambridge City) so pull up your player search and filter for the players whom you can afford currently.

When starting as a small club I generally initially filter for players within my home nation who are without a club, This shortlist generally be the most reliable with regards to signing players as they’re currently unemployed and so will be looking to get back into football.

Again as with staff the chances are you won’t be able to be over fussy regarding who you can bring in, but if you look around then you might be able to locate a couple of ex-Premiership youngsters who will be star performers for a club at your level.

Obviously the hardest part of scouting for new talent yourself is determining what makes a good player. The table below will help by acting as a quick reference guide as to the attributes which are most important to a player for each of the main positions found in the game.

The settings indicated in the table below are sensible things to filter for for general player roles.

Suggested Filter settings

<i>Position</i>	<i>Important Characteristics</i>
Goalkeeper	Reflexes, Handling, Communication, Jumping
Wing Backs	Positioning, Tackling, Pace, Anticipation, Stamina
Left/Right Defenders	Positioning, Tackling, Pace, Anticipation
Central Defenders	Tackling, Jumping, Positioning, Heading, Strength, Marking, Bravery, Teamwork
Attacking Wingers	Pace, Dribbling, Passing, Off the Ball, Creativity, Crossing
Attacking Midfield	Passing, Off the Ball, Creativity, Technique, Dribbling

Defensive Midfield	Workrate, Jumping, Tackling, Stamina, Positioning
Fast Striker	Pace, Acceleration, Dribbling, Technique, Finishing, Off the Ball
Target Striker	Jumping, Heading, Strength, Off the ball

The Level which is deemed acceptable for each of these attributes will vary dependant upon the level your club is playing at, as a rule of thumb I'd suggest Premiership clubs (15+), Division One (10+), Conference (7+). In the lower regions you'll have to accept that most players at that level won't have a 'high' value in all of their important characteristics and it'll be up to you to determine which are more important for the style of tactic which you're attempting to undertake.

Searching for Players

When searching for players after setting filters to narrow the people down to a reasonable level I generally find that viewing via. Players attributes and clicking on the column headers to sort the lists into order can quickly narrow down for me whom I am likely to be interested in.

Now you've used the search filter to find a few players the next thing is to persuade them to join your club. If they're available on a free-transfer then the next stage is negotiating a contract with them, however if they're already at a club you first have to decide what would be a fair price to pay for them.

Deciding a purchase price

If they're always at a club then you'll probably have to negotiate a transfer fee for the player – you do this by selecting 'Make Transfer Bid' from either the bottom left of the menu bar on the player profile or by right clicking on the players name and selecting that option from the pop-up menu that appears.

When placing a bid for a player bear in mind that you will often have to pay above the displayed valuation of the player because their club isn't really that interested in selling the player in question and has to be 'persuaded' to do so.

If money is tight then consider the position that the players club is in as there are circumstances in which a player might be allowed to go on the 'cheap' from a club (sometimes even much less than their displayed asking price). I've listed a few examples of these situations below:

- Player is Transfer Listed
- Player is unhappy
- Player's contract is about to expire
- Player isn't wanted at the club
- Player has fallen out with his manager

In contrast there are many similar warning signs available when a club may want more money than his displayed value, again I've listed some of these below:

- Player is a key player in the side
- Player has a long term contract
- Player is happy to stay at the club
- Player is a youth player with potential (commonly these are players who are in U21 International sides or similar)

Once you've placed some bids for a few players continue the game using the 'Continue Game' button (top left of the main bar across the game screen). The game will run through a few days and stop either when its got some match results to display or when someone responds to one of the offers that you've placed for a player.

Spotting Good youngsters

Generally when looking for good younger players I tend to search for the following:

- Reasonable physical stats, especially pace (as this and acceleration less likely to improve as much as the other physical stats).
- A good technical stat in at least one area critical to his position.

For instance I'll consider a young kid with 16 pace and acceleration and 12 finishing regardless of his other attributes. This is simply because his other areas may improve in the future as he matures.

When to cut them loose?

If a youngster hasn't improved to the stage where he's at least a backup player by the age of 22 then I generally cut him loose as they're less likely to improve hugely past the age of 23.

Be warned however, this isn't a 100% fool-proof method and every now and then one of these released players will pop-up and show me the mistake I made in releasing him.

Negotiating Contracts

When negotiating contracts its important to keep in mind the role you envision the player taking at your club. Don't over-pay for a speculative player unless you're at a club where money isn't an issue.

For smaller clubs, especially semi-professional clubs try and keep within your wage budget as much as possible and aim to sign mainly younger players who will accept wages which are within your normal wage structure.

In my case I failed to abide by these rules and the transfer acquisitions blew my wage budget through the roof triggering the board to promptly indicate that they'd block any further transfers into the club until I got my budget back under control (one of the hazards of managing a small club).

To round my team out further I looked at my youth (grey) players for any who might hold up a backup role in the team and offered contracts to a defender and a striker who were at least physically capable. The youngsters quickly accepted and while I doubted they'd excel they gave my squad some much lacking depth.

Purchasing players from big clubs a word of warning

When purchasing players from a large professional club bear in mind that they are currently training with highly competent coaches on a full-time basis. Hence when they join your small club and start training only part-time you should expect a slight decline in their skills due to them losing their edge slightly.

This is an important thing to bear in mind when offering contracts otherwise you might find yourself wildly over-paying for a player who in reality isn't that much better than current members of your squad.

It should also be noted that players from larger clubs are often more used to success than those groomed at smaller clubs, as such if they move to a struggling club they may be somewhat more volatile than usual.

Training

Basic Overview

Training in FM is far quite simple to use – push the sliders on a schedule around to ensure that it concentrates upon the areas which you feel are more important for the players who are upon it.

The initial default schedule which outfield players start upon is aimed at being a balanced schedule which will generally maintain all attributes - you can increase the workload of this schedule, but you will tire the players out more and increase the chances of them getting more training injuries.

Divide your players into schedules based on areas of their game that they are lacking on. You may decide to have 3 or 4 basic schedules focusing on improving fitness, ball control, etc. Alternatively you could create a custom schedule for each player as no two players are alike and each may require individual training.

Understanding the graphs

The new training overview screen (accessed by clicking on a player and then selecting the option from the left-hand panel) is a godsend for those who have feared tinkering with their regimes in the past, though few people understand the proper meaning of the Training Levels graph. It's actually dead simple...

The graphs represent the current training levels of the player, not the training improvement. If a bar is at the highest point, it means that he has reached his maximum limit in that category. If the bar is at the lowest point, it means that he cannot get any worse from training.

Between the highest and lowest limits, there is a range of 4-6 ability points depending on which player you are looking at. Players with high professionalism and work rate will keep themselves in shape more than other players so will have a lower range of possible attribute values.

The values in the Training Levels graph map roughly on to the Attributes graph. His attributes for that training category do not change at the same rate as each other - for example, if the Attacking bar increases by 10% on the Training Levels graph, it might mean that his Creativity increases by 12% and his Passing by 8%.

The coaches

If the training process ends with fitter, better players then it starts with getting your coaching set-up right. Look at their attributes to determine their proficiency in each of the training areas and allocate them to routines that suit their skills. Clearly, if you are at a smaller club, you may not have the resources to fund a range of coaches. But, regardless of your current set-up, it pays to understand

how coaches work and how their ability to improve your players can be hampered or improved.

The ideal setup is to have 5 star ratings in each training category (see Training, Coaches accessed via the left-hand panel in your Squad menu), reflecting the fact that you have a top coach in each discipline. A very good coach who is assigned to just the one category will give you 5 stars if his coaching rating is high in that area. The more categories that he is assigned to, the lower his rating will be for each category. For example if you have a coach with a rating of 20 for attacking coaching, you will get a 5 star rating for Attacking if he is assigned only to this category. If you assign him to 2 categories you may only get a 4 star rating. If you assign him to all of the categories, you may only get 1 or 2 stars.

You also need to make sure the workload isn't too high otherwise players will suffer from not getting enough attention.

The players

It takes around 2 months generally for most players to receive the full effects from starting a balanced normal training regime after a period of inactivity (ie. Coming back from holiday).

When players improve during their developmental years to reach their potential, their training schedules are looked at to determine the areas in which they improve most on. These changes are more permanent than the simple training levels. Thus the longer you keep players on the same schedules, the more their abilities will stick to the new values.

It should be noted that training 'shapes' a player over time, as such there is no 'maximum' gain that a player can acquire from training in an area beyond that that his potential allows – HOWEVER past a certain point his gain in that area may be given because he is lacking focus elsewhere (ie. He will be losing attribute points in another area).

Spotting the potential for a player's improvement is a fairly tricky calculation that you can't do by a quick flick at his attributes. His professionalism, current morale, jadedness, work rate, and determination are all used to decide what level he can reach. The calculation also uses the club variables like the training facilities and quality and workload of the coaches.

Heavily training players can make it harder for them to stay fully fit and ready for matches. If you have a key player who is struggling to cope with the repeated demands of matches during a season consider lowering his training regime slightly.

You might find he loses his edge slightly because he's training less, but that's better imho than him not being fully fit.

What affects what?

The following table lists what attributes are affected by each of the various training categories which you can modify in a training schedule. This should help you decide which areas require intensive training and which can be left low.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Attributes Affected</i>
Strength	Natural Fitness, Stamina, Strength, Work Rate,
Aerobic	Acceleration, Agility, Balance, Jumping, Pace, Reflexes
Goalkeeping	Aerial Ability, Handling, Kicking, Throwing, One on Ones
Tactics	Anticipation, Decisions, Positioning, Movement, Teamwork, Command of Area
Ball Control	Dribbling, First Touch, Technique, Flair, Heading
Defending	Tackling, Marking, Concentration
Attacking	Passing, Vision
Shooting	Finishing, Long Shots, Composure
Set Pieces	Crossing, Corners, Free Kicks, Penalties, Long Throws

Whats a sensible training level?

The 'safe' level for training players at varies according to the player in question, generally speaking players who have high stamina and natural fitness can handle more strenuous training regimes than players who don't.

There are exceptions to this though and it is best to learn about your squad by setting them initially to a safe level (high levels are shown by being to the right of the bar on the area where you set the training intensities) and tweaking things for a few players at a time and seeing whether they appear to be handling the new regime safely or not.

Retraining players for position

You can find the option for retraining a player for a specific position in the 'training' section of a player's profile.

Players tend to be more likely to progress with position training if they are young than when they are old. Exceptions to this do exist, notably for hard-working players moving into more defensive positions as they get older, however these are fairly rare.

The likelihood of a player retraining for a position is dependant upon his preferences and abilities; a defender with a 1 finishing and no interest in attacking is thus unlikely to be particularly motivated to retrain as a striker whereas his brother a fellow defender with 8 finishing and 8 off the ball will probably be very interested in retraining in that position.

When retraining a player, if successful, you will find he moves through a series of stages towards being 'Accomplished' in this position. A player can never be

trained into being a 'Natural' in a position, it's something you're either born to be or not.

The various stages of development for a position are listed below in order of rank (ie. First is the best possible):

Natural
Accomplished
Competent
Un-convincing
Awkward
Ineffectual

Can a player learn a position by simply playing in that position

A player cannot learn a position simply by playing there in matches, but if he is training in that position then playing there during matches does complement his positional development.

If you think about things logically this makes a fair amount of sense, a match is merely 90 minutes a week whereas the player is training for 20+ hours a week and so on its own a match will not be enough to fully train a player for a new position.

Your First Match

Having pressed Continue game a few times I now arrived at my first match and the hard decisions about what style of football to play and whom to put into the first team.

Choosing the right Tactic

Playing with less talented players its normally sensible to restrict things to a fairly simple setup as over complicating things with instructions and runs tends to leave players out of position and confused. With this in mind I left the tactic on the default displayed 4-4-2 and tweaked a few of the under lying instructions slightly to suit my preference.

In the lower divisions don't be afraid to play people out of position if the team is stretched by injuries.
An experienced tall striker might be better cover for that problem central midfield position than one of your youths who plays in that position.

Team instructions I left as is, they're fairly balanced by default and 'easy tackling' will help ensure that things don't get too heated during the friendlies and hopefully help to minimise injuries to my playing staff as they're currently regaining their fitness levels.

With the player instructions I tend to tweak these according to the abilities of the players in question; as a rule of thumb I've listed a few options to consider below, however it is very important to remember the balance of the team as a whole (ie. Just because you've got a very creative central midfield don't allow all of them to go bombing forward when you've got the ball – ensure that at least one acts in a holding role).

Finally as I mentioned above keep things simple with lesser players and don't give them a huge amount of instructions and NEVER ones which might potentially conflict. Ones to be most cautious regarding are those like 'forward runs' which might drag a vital player out of position.

Recommended basic Instructions

<i>Position</i>	<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Defender Left/Right	Pace, Positioning, Stamina	High	Forward Runs
Defender Left/Right	Dribbling, Positioning, Stamina, Crossing	High	Run with ball
Defender Central	Positioning, Stamina, Jumping, Heading	High	Forward for set pieces
Defensive Midfielder	Strength, Decisions, Passing	High	Hold up the ball

Winger	Any	N/A	Forward Runs
Winger	Dribbling, Pace	High	Run with ball
Midfielder	Strength, Decisions, Passing	High	Hold up the ball
Midfielder	Stamina, Decisions	High	Forward Runs
Midfielder	Dribbling, Pace	High	Run with ball
Attacker	Strength, Jumping	High	Run with ball
Attacker	Dribbling, Pace	High	Hold up the ball

When setting positions don't just look at individual players, think of the effect of the changes upon the team as a whole. For example, just because all your midfielders are great at dribbling and fast doesn't mean asking them all to do forward runs a good idea. (otherwise you'll find yourself caught out when they're all pushed up).

Playing people to their best advantage

When putting players in the side and playing them slightly out of position generally speaking people will still be fairly 'comfortable' playing in a linked position (for instance playing an AMR in MR position) and so will operate reasonably well there, especially if they are given a 'run' to their natural position (so part of the time they're operating in their favoured role).

Difference in tactics for home and away?

Depending on your managerial outlook, the quality of your team and the depth of your squad you might want to consider changing tactics subtly for away matches.

Generally away matches will be harder to win than home matches simply because the opposition will have their fan-base behind them and so be slightly more motivated during the match, also a home team tends to play a more attacking mentality at home which will put more pressure upon your defense.

With this in mind many managers (including myself) will sometimes customise their tactics for particularly stern away matches, preferring to utilise a slightly more defensive mentality and counter attacking.

Things to watch out for during the match

There are many things to look out for during a match which can help ensure your team play at their peak and don't miss out on points which they really should have secured.

- Injury Indicator

On the 2D view any player who is currently carrying a knock will have a small green cross symbol next to his 'player circle' to indicate that he is carrying an injury. Dependant on the type of injury this might impede his pace and/or affect certain of his skills.

If you substitute such a player then it will minimise the chance of the problem developing into a serious injury which might keep him out of subsequent matches.

- **Specific Commentary**

There are many lines of commentary which will give you an indication of a player's current mood or indeed where a player is dominating a match or being overwhelmed. Use this information wisely to your advantage.

If for instance the commentary indicates that an opposition defender is winning everything in the air, consider keeping the ball on the floor or even dropping your striker back a little off him so that the defender is left with the choice of either coming forward out of position to challenge for headers or leaving the striker free to flick the ball on (or better still control it if possible).

- **Tactical advantages and weaknesses**

Once you've watched a few clips of the match you'll probably be able to make out strengths and weaknesses in the teams who are playing by some simple analysis of the match.

For instance if your team seem to be over-run by the opposition then try and work out how this is happening, there could be many reasons – most of which are simple to rectify. I've listed a few of the possibilities in a table below to give you an idea of what to look out for, but obviously there are a huge variety of possibilities and I'm afraid you'll have to work some out for yourself.

- **Ways to avoid making the opposition keeper look good**

One of the most common complaints of new players of Football Manager is that their team has a 'super goalkeeper'. This non-existent problem is normally caused by them playing in a style which encourages players to take speculative shots which are relatively easy for the opposition goalkeeper to deal with.

If your team dominate play frequently yet score only a small percentage of the shots then this section is for you.

When setting up a tactic try not to emphasise the amount of shots that your team gets as an indication of a good tactic, it is more important to have a tactic which creates clear cut chances rather than one which creates lots of half-chances.

Often you can do this by simple tweaks to the tactic you are currently using, for instance if you're a large club playing against a small team then don't leave the team tactics simply set to 'attacking' in your normal manner, consider getting your team to play more of a counter attacking game and ask any ball holding midfielders which you might have to hold up the ball. In this way you'll persuade the opposition to push out from their own box more making chances more clear cut when you get them.

Tactical Tricks

- **KISS (Keep it simple stupid)**

Before resorting to drastic changes and substitutions, look at the players you have on the pitch and consider switching players around slightly if they're being neutralised by an opposition player. For instance if your fast center forward is up against a quick defender switch him to the other side where he might be up against a slower person etc.

- Scaring players out of being effective

If the opposition has a player who is extremely creative or good on the ball but has a low bravery setting then consider stifling him by sitting a man-marker on top of him (if required take off a striker and bring on a defensive player to specifically handle this duty).

This will mean the player is always competed against for 50-50 balls and will minimise his effectiveness, this policy works best if the marking player errs on the aggressive side.

- Tiring out ten men

If you're playing against a team who have had a man sent off with a considerable amount of time left on the clock then try and take advantage of this by tiring them out as much as possible.

You can do this in one of various ways, but my favourites are:

Winning – If you're winning the game and they're chasing it, then go defensive and counter attacking, slow the tempo down and ensure that your fast attacking players are set to run with the ball.

If the opposition are trying to get something from the game you'll find that they tire themselves out a fair bit trying to close your team down. This will also leave them open to quick counter attacks at the back.

Not Winning – Keep things pretty much as they were but ask your team to play as wide as possible, this will mean the active area the game is played in is larger and cause the opposition players to have to cover more ground in order to keep players closely marked.

- Giving Creative Players space

I don't recommend that you give creative players 'Pressing' instructions as this means that they are more likely to be near an opposition player when your side regains the ball.

- Pressing

Don't expect all of your team to be able to press for the entire match in FM, pressing will tire players out quite quickly if they have low stamina. Unless I have a team with high stamina across the board I usually use pressing in 5 minute bursts to disrupt opposition pressure.

- Defend from the Front

If you have hardworking attackers then sometimes it may be helpful to tell them to close down the defence, this will prevent defensive play makers from having

time to look around for creative passes and can sometimes cause mistakes which can generate goals.

- Maximise Set Pieces

I definitely recommend customising which players are Forward/Back for set pieces as this can be worth several goals over the space of a season.

In particular for Corners I would recommend pulling back any players with 15+ Jumping ability when defending and conversely pushing forward as many players with 15+ Jumping or high Anticipation / Off the Ball skills (the latter for getting on the end of any rebounds).

- Holding up the ball

I recommend using holding up the ball if have a player with High Strength, Dribbling and Technique (especially if he has low pace) if he plays either as a lone SC or as a DMC (this will allow the rest of the players to get forward).

- Check who's referee

I would recommend NOT playing with hard tackling if you have a referee who has a reputation for giving out lots of red cards (easy to check via. the referee league table) ... although it can work (especially if your opposition have players who are easy to 'wind' up).

- Getting crosses into the box

If you have tall (i.e. Good jumping and heading) strikers then try playing with very wide wingers and pushing them forward so that they are more likely to get crosses into the box.

- If using wingers then play them very wide

Something which players often overlook is that if wingers hog the touchline then your team will be quite likely to get a throw-in if they are tackled.

- Goalkeeper distribution

Ensure that your goalkeeper distributes the ball as effectively as possible – a lot of people underestimate the pressure they put their own team under when their goalkeeper kicks are simply returned straight towards their own end.

If your keeper can't kick accurately (and you don't have tall enough midfielders to win the headers) then consider asking him to distribute it short to a defender instead.

- Theatrics

Don't underestimate the advantage a team can be given from a player with a degree of acting ability. A fast striker with the habit of tripping over daisies in the box can be an effective weapon – even if he can't actually do much while on his feet.

My Cambridge City side keeps one of these strikers on the bench, if the opposition appear to be going in hard or one of their defenders gets a yellow card then on he comes – its not nice, but 3pts is 3pts ...

Team talks

Half-time team talks are essential to undertake If you haven't already set a precedent that you're more of a tactician and leave the motivation to the assistant manager (ie. Set the option in 'manager preferences' to 'Assistant Manager handles team-talks).

If you fail to do a team-talk without this option set then the players will presume you're extremely upset with their performance as you've failed to even enter the dressing room, in extreme circumstances (ie. You're 5-0 down in a local derby) this might motivate them to try harder, however in most circumstances it will just ensure they aren't particularly happy with you.

The overall team mood you set for a team-talk should reflect how you believe a teams performance is going and acts as a guide for how you approach the teamtalk. When setting up a team-talk I tend to think in my head about how I'd approach such a situation in real-life.

For instance if my team is losing 1-0 at half time but have been playing well generally then I'd want to do a team talk which tells the team they're performing well and to 'keep at it', I'd then pick out a player or two who have been doing exceptionally well during the match and set their performances as ones to be aspired to by their team-mates.

In game terms this is the equivalent of setting the team mood to 'sympathetic' and then setting the individual team talks for certain players to a positive level, i.e. 'pleased' or 'delighted'.

If you follow this approach of considering how you'd do the talk in real-life you'll probably find your talks go reasonably well and even inspire the occasional turn-around in a match (which can be incredibly satisfying).

If a team talk has had a large effect (either positive or negative) upon a player then you will sometimes be able to pick up on this by spotting certain commentary during a match (ie. Player 'x' appears to be fired up etc.). This is a useful guide for ascertaining how successful a team-talk has been on certain members of the squad.

It is important to note that there is no such thing as a 'perfect' team-talk and it is generally unavoidable that a talk which is very positive on some players might be lost on other members of the side.

If you set too many individual team-talks then this will dilute the overall team talk message to the squad.

If you set enough that one of the other options than the team mood is prevalent then this mood will replace the team mood setting (ie. If you set the team mood to 'must try harder' but set 7 players individual settings to 'pleased' then the effective overall team talk message to the squad is 'pleased'.

A simple and safe way to use team-talks while getting to know your players. If you're worried about using team-talks and their potential effects then I've indicated a relatively simple system below for giving out 'sane' talks to your team which should work reasonably well with most players, While it won't help motivate people in an optimal manner it should help while you're settling into the new game.

<i>Match Situation</i>	<i>Player Rating</i>	<i>Morale</i>	<i>Suggested Talk</i>
Doing Well	Below 7	Above okay	Encourage
Doing Well	Below 7	Okay or below	Encourage
Doing Well	7	Above okay	Pleased
Doing Well	7	Okay or below	Delighted
Doing Well	Above 7	Above okay	Pleased
Doing Well	Above 7	Okay or below	Delighted
Doing Okay	Below 7	Above okay	Encourage
Doing Okay	Below 7	Okay or below	Encourage
Doing Okay	7	Above okay	Pleased
Doing Okay	7	Okay or below	Pleased
Doing Okay	Above 7	Above okay	Pleased
Doing Okay	Above 7	Okay or below	Delighted
Doing Poorly	Below 7	Above okay	Encourage
Doing Poorly	Below 7	Okay or below	Encourage
Doing Poorly	7	Above okay	Encourage
Doing Poorly	7	Okay or below	Pleased
Doing Poorly	Above 7	Above okay	Pleased
Doing Poorly	Above 7	Okay or below	Pleased

When using this table please ensure that you only set personal talks for around 3-4 players maximum, any more than that and you run the risk of spending too much time with individual players and diluting the effect of the overall team-talk.

A similar system can be employed for post-match team talks and each while not spectacular in effect will ensure a relative sanity to your team talks.

Advanced Game aspects and nuances

Handling and avoiding Injuries

Injuries to professional footballers are impossible to avoid fully and are simply par for the course in some ways.

However a rash of injuries can cripple a small team and so its important to keep injuries to as manageable a level as possible during a season and because of this it is important to keep the injuries within your squad at a low level by employing sensible management techniques.

The other reason for avoiding injuries is simply that one long term injury or a sequence of smaller short-term injuries can adversely affect the development of young players.

Employing Good Physios

The better your physio's the quicker that players will tend to recover from injuries and the less likely they will be to have to endure recurring injuries.

The amount of physio's a club needs is largely dependant upon the size of their squad and obviously the length of their injury list. For smaller clubs one or two physio's is acceptable and obviously quality is better than quantity in this area.

Not over-training players

If you put your players on an overly physical training regime then this will increase the chance of them being injured. If your squad is feeling unduly stretched during a season and players are indicating they are tired frequently consider easing off their training level a little to give them a better chance to recover between their matches.

Avoiding over-physical matches

If you have a small squad then try and avoid matches becoming overly physical encounters. This will help avoid picking up too many injuries from within matches.

You can help to ensure this by playing a more technical game where possible rather than a physical closing game (ie. Less pressing and easy tackling).

Don't over-play people

Over-playing players during a season is a sure way of picking up continual niggly strains and other injuries.

Young and old players are the most susceptible to these types of injuries in general.

Substitute players who pick up a knock

If a player picks up a knock during a match (indicated by a green injury icon showing above him on the 2D match view) then seriously consider taking him off. This will minimise the chance that the problem will blossom into a serious injury.

Weather Effects

During matches don't ignore the effects of the weather – consider how it might influence the game and use it to your advantage where possible.

Weather Condition	Effect
Wet Pitch	Ball will skim on wet surfaces making long passes and low shots hard to anticipate and control. Studs won't grip the surface quite as well as usual making sharp turns more problematic.
Muddy Pitch	A muddy pitch will cause the ball to 'bog down' at times and stop much earlier than normal. This means low shots will lose a lot of power if they bounce and also that long passes are less likely to roll out of play if inaccurate. Players will also tire more quickly on a muddy pitch.
Windy	A windy day makes any aerial ball unpredictable whether a shot or a pass.
Sleet	Sleet can cause a muddy pitch but is also very cold, this can cause players to work slightly less hard – especially if they're not especially determined or generally unused to playing in these conditions.
Rain	As per sleet, but to a much lesser extent.
Dry Pitch	A dry pitch will cause more bounces than usual meaning that precise close control is required by players. Studs won't grip the surface quite as well as usual making sharp turns more problematic.

Developing Young players

Developing young players is a skill which all managers should attempt to cultivate to at least a lesser extent.

Youngsters are cheap to bring in and generally more patient at sitting on the sidelines than experienced players and so very useful in giving a squad depth without disruption, even if you're not naturally inclined towards bringing kids through the youth system.

- Don't over-play kids

Over-playing kids to the extent that they're constantly exhausted can seriously affect their development, not only will they be less inclined to give their all in training but they will also run the risk of developing long term injury problems with their still developing muscles.

The amount of games which a youngster can handle is entirely dependant on the youth in question. You can partially determine this by his physical attributes as a rule of thumb the better his stamina and natural fitness the more resilient he will be to playing frequent matches.

- Give them first team experience

Where possible give promising youngsters some first team experience. If you're a very large club and don't really have the chance to allow them this experience then seriously consider lending them out on loan.

- Spotting players who've peaked

Young players will generally improve much faster than older players. You will however sometimes find that their technical skills might fall off slightly as they grow physically and have to get used to their increased body mass.

If a youngster has shown no sign of improvement over a period of two seasons then I'd generally consider him to have possibly 'peaked' in his ability.

Handling the press

One of the hardest aspects of FM for newcomers to the game is how to approach handling the media and when to use it to your advantage.

We will break this aspect of the game down into individual components and hopefully clarify some of the reasoning behind how this operates.

Manager Mind Games

Generally, when making personal style comments, your professional players will want you to act in a professional manner, whilst your not so professional players (when making degrading/disrespectful comments) will be thankful that they have got a manager who thinks on the same wavelength and is therefore more willing to work harder for him. So it's a matter of judging the make-up, personality wise of your squad, to achieve the best possible response from your squad.

Player reaction in fact reveals elements of their hidden stats and personality. For example, following a test case where Alex Ferguson condemned Southampton as relegation candidates, while Beattie and Phillips were determined to prove Ferguson's claims that the team were relegation fodder incorrect, Fernandes was unsure and felt that Ferguson might be right. To explain further, Beattie and Phillips have shown a reaction typical to player's who have strong character traits such as a high determination level, being able to handle pressure well and having a good ambition level. If when dealing with the media you react in this manner you will generally get the best out of these type of players (results permitting of course). However, Fernandes has shown a level of insecurity which makes him prone to doubt himself, the manager and the club as a whole. It can be a tricky situation and the best way to deal with players of this nature is not to pile too much pressure on him, always play down your chances, don't provoke other managers or players and generally try to stay out of the limelight. Players such as Fernandes will flourish in a less pressurised atmosphere.

In terms of how a player who has been affected by a mind-game will play on the pitch, it is much harder to predict. There are so many factors involved in determining whether a player will perform on the day of match; including morale, happiness level, tactics, opponent on pitch, opponents tactics as well as off-the-pitch topics such as transfer or contract activity regarding the player. These are just some of the factor's involved. What we can definitely say is that if a player reacts positively to a manager comment it will definitely have some positive impact on that player in terms of his match performance, although how much is down to the other factors as stated above. This is also the case in terms of a negative reaction.

As with much of the media both in real life and in FM it can be a fine balancing act between pleasing one group of players but maybe upsetting others or vice

versa. This makes analysing your squad's personality traits essential to the success of the team.

Release Media Story

At present there are a couple of restrictions upon this feature, the first being that this option will not appear on the player profile unless he has played at least four games. You will also be restricted to praising or criticizing one player a week. These restrictions are in place simply to prevent managers from over-using this option on inappropriate players.

As in real-life, players love to be praised by their manager and aren't fond of criticism. However remember some players while disliking criticism will be inspired by it and attempt to prove their manager wrong, also some players will become complacent if praised and so may perform worse than otherwise.

It is (as always) your job as manager to decide how to go about motivating each individual in your squad. As a guideline we would recommend avoiding criticising youngsters or people who are known to be highly strung.

Responding to transfer speculation

If one of your players has been linked with another club you will be asked for a comment by the press. The options you are presented with vary from issuing a hands off warning to declaring that you might have to sell the player to ease the club's financial plight.

How you respond normally depends on whether you actually want to sell the player in question. However sometimes you might want to spread seeds of doubt about your willingness to sell a player (if for example the player in question is popular with the fans) until you actually do so, as admitting to even considering such an act can turn fans against a manager unless results are going the right way.

Keeping the squad happy

Individual Players

A player's personality can affect his mood quite severely; some players are naturally more moody than others.

You can detect this in Football Manager by keeping an eye on the 'Future' section of a player's fact file. These are largely the same as previous Sports Interactive football management simulations – however, in case you haven't played previous versions of the game I've have listed a couple of examples below to give you an idea of how this works.

<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Outraged	low temperament and isn't amazingly professional.
Disappointed	Model professional who isn't going to rock the boat or dip in his application when unhappy.
Worried or Upset	Not very good at handling pressure.
Believes he can force his way back into the manager's plans	Hardworking and good at handling pressure
Thinks this club is a stepping stone for the future	Disloyal, Ambitious and fairly un-professional.

As you can see from the list it is fairly easy to ascertain the personality of the player from the phrases that are displayed (not all phrases in the game are in the table as there are several hundred possibilities).

Ensuring that the player's squad status is appropriate

A player won't be happy if you tell him he is an important player and then never play him.

Don't jump his squad status around repeatedly

If you change his squad status every other week then this makes a player feel insecure about his position at the club.

Players will indicate that they have been upset by a change in their squad status by displaying a message indicating that the 'player feels he has been treated unfairly' on their profile.

Pay him what he is worth

If you bought your star player while in the conference and put him on a 5 year contract at £150 / week then when you reach the Premiership he will not be very happy to still be stuck with that contract.

Don't try and train a player for a position that doesn't suit him

If you try and train a player for a position that he feels he isn't suited for then he will tell you he is 'unhappy with training'. This will slow any improvements that he may gain from training and may make him more prone for not turning up to training.

Language Barrier

If a player can't communicate with any other staff members then he is more likely to be unhappy than one who can talk to other staff.

Disliked Players

Some players actively dislike other players and shouldn't be placed in the same team, this you can only find out by trial and error (a player will tell you when it happens).

Vetoing Player Requests

Ignoring player requests for transfer or first team football may make them unhappy.

Winning Games

No player likes always being on the losing side, winning games is an effective way of increasing squad morale.

Value him realistically

Players won't be happy about being over-valued by their coaches. While a happy player might allow you to value him at 10x his value if he's tolerant and at his favourite club, an unhappy player who wants to move to a bigger club will probably be unhappy if valued at 1.5x his Automatic asking price.

Protect him from the media

If you fail to protect players from media criticism then this can affect the way they feel about you.

Note:

This is a double-edged sword however as certain players may take your praise of them to the media as an indication that they can relax and take things easy.

Time at the club

Certain players will feel that they have achieved all they can at your club and be looking for a new challenge. If you force these players to stay put then their morale will drop.

If a respected senior member of your team is upset then it will have a knock on effect through the rest of the team. Thus if Shearer is unhappy at Newcastle then it may unsettle other players in the squad.

Don't promise what you can't fulfil

Making empty promises to a player that you later don't fulfil is a sure way of making them dislike you. Avoid using promises to solve problems in the short-term unless you are sure you can fulfil them, otherwise you'll find you've stirred up more trouble than you started with.

Possible types of unrest

I've listed below all the possible types of unrest which might afflict a player within the game. While long this list is only a fraction of the actual visible items which might appear upon a player's profile.

Pay close attention to how items on a players profile are phrased as often the words are chosen carefully. This is to reflect aspects of a players personality which might help you handle him in the future.

For instance if a player is indicated as being 'worried' about retaining his first team place then you can ascertain that he's an insecure player and as such you might be able to bully him into submission if required.

1. Wants to move to bigger club
2. Wants improved contract
3. Wants to play in first team
4. Unhappy at being fined
5. Wants first team football
6. Problems settling in country
7. Personal Reasons
8. Unhappy transfer bid rejected
9. Wants new Challenge
10. Treated Unfairly
11. Treated Teammate unfairly
12. Dislikes teammate
13. Dislikes Assistant Manager
14. Dislikes manager
15. Unhappy with role
16. Homesick
17. Unhappy refused injection
18. No Manager support
19. Jaded
20. Teammates remarks
21. Unhappy at being subbed
22. Unhappy about club finances
23. Value too high
24. Victimised by referee
25. Wants to match teammates pay
26. Manager obstructing move

27. Worried by lack of discipline
28. Worried by lack of club harmony
29. Thinks club is under achieving
30. Considering bosman
31. Club signed rival player
32. Rumours of being replaced
33. Too many rival players
34. Manager listening to player
35. No competition for places
36. Unhappy at sale of star player
37. Unhappy at sale of youngster
38. Unsettled by transfer speculation
39. Can't settle in area
40. No given credit by manager (team talk related)
41. Feels manager harsh on team (team talk related)
42. Confused by team talks (team talk related)
43. Manager putting pressure on team (team talk related)
44. Players being treated preferentially (team talk related)
45. Unhappy with team talk (team talk related)
46. Lack of leadership in dressing room (team talk related)
47. Unhappy at assistant managers team talk (team talk related)
48. No confidence in manager
49. Worried club may be forced to sell players
50. Unhappy at withdrawal from international squad
51. Being forced out of club
52. Unhappy at offer of contract termination
53. Feels manager doesn't rate him
54. Wants clarification on squad status
55. Feels he is past it
56. Feeling pressure from media expectation
57. Feeling pressure from media criticism
58. Under valued by manager
59. Being forced out by club administrators
60. Being played in weak position
61. Unhappy told he won't play for club
62. Doesn't want to leave club
63. Unhappy no (training area) coach (training related)
64. Wants dedicated (training area) coach (training related)
65. (training area) coach workload too high (training related)
66. Wants to do more (training area) training (training related)
67. Wants better (training area) coaching (training related)

<p>NB> While there are 67 distinct types of unhappiness within the game there are literally hundreds of different messages indicating them.</p>
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The effects of morale

Morale, as in real life, will have a significant effect on your team. Just as a few consecutive wins will get your team's confidence flying, losing a couple will have them wondering where their next point is coming from. Your players' morale will thus have an important on your team's run of form – you will need to know how to prolong winning runs and halt losing streaks.

The effects of a loss on morale

A loss will mainly affect players who were active in the match. However, not all players will drop to very low - just those who are most affected by the defeat. Strikers who have missed a number of chances or goalkeepers who have conceded several goals are a good example of players who are most likely to suffer a drop in confidence.

The effect of player characteristics on morale

The effects of morale in Football Manager are partially dependant upon your team's maturity and the personalities of your players.

If your team is full of temperamental (especially disloyal) players then they will most likely be unable to turn things round when the going gets tough. If they find themselves playing for a losing side each week, they will be more likely to want to jump ship and get a transfer elsewhere than dig in and grind out results. In a similar manner (but for different reasons) very young players are also more severely affected by morale. These youngsters generally lack the experience and confidence to be able to battle or get motivated when things aren't going well.

Is it wise to keep playing the same team after a particularly severe drubbing?

The best managers would tell you it depends on the situation – and this is exactly the same for FM too. If you go on a losing streak for several games then it might be wise to rotate in a couple of 'older heads' to stabilise things - maturity is a great thing for young sides. Otherwise you may believe that a revival in form is only round the corner, in which case it would be best to not make too many changes.

Morale - Leading to Winning/Losing streaks

The effects of morale are partially dependant upon your team's maturity and personality.

If your team is full of temperamental (especially disloyal) players then they'll be quite volatile in this way, in a similar manner (but for different reasons) very young players are often affected more severely by morale than older more mature players.

If you're looking to 'stabilise' a team which has poor morale and a losing streak then consider putting in a couple of older heads to hold the rest of the team together, most especially with regards to this - don't give the captancy to an 18

year old however good he is.

Morale Summary

As a general summary, the effect of a player's morale varies from player to player. Very unprofessional or temperamental players, for example, tend to differ hugely in performance due to their morale. If they're happy then everything is great - if it's not then they'll sulk. In contrast, very professional players will turn in consistent efforts week-in week-out regardless of their morale.

If you're looking to 'stabilise' a team which has poor morale and a losing streak then you should consider putting in a couple of older heads to hold the rest of the team together. And one last thing, never give the captaincy to an 18 year old – no matter good he is. He'll never be able to cope...

Manager To Own Player Interaction

In Football Manager there are several ways in which you can interact with your own players in the latest version of the Football Manager series.

Learn From Experienced Player:

Have you ever wanted one of your youngsters to emulate a senior player at your club with regards to attitude and movement on the pitch?

Well now is your chance, firstly you will need to select one of your hot prospects and then you will get to choose an experienced player, who can play in a similar position to the youngster in question, to mentor/tutor him for a period of six months.

A youngster will get more out of this tutoring if he has a similar character and style to the player who you have selected to mentor him. He will also be more willing to learn from the experience if he shares the same nationality and language. Beware, if you pick a couple of players with very different character traits then it could all go pear-shaped, with both players falling out and the impact getting felt throughout your squad.

Finally, here is some advice for making the most out of this interaction. Choose a senior player who has a character trait which you prefer (Determined etc) then ensure the senior player has the player preferred moves that you would like the youngster to have. The most important thing however is to ensure you pick players who play in a similar fashion (e.g. both strikers with pace / both hard-working midfielders etc).

Rest Player:

Have you ever rested a player, only for him to moan about being dropped from the team? Well how about if you tell him about this first. That's what this interaction allows you to do.

Once a player has played in a match and you feel you need to rest him for at least the upcoming match then you can ask him via player interaction. If he responds favourably then you know you are safe to rest him for the period you specified.

A player will be more likely to agree to a rest if he is starting to feel jaded especially after a tough prolonged period of games. A warning though is that players don't like to be rested for too long and so be careful when choosing what length of time you ask the player to be out for.

The easiest way to get a positive response from the player is to ask a player who is feeling jaded and has played in a series of consecutive matches to take a rest for about a week.

Recommend Signing:

After you have played the game for a while you can gain quite an affinity with some of your longest serving players. Have you ever wished to ask them for a recommendation on who you should sign in the next transfer window.

The player you ask will use his knowledge of his current national squad, his former club and any players he is friendly with within football circles. It is recommended that if you want to get into a player's good books then if that said player comes back to you with a very strong recommendation, that you heed the player's advice and sign the recommended player.

(Note: you can also ask a player to recommend a member of back-room staff to join your club)

Recommend Staff Role:

Your star striker is getting towards his twilight years and you dearly want him to stay on at the club in a non-playing capacity. This interaction will allow you the possibility of trying to sway his decision on whether he wants to stay in the game after his playing are over or not.

Once a player has reached the landmark age of 30, he will start telling you his long-term plans. These plans will give you an indication as to what direction the player is looking to go once he hangs up his boots.

You can try and persuade him via this interaction to go into a general area of the backroom staff. If you are persuasive enough then you could get the player to commit to becoming a non player long before he has decided to hang up his boots.

To get the most joy out of this interaction you should pick on an old player who loves the club and likes you and then take a note of his preferred role stated under 'Long-Term Plans' and encourage him to take it up once his playing days are over. However don't keep pestering him all the time as this could have an adverse affect.

Recent Form:

The old praise/criticise player has undergone an entire re-write to bring it into the player interaction element of the game. Once a player has played in a few games you will get the opportunity to praise and criticise his recent form to varying degrees of severity.

Choosing the right level of praise/criticism is key to this player interaction. The more determined players will have higher standards than the rest of your players so overly praising them after a couple of decent performances will not go down well with them.

Whilst criticising the more insecure members of your squad after a couple of average performances could well back-fire.

Under Performing:

Have you ever been in a situation whereby you can't get a win for love nor money, your players are disappointed at the club's under-achievement and the board is starting to get concerned.

You start tinkering with the starting line-up and tactics but this only makes things worse. You are in despair and feel that there is nothing you can do but pray.

Well there is a player interaction which might help. This player interaction allows you to ask a player who isn't concerned about the club's under-achievement to chair a team meeting to discuss and try to resolve team members concerns regarding the club's under-achievement.

However the key to this meeting being successful is the player you choose to chair the meeting. It is imperative that you choose a player that is well respected by the majority of the squad.

If the meeting goes well you will have reduced the amount of players moaning about the under-achievement at the club and converted them into players striving to improve the club's league position.

Hints & Tips - Manager To Other Player Interaction FM

There are several ways in which you can interact with your players from other teams in the latest version of the Football Manager series.

Danger man:

You are playing against your arch rivals in the next game. They have a star striker who has scored plenty of goals against you in the past. You suspect this star striker might buckle under the pressure of expectancy. Now you have the opportunity to test out this player's true character. You can firmly place him in the limelight by declaring him to the media as the danger man in your forthcoming fixture.

Releasing a statement of this kind will also go down well with the professional players at your club as it shows that you have analysed the opposition team.

To get the most out of this interaction you are best isolating an opposition player a day before the match, who you suspect doesn't handle pressure too well (young players are normally a good target) and ensure he hasn't had the best of times in recent games.

Weakest Link:

In a similar way to danger man you can also target a forthcoming opponent team's player for special attention from the press. However instead of

highlighting him as a danger man you can target him as the weakest link. This interaction works best with players don't have strong characters and are suffering from relatively poor form.

Impressed By Last Performance:

You have just played a game against a team where you noticed a player on the opposition's team who had just played a blinder against you. You start thinking that you wouldn't mind having him in your team but you notice that other teams are sniffing around him.

You then start thinking about how you can start persuading him to choose you ahead of the other interested teams. Well by praising him after you match is a good start in trying to build a good relationship with him.

To get the best results from this interaction praise a player who had an absolutely amazing performance in his last match against you. Being of the same nationality as yourself and also having a better reputation within the game also helps persuade the players to start liking you. Finally don't choose a rivals clubs player and to top it all if you are managing a club which the player favours then a blossoming relationship between yourself and the player in question could well be on the cards.

Admire Player/Admire Youngster:

A nice way to follow up from the previous interaction is to declare your admiration of the player. Especially if your scout has indicated that the player isn't interested in joining your club at this present time.

So now it's up to you to start working on persuading the player to join your club by getting into his good books. The same sorts of factors apply to this interaction as for being impressed by last performance.

This interaction is best used when you aren't sure as to how interested the other player is in joining your club at the present time. It also helps prevent any of your existing squad feeling insecure about a potential rival player joining the club and displacing him from the team.

Declare Interest:

After you have made a series of comments and got in the good books of player then its time to step up your interest in the player by declaring that you are interested in signing the player.

This interaction can/will cement your relationship with the player and should put you firmly in the driving seat when you bid for the player.

Keeping the board happy

You know that your job is on the line when your board is less than satisfied with your performance, your name has appeared on the potential job vacancies screen and either Supporter Protests or the Dreaded Vote of Confidence has occurred.

To keep your job as Manager you must learn to appease your chairman. The following things affect a chairman's happiness in FM.

- **Transfer Decisions**

If you free-transfer valuable players (or players that the chairman likes) then the chairman will be understandably upset with you. What the chairman views as a valuable player depends on the size of the club you are managing (e.g. Brighton may be upset at a player valued at 50k being free-transferred where as the Liverpool board wouldn't bat an eye in the same circumstances).

- **League Position**

The chairman indicates to you the club's desired league position at the beginning of a season (or when you take over the club if you come into the job part way through a season). If you are failing to achieve this after the first few games of the season have passed then he will start to have doubts about your ability.

- **Runs of Form**

If the club has a run of form (either good or bad) this will affect the chairman's mood, if you have a bad league position then a good run of form may prevent you from being sacked. If you have a good league position then it may raise doubts that you can sustain your good start.

- **Supporter Pressure**

Supporters are notoriously fickle in football and that manager who was god for rescuing the team from relegation and winning a cup last season may not be so popular this season (remember Joe Royle Oliver?). Supporters will react badly to poor league position, bad runs of form or the transferring of favorite players.

- **Board Player Suggestions**

Occasionally the board may indicate that they believe a player is a good signing for the club or that a player is a valuable member of the squad. If your team is performing well then feel free to take these judgments with a pinch of salt, however if all is not going quite so well it may make sense to listen to the board.

- **Board Requests**

If the board warn you that you're taking too much time on business aspects of the club and not enough on your management then take them seriously, as any further requests that you make will try their patience.

- **Financial Worries**

As if you haven't enough things to worry about, the board would prefer you to at least keep the status-quo financially. If you drastically improve the situation then this might make up for short-fallings elsewhere at the club (although it depends on whether the chairman wants success or profit).

- **Fining Players**

If you discipline players frequently then you may find that your board warn you about your destroying the teams morale ... ignore this warning at your peril.

- **Bad Media Management**

If you are unable to handle the pressure of the media and they disrupt your team morale sufficiently then this may affect the board's view of you.

- **Time at club**

The longer a manger has been at a club the more a chairman will expect from him.

It should also be noted that each chairman has a different personality and certain chairman will be more likely to fire managers than others, I have listed a few clubs below who have relatively patient chairmen.

Brighton	Championship
Cambridge City	Conference South

Avoiding end of season slumps

End of season slumps happen and can easily happen in Football Manager if you aren't careful. The first step towards avoiding such slumps is to understand the reasons why they can happen. I've listed the most common causes of these slumps below and given some brief advice about how to avoid each of the problems.

Tired players

A small squad repeatedly calling upon a core of first team players will find that towards the end of a season those players are getting more and more tired and jaded. Where possible try and rest some of your best players by avoiding them starting in unimportant matches.

If this isn't possible or practical then at least lower their training levels so that they get more of a chance to recover between matches.

Injuries to critical players

Always try and ensure that you have sensible cover for each position in the team, otherwise an injury to one critical player at the wrong time can undo months of painstaking work.

I've personally seen a nearly unbeatable team under my management struggle to maintain their charge for promotion simply because I've had too many young players in the team and had the bad luck of having my only truly senior player (and captain) injured for a month.

Suspensions to players

As with injuries keep an eye upon player disciplinary records, especially if you've important matches coming up.

It might be a good idea to put a player on hard tackling if he's one yellow card away from a ban and you know you've some easy matches coming up – get it out of the way at a period when you know you can handle the opposition rather than let luck play a part and have him banned against a harder team later on.

Distractions from other competitions

Staying in Cup competitions can often distract players from the job at hand in the league especially as the later rounds approach.

Not only do these extra games tire out players but they can seriously distract them from the less exciting league matches. In these circumstances keep first team players on their toes by rotating any who appear to be getting lax onto the subs bench for a match or two – that normally persuades them to keep motivated.

Players getting cocky

This is often combined with one or more of the other causes. This is the situation where a player is getting over confident and lax about his game, either because he believes the team is unbeatable or because he feels he is too good to be dropped from the side.

In these circumstances keep players motivated by dropping a senior player to the bench now and then for a match – this indicates to players that no one is too good to be dropped.

Board Takeovers

There are Six Types of Board Takeover in FM . These are listed below:

Takeover Type	Description
PLC	A company will purchase the club and float them on the stock exchange Consortium - a consortium of businessmen will purchase the club, possibly installing a new manager
Fans Trust	This is for smaller clubs who are in financial trouble. They will be bought by a fans trust who will look to guide their club away from extinction Rich Individual - Tycoons! These are fairly rare but will throw their money about like there's no tomorrow
Promotion from Within	This is the most common. A chairman will stand down and allow a director to purchase his stake in the club.
Elections	These are rare and only occur in countries or clubs where an election structure is in place. e.g. Real Madrid.

There are several stages to a board takeover, each of which is detailed below:

- Rumour Mill - Rumours that the club may be subject to a bid soon. Depending on the type of takeover, the club may put a hold on in-coming transfers and board requests at this point
- In Talks - A formal proposal is submitted and will be discussed with the club's board.
- Talks Progress - Talks can go badly, go well or fail altogether. Obviously they can also succeed. If they fail, the restrictions on transfers etc will be lifted
- Takeover Completion - If the talks succeed, the old chairman will be replaced and the new chairman will step in. He will outline what changes (if any) will be made
- Post Takeover - After a bit of time, any longer-term aims of the chairman will be completed. e.g. facilities expansion or replacing the manager

You can create an edt config file to give yourself the chance of becoming chairman of your favourite club. This should take the following format:

```
"BOARD TAKEOVER" "Joe" "" "Bloggs" "01.01.1980" "England" "Ipswich"
"England" "" "Media Corner Ltd"
```

These are, in order.

```
FIRST_NAME, COMMON_NAME, "SECOND_NAME", "DATE_OF_BIRTH",  
"NATIONALITY", "FAVOURITE_TEAM", "FAVOURITE_NATION", "UNUSED",  
"COMPANY_NAME";
```

If you leave the favourite_team field blank, it will choose you a team in the specified FAVOURITE_NATION i.e. any club in England. If you specify a favourite team, it will not link you to any other teams.

Save a text file with this information as "board_takeovers.edt" and place it in the db directory. You will need to start a new game for this to be read in by the game.

If you're really keen not to have a takeover, you do have that option. Open the edt file called "board_takeover_valid_types" and add the appropriate lines to disable aggressive takeovers in your game.

For example: "NO_RICH_INDIVIDUAL_TAKEOVER" "England".

You should also add the other takeover types e.g. "NO_PLC_TAKEOVER" "ENGLAND" in similar fashion (copying the examples which are already in the file). Bear in mind that you will not be able to prevent PROMOTION_FROM_WITHIN.

As before, you will need to start a new game for these changes to take effect.

Common Questions and Answers

Why does a player recover from flu faster with physio attention?

If a player stays at the club then he will work out as much as possible in the circumstances, but also the physio will ensure he gets sensible rest, eats the right food and determine the point at which he has recovered enough not to be contagious and go back into training.

If he is at home then he'll be more inclined to slob on the sofa and will probably go back into training later because he's been advised now to come in until he feels completely recovered in order to avoid making the rest of the team contagious.

What is an 'old' age for a player?

In recent years players have been defying the effects of aging longer within professional football. Thanks to the increased attention given to training properly and a healthy diet professional players can play at the highest level well into their thirties.

As with all aspects of football we have attempted to mimic this change in FM , however please bear in mind that ONLY professional players with the right attitude will reap the benefits from such things, players who don't look after themselves will still find themselves burnt out and on the scrap heap at an early age (thinking of no English midfield maestro in particular ;)).

<u>Playing Position</u>	<u>Peak Age</u>
Goalkeeper	33
Defender	31
Midfielder	29
Striker	28

The largest improvements in player ability will usually happen below 24 years of age. Please bear in mind that these 'Peak Ages' are only guidelines and players will sometimes peak before or after these ages.

As mentioned in the initial paragraph how long a player remains at his 'peak' is somewhat dependant upon his attitude and commitment to playing professional football. A player who is a thorough professional and is known for his work-rate and commitment will generally speaking tend to have a longer 'peak' than an erratic temperamental player.

The age at which a player is liable to retire is again affected by his position. Bear in mind that a player who is still very fit (indicated by high Stamina) and playing

first team football is less likely to retire than one who is unfit and languishing in the reserves.

<u>Playing Position</u>	<u>Earliest Retirement Age *</u>
Goalkeeper	35
Defender	32
Midfielder	31
Striker	30

* Exceptions due to serious injury can occur

What do all the situation indicators means?

Icons you might encounter on the Squad Screen while playing the game are:

Abs	Absent (AWOL)	Ret	Retiring
Bid	Under Transfer Bid	Rst	Needs a rest
Ctr	Out of contract	Sct	Scouted by manager
Cup	Ineligible for cup match	SI	Senior International (MLS only)
Fgn	Foreign	Sus	Suspended for next match
Frn	Leaving on a free transfer	Trn	Transfer Arranged
Fut	Unsure of future	Unf	Not Fully Fit
Ine	Ineligible (e.g. for next match)	Unh	Unhappy
Inj	Injured	Unr	Unregistered for team
Int	On international duty	Wdn	Withdrawn from international duty
Lmp	Lacks match practice	Wnt	Wanted by a club
Loa	Listed for loan	Wp	Needs work permit
Lst	Transfer listed	Yel	One yellow card away from suspension
Pr	Player reaction to recent media comment	Yth	Youth Contract
Req	Transfer listed by request	45	International instruction: play 45 mins only

How do I run the game in a wide screen resolution?

On Windows you must start the game from a command line (command prompt - 'cmd' on Windows NT/2K/XP or 'command.com' on Windows 98/ME).

In general the options are specified by double dashes (--) in front of the option, but single dashes (-) are also supported.

if the resolution is incorrect or unsupported on your system the game will not start up properly.

--fullscreen_height=1050

Tells FM that the vertical resolution is 1050 pixels.

This option is particularly useful for running the game in full screen on wide screen monitors.

--fullscreen_width=[N]

If you want to run in full screen on a "non-standard" resolution then you can use this option to specify what resolution you want to run. Use with care - if the resolution is incorrect or unsupported on your system the game will not start up properly.

--fullscreen_width=1400

Tells FM that the vertical resolution is 1400 pixels.

This option is particularly useful for running the game in full screen on wide screen monitors.

Chairman interaction bugs me – can I turn it off

The chairman of a club is now more active than he has been in our previous titles and can even go so far as to bring players into the team if he doesn't think you're signing the right type of player (although this is fairly rare).

Whether he does this and how exactly he acts depends entirely upon his personality settings within the pre-game database. If you wish to remove or alter your chairmans personality use the database editor before the start of the game and bear in mind the following personality profile sets which are modelled within the game.

High Interference Chairman / High Club Debts / Low Confidence in Manager

This situation could result in the sale of some high profile players, providing the chairman deems the bids received for these players as acceptable. The chairman would intercept these transfer bids and immediately accept any bids which he deems to be non-refusable in the club's current financial plight.

High Interference Chairman / Lots of Cash

This is a situation that could result in the chairman buying a player behind the manager's back.

Highly Ambitious Chairman / Low Business Acumen / Confidence in Manager / Sleeping Giant / Fair Amount of Cash

A Chairman might decide in this scenario that he wants to raise the profile of the club by instructing his manager to bring in a high profile player; he will also indicate that he will support the manager as much as he can in terms of finance for this player.

Fairly High Interference Chairman / Fairly High Business Acumen / Not Rich / Low Confidence in Manager

This scenario could result in the chairman providing a warning to the manager just before he completes a deal indicating that he doesn't think a signing would be beneficial to the club and would urge the manager to re-consider his decision on this player and not finalise the transfer. All this providing the chairman doesn't rate the signing.

All the above scenarios will have disguised warnings from the chairman before the chairman steps in; also these actions will be recorded on the manager confidence screen.
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Appendix A - Player attribute list

This section lists the visible player attributes and gives a brief definition of their affect within the game.

Please note that not all of these attributes are visible within the game. Some are 'hidden' attributes and will only be visible via the games database editor or via their in-game effects.

Goalkeeping (Goalkeepers only)

Aerial Ability	The capacity to pluck the ball out of the air. A keeper who comes out and flaps at a ball will cause panic among his defenders. A good aerial ability is helpful against teams who get lots of crosses in or use the long ball tactic.
Command of Area	A 'keeper with good command of his area is mobile and gets around the box rapidly. He will display this attribute best at set pieces – knowing when to come for the ball and making sure he gets it when he does.
Communication	A 'keeper with good communication skills is essential if you want to possess an organised defence. Think Peter Schmeichel...
Eccentricity	An eccentric keeper is a double-edged sword. He might be capable of moments of genius, but equally you may find him scampering out of his box with no hope of getting to the ball before the opposition striker. If you like a player with a bit of character, a low rating, in my opinion, is not necessarily a good thing.
Handling	This is the attribute you really want to look out for in a 'keeper. No handling = no good.
Kicking	If you play the long ball tactic, make sure your 'keeper has a good kicking attribute. He'll be able to stick it on your target man's head from his six yard box. If your 'keeper has a poor kicking rating, have him distribute the ball straight to your defenders.
Reflexes	This is a great attribute for your 'keeper to have, denoting how good he is at making instinctive saves – particularly from close range. This combines with good Handling and Agility to keep your goals conceded to a minimum.
Rushing Out	This is a good stat to have if your team plays the offside trap or if the opposition have a particularly fast striker (aka Michael Owen). Your 'keeper will be

	out to meet them before you can say “Rushing Out”... errr....
Tendency to Punch	Something we’ve seen more of in the English Premiership in recent seasons as more teams employ continental keepers. Looking for this stat is purely a personal choice – punching can clear the danger immediately but it still remains a risky business. Not recommended with a weak and shaky defence.
Throwing	If you like your team to play Counter Attack football, a keeper with good Throwing ability is essential. Once in possession he’ll have the ball out to your striker on the halfway line in no time...

Technical

Crossing	If you like to employ wingers and fullbacks marauding down both flanks it’s vital that they have the ability to get quality balls into your strikers. No point in doing this if your attackers are 5ft nothing though. The Crossing schedule in training is a good way to improve their stats.
Dribbling	Coupled with Agility and Balance, I consider it essential you have a good dribbler in your side – especially in the more advanced roles with room to run at defenders. Be careful you don’t have too many dribblers though as they’ll tend to ignore any passing tactic you might have. Although a dribbler has the potential to be a match winner, he could also give it away in his own penalty area and lose you the game.
Finishing	Nothing simpler here. Bad Finishing = Missing a Sitter. Mind you, your player has to be in the right position to score a goal, so ensure your player also has good Off the Ball movement, Balance and Strength.
Heading	As crucial for players you want to use as Target men as it is for Central Defenders. Any team either playing the long ball tactic or being confronted by it will want some good headers in the side. Look for this attribute combined with Jumping.
Long Shots	If you don’t get shots on goal, you’re never going to score. A few long shots now and then can also really test a dodgy keeper. Once you’ve established that you have a midfielder like Hamann who can

	bullet them from the halfway line, instruct him to take a few long pots. He might be good at freekicks too...
Long Throws	Long Throwing ability is a particularly good attribute for a fullback to have as you will probably be wanting them to take most of the attacking throws, thereby freeing up your more attacking players.
Marking	If a defender has poor Marking it doesn't necessarily mean he'll be a load of rubbish. However, you'll definitely want to avoid playing a Man-Marking tactic. If your defenders can't mark for toffee, perhaps consider a Sweeper system or have them defend deeper than you would otherwise like. A Hard Tackling ploy goes nicely with Marking to soften up the opposition....
One on Ones	If you're playing Counter Attack football, there's going to be a few situations when your striker finds himself through on goal with "no-one to beat but the 'keeper". The better a player's rating, the more likely he is to be able to chip or go round the on-rushing 'keeper. Good Dribbling and Finishing blend nicely with this attribute.
Passing	If you've got a midfielder posse who would give the Real Madrid midfield a run for their money, then you'll be in a good position to use a Short or Mixed passing tactic to good effect. However, your midfield are more likely to be a bunch of muppets, so have them long ball it for all they're worth.
Penalty Taking	Although this stat speaks for itself, I've often found that a player with high Influence (e.g. club captain) will also come up trumps and have the guts to take a good penalty. Think Beckham...
Set Pieces	Together with this attribute, both Long Shots and Crossing ability can aid a player's aptitude for free-kicks and corners. Again, the best way to find out who strikes a good setpiece is through match practice.
Tackling	If you combine this attribute with Strength, Marking and particularly Aggression and Bravery, you'll have a great defender on your hands. Essential for defenders and battling defensive midfielders.
Technique	Technique is perhaps one of the more important attributes a player can have and refers largely to natural skill rather than an expertise in a particular area or position. Look for good technique in your more attacking players if you want to impress the

	opposition.
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Mental

Aggression	This attribute is a measure of how enthusiastic a player will be when involved in a confrontation with an opponent or when challenging for a 50-50 ball. Aggressive players will get cautioned more often (which will make them miss matches) but they won't half get stuck in for your team!
Anticipation	If your midfield players have good anticipation, then they will be likely to manage more interceptions during a match and therefore give your team more possession. Good anticipation is a vital ingredient for defenders and attackers alike though - best coupled with good Off the Ball movement and Decisions.
Bravery	Bravery should be an essential part of any player's vocabulary. A high Bravery rating will increase the likelihood of your player winning 50-50 balls and generally getting in where it hurts. As previously mentioned, at its best with Tackling and most goalkeeper stats you care to mention.
Creativity	Creativity is the ability to make things happen. You'll score more goals if you get a creative midfielder operating in the centre of the park. It might be wise to support him with a defensive midfielder though as creative geniuses don't tend to be great tacklers. There are exceptions of course...
Decisions	Quick thinking is crucial in a hectic game of football. You want players who can make the right decisions in the heat of the moment. Look for a good Decisions attribute to be combined with Creativity, Passing and to a lesser extent Anticipation.
Determination	Determination is a measure of your players' desire to win and it's a good attribute to possess throughout your team. You might particularly look for Determination in players if you manage a lowly club and often find you're having to come back from a goal or two down. Players with Determination will keep battling to the final whistle.
Flair	A player with a lot of flair can cause you a lot of frustration but equally can be a match winner. There will be times when you wished he'd tried the simple pass rather than blazing a bicycle kick into the

	stands. There will be other times however when you rise from your seat and applaud the best piece of individualism you've ever seen. Not recommended for managers who like their team to play George Graham Arsenal long ball.
Influence	A player with a high Influence attribute will undoubtedly be a prime candidate for the role of captain. Yet choose wisely. A player who has high Influence but doesn't seem to command the respect of the players around him will not make a good choice. Remember, even when you've chosen your captain it's good to have Influence in every area of the pitch.
Off the Ball	Off the Ball is perhaps one of the most overlooked aspects of the game of football, yet FM regards it as one of the most important. A player with good Off the Ball movement (aka Jeffers perhaps) can draw defenders and generally cause the opposition a lot of problems. Try to find a player who combines a high Off the Ball attribute with good Pace, Positioning and Anticipation.
Positioning	If you've ever entertained the idea of your team playing the Offside trap, you will know that Positioning is the main attribute you want your defenders to bring to the game. Combines well with Strength and Anticipation to create an air of solidity.
Teamwork	If you not the sort of person who likes to rely on one player to win matches, you'll need players with strong Teamwork to get your team gelling. High Teamwork throughout your team will see your side working their socks off for each other. Blends nicely with high Work Rate and Determination.
Work Rate	As mentioned, this is an attribute which compliments a high Teamwork ethic. If you like your team to Close Down your opponents, then a high Work Rate attribute throughout your midfield will be highly useful. Don't forget to ensure they've got a bit of Stamina though...

Physical

Acceleration	As a measure of how quickly a player can reach top speed, Acceleration is a must-have attribute for wingers and pacey attackers. You might also consider having defenders with good Acceleration if
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	you're faced by a team who are aiming to hit you on the break. Good Stamina is a must and a little bit of Work Rate won't go a miss either.
Agility	Agility is an attribute which is most necessary for players in top-flight football. You can get away with being a cumbersome lump in the lower leagues but the top divisions demand that even the central defenders have a bit of dexterity. Combined with Acceleration and Dribbling a high Agility rating can make for a great attacking footballer.
Balance	Although by the very nature of their profession all footballers could do with a bit of Balance, the ones who'll need it most are the ones who are going to be on the receiving end of a few tackles and kicks. You'll predominantly like your wingers and other attacking players to have high agility, coupled with good Agility, Dribbling or Strength to make it difficult for the opposition to knock them off the ball.
Jumping	An easy one this one. You've got to link it with a good Heading attribute and be sure if you ever want to play long ball or crossing-intensive tactics that your players are good at springing off the ground. If, say, your players are also high on Bravery and Aggression as well as Jumping, make sure you've got them putting in some Hard Tackling to really dominate the opposition.
Pace	Pace can actually be a bit of a misnomer so be careful. Your player might be lightening quick but if he can't do anything with the ball then he'll soon become a bit of a liability. Look to link Pace with Flair, Dribbling, Agility and of course Acceleration. Have your fastest players run from deep to really scare the opposition defence.
Stamina	The importance of Stamina cannot be underestimated – particularly if you play an effort-intensive style such as Closing Down, Gung-Ho or have players set to making lots of forward runs. You'll find that if your team has a low level of Stamina in general, you will tend to concede goals late in the game. You have been warned...
Strength	Strength is an important issue when challenging for the ball, so you'll be keen to have a fair few players in your side who can mix it when the going gets rough. Tackling, Jumping and Marking are augmented by Strength and you will find that stronger players don't give away fouls so often as

	they can generally muscle players off the ball instead of having to slide in.
--	---

Appendix B – Game Configuration

Configuration Files

There are several configuration files present in the game, these are generally either in a raw text format (open with notepad) or in a uni-code text format (open with Wordpad).

These files will allow configuration and alteration of several areas of the game. The format of these files is indicated below:

Init.cfg

This is a simple raw text file and is designed to contain a series of 'key words' which trigger special things happening within the game. The basic range of keywords available for use by the public is listed below:

"SUGAR_DADDY"

This option will give you a rich chairman who will support you financially with transfers to ease your rise (hopefully) to the pinnacle of the footballing world. Your very own little Roman! To enable it, type "SUGAR_DADDY" in inverted commas, followed by your club's long name e.g. "Watford"

"CLUB_DEBT"

This option will allow you to give a club a money loan (otherwise known as a debt which has to be paid back!). To enable it, type "CLUB_DEBT" in inverted commas, followed by the amount you wish to borrow, your club name and the number of months it should be paid back over. e.g. as follows:

"CLUB_DEBT" 2000000 "Watford" 24

New Game Config File

Using edt files, you also have the option to swap a team's division. An edt file is what is known as an Extra Data File. The most common use for this is in Scotland as people want to enable the Old Firm to compete in the English Premiership. Another option will be to boost a team's stature and finances to allow yourself to have plenty of money to spend if you wish. (call it cheating if you wish!). Bear in mind you could also enable the Sugar Daddy option (as detailed in the above init.cfg section).

To enable these options, all you have to do is create a normal text file with the extension '.edt'. Then add the following command to swap two teams divisions. Here's the command that needs to be added to the '.edt' file to enable the Old Firm to compete in the English Premiership. This 'Config File Feature' will only work when creating a new game and will not affect existing games.

```
"SWAP_TEAMS" "West Bromwich Albion" "Celtic"  
"SWAP_TEAMS" "Crystal Palace" "Rangers"
```

These two commands will basically put the Old Firm in the English Premiership and put West Brom and West Ham into the Scottish Premiership.

Another option you have, is too increase a teams stature and finances. This can be done using the same '.edt' file as above.

```
"BOOST_TEAM" "Watford" 20000000 7000 50000
```

The first figure represents the amount of money the club will start with. The second figure represents their world reputation and the third will dictate their stadium capacity. The above command example will give Watford £20 million pounds in transfer funds, increase their reputation to about the same level as Chelsea's (Max = 10000, e.g. Manchester United/Real Madrid) and change their stadium capacity to 50,000.

You can call your '.edt' file anything you like as long as it has the extension '.edt'. If you only have the one league running e.g.. English Premiership and you bring a team from an unselected nation into that league then only the famous players for that club will be present especially if running with a small database.

For the '.edt' to work it needs to be placed inside the 'data' folder off the 'FM ' location where you installed the game. Advanced users can create and use Custom Edit files (EDT and DDT files) to personalise their game. This can allow the User to start a game with specific settings without needing to modify the game database via an Editor. The Preferences screen picks up EDT and DDT files from the game's database directory (...\\Program Files\\SEGA\\Football Manager \\data\\db...) and allows the User to select which ones should be used when starting a new game.

EDT and DDT files are often made available for download by members of the FM Community or appear on the cover disc of the Official Football Manager magazine. Further information can be obtained via the FM Community at www.sigames.com.

Game Command Line Options

There are several command line options available to users of the game, these are listed below. To utilise command line options simply launch the game using "FM -<command line option>" from a command line (or the 'target' line in a shortcut).

--small_screen

This will force the game to run in 800x600 resolution. This mode is NOT recommended as the game is designed for a higher resolution and scroll-bars will be present upon many screens.

-windowed

This forces the game to start in 'windowed' mode regardless of the situation when the game was shutdown last.

-full_screen

This forces the game to start in 'full screen' mode regardless of the situation when the game was shutdown last.

Configuring Pictures within the game

Default Pictures

By default, FM displays a default background picture (plain grass). If you wish to display a different background picture then you will have to replace the current default.jpg background picture located in data/graphics/backgrounds/

Configuring Player Portraits and Club Logos.

To configure any player pictures or club logos, a config.xml file is required to 'map' the picture to the correct place so that the game knows it is there.

Here is an example of your typical config.xml file

```
<record>
  <!-- resource manager options -->

  <!-- dont preload anything in this folder -->
  <boolean id="preload" value="false"/>

  <!-- turn off auto mapping -->
  <boolean id="amap" value="false"/>

  <!-- logo mappings -->
  <!-- the following XML maps pictures inside this folder into other positions
       in the resource system, which allows this folder to be dropped into
       any place in the graphics folder and still have the game pick up the
       graphics files from the correct places
  -->

  <list id="maps">
    <record from="filename"
to="graphics/pictures/person/4354374/portrait"/>
  </list>
</record>
```

The main part that you need to concentrate on is the section which starts <record from.

It's what you put in here that will tell the game what the filename of your picture is and what unique id in the database to link it to.

There are different types of images you can link to objects, and depending on what you display in a config.xml file will depend what is shown in the game.

Here are examples of the various types you can have

Players

```
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/person/4354374/portrait"/>
```

filename is the name of the graphic and the number 4354374 is the unique id of the player you are linking the picture to. The other types are done in the same way.

Clubs

```
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/club/109210/logo"/>
```

Competitions

```
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/comp/12/logo"/>
```

Kits

```
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/team/1142/kits/home"/>  
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/team/1142/kits/away"/>  
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/team/1142/kits/third"/>
```

International Team Logos

```
<record from="filename" to="graphics/pictures/nation/784/logo"/>
```

Image Formats

The game recognises a number of image formats, including GIF, JPG and PNG. However, a current limitation is that only JPG files can be resized.

For this reason, any background images used must be in the JPG format.

Background images are automatically stretched or shrunk to fit the current size of the window, which is 1024 x 768 in full screen mode. If you resize the window, or if you use images that are not 1024 x 768, the stretching may make them appear distorted or blurred.

It's recommended that for player portraits, club logos, kits that you use PNG

Warning: Please be sure to make a back-up copy of the file in case you wish to return (without reinstalling) to the game's default player templates at a later date.

images as those are the best quality.

Appendix C - Common Problems and Solutions

The game is too slow

If you find the game is too slow when progressing then please try restarting using fewer leagues and a lower database setting. If the game still appears low when running only a single countries leagues consider switching that country into the 'background'.

Load/Save times are very slow

The game is very hard-disk intensive when loading and saving, this can make the process slow on systems which contain slow hard-drives. The main culprit for save game size is the statistic storage of past matches, this is dependant upon the size of database which is active within the game. If you find Load/Save times too slow please consider switching to a lower database setting.

Game CD is not detected

If you find you have problems with the games copy protection system then please ensure that you install the patch as this rectifies many such problems. If you still have problems after installing the game, then please visit the technical support forums at community.sigames.com where you should be able to get help.

Cannot Install Game Patch

If you have problems installing the patch for the game this is normally due to information being absent from your windows registry. To refresh this information store please uninstall and reinstall the game, this will fix the problem under normal circumstances.

If you are running a NOCD crack or wares version then these will be very unlikely to work with any official patches.