

The half-time orange

(October 2002)

This edition we're asking you to vote on the availability feature. What the majority want the majority get.

Availability

Although concern has been voiced about the availability feature by only a small percentage of managers we've decided to put it to the vote. So please fill in the section at the bottom of the sheet and send it to IOTP with your turnsheet.

There's 17,500 players on the database and over 36,000 on the larger SoccerAssociation database. Even with availability there are still thousands and thousands of players available, however some blinkered managers fail to see further than the one player they are currently interested in. Quite simply a player is either available or unavailable. If he's unavailable you can stick him on you watchlist and wait just like all the other managers, or you can look elsewhere. I can appreciate that if you manage one of the big clubs then there's a limited number of players who would interest you and this is further limited by availability, but that's the way it is. Whether his club in the game is Shamrock Rovers or if you think that Santos would sell him in real-life or if you reckon a player at Brescia would love to move back to Middlesbrough is irrelevant. The game is complicated enough without spending months working on an AI engine that could mimic the decisions of players. He's either unavailable or available, that's it.

Although the forum managers have a penchant for complaining without offering any feasible solutions, here are IOTP's suggestions to re-model the availability rule:

- 1) Shorten the length of time that a player is unavailable for. So basically he'll become available quicker.
- 2) State the number of turns before the player will become available on the watchlist.
- 3) All players rated below 50 are available
- 4) Decrease the unavailability of external players, so more external players will be available.

If you agree with the points above then tick the boxes on the form below and send it in, if you disagree put a cross and if you're not bothered then leave it blank. Send any other comments on a separate piece of paper as I'm particularly interested in hearing the comments from the non-forum majority.

Foreigner restrictions

Some managers have expressed a wish for the foreigner restrictions of "English Footie" to be scrapped. However they will remain the same. In real-life there isn't a massive influx of South American players because of work permits. As it's impossible to have work permits in IOTP (or dual-nationality, fake passports etc.) then the current rule is adequate. Note that you're allowed to sign any European player (not just any EU player).

Third clubs

Currently you're only allowed to manage two clubs per setup. Your first club costs £2.25 and your second £1.75. When IOTP started you could manage as many clubs as you wanted and after a while although full of managed clubs there were only a handful of actual managers in the top division due to the number of clubs each person managed. It's always better for a setup's competitiveness to have more managed teams but also to have more managers. Let me know your thoughts about allowing managers to take over a third club. If the response is decent we may be able to allow managers to manage a third club, provided that it's currently in the bottom division with a turn fee of £1.75. What we don't want to see is some managers getting an even bigger stranglehold on the top clubs and setting in motion the decline of the setup.

Availability poll

- 1) 2) 3) 4)

Comments:

New rulebook

The new rulebook is now available to all managers. To get your copy just order a T luxury on your turnsheet. The price for the next month has been reduced to cost price, that's 50p. If you've started playing in the last six months inform us on your turnsheet and we can refund the 50p. If your rulebook has the Nottingham address on the back page then it's the current edition. You can also download the new edition from the IOTP website, or e-mail webmaster@iotp.net and we can send it as an attachment. You'll need a PDF viewer to view and print it.

There's not a great deal of difference between the old and new editions of the rulebook, with the majority detailed in the intervening HTO's. But to summarise:

Availability – unmanaged/external players are either available or unavailable. Bids for unavailable players will be ignored.

Signing limit – you cannot sign players with a rating higher than your club's signing limit (shown on your squadlist). The signing limit is your first team average rating + 8.

Medical treatment – no longer exists.

Scouts – you can now do 6 per deal and they're added onto your watchlist

Keep a player on your watchlist – use transfer character K

Remove a player from your watchlist - use transfer character X

Youth promotion – if you have a youth player with a rating greater than the first-team average he'll automatically be promoted to the first-team.

Contracts – the full contract years left are now given rather than the season, so blank means out of contract at the end of the season, +1 means contract ends the following season etc.

Quick sale – prices are 0% if the player is eligible for the youth squad (25% otherwise)

IOTP website – use www.iotp.net rather than www.iotp.co.uk

Complex deals – instalments can't be used for loan players.

Stadium costs – increased

Size of real-life club – influence decreased

SoccerAssociation.com

As many of you are aware SoccerAssociation.com is now no longer free access. Basically, due to the cost of running the website (server, wages, books/mags, etc.) and the measly advertising revenue generated (despite over 1m impressions in August!) we had to either close it or to change it to a subscriber website. Several IOTP users currently use it for their research. The subscription cost is £5.99 per quarter, which is less than 50p a week, and provides you with information unavailable elsewhere. The uptake has been disappointing, it's amazing how many e-mails I received from "your most loyal customers" saying that they'd never visit again! (Greeeaaattt! Saves some bandwidth!) Anyway, the revenue generated easily surpasses the advertising revenue (although not yet near break even) and many clubs have subscribed (Rapid, FK Austria, B.Mgladbach, TSV 1860, Birmingham, Stoke, Utrecht etc.) plus many broadcasters and media players (L'Equipe, Gazzetta dello Sport, Eurosport, UEFA, Diario As etc.), and of course agents and fans. So please visit soccerassociation.com and sign-up via our secure subscription process. If it's good enough for football professionals it's 50p a week well spent.

Quiz

- 1) Which manager holds the record for the longest spell at a Bundesliga club?
- 2) What is Ole Gunnar Solskjaer football-related allergy?
- 3) What foreign nationality was most represented in Brasileirao 2001?
- 4) Which club did Valencia sign Pablo Aimar from?
- 5) Which club does Michael Laudrup currently manage?

All correct entries drawn out of me bobble hat. E&OE. Prize is £20 worth of IOTP credit.