

WEAR DOWN SOUTH



We're Back!

Official Magazine of the
Sunderland Supporters' Association
(London and Southern England Branch)

2025-2026 Issue One

SAFCSA (London & Southern England Branch)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Matthew Foreman	Chair	07557 951772
Richie Cockton	Secretary	07969 615031
Andrew Jordan	Treasurer	07423294242
Bernie Hutchinson	Membership	07586 044238
Andy McIntosh	Away Tickets	07739 315182
Eileen Sproates	Newsletter	07849 269678
Nick Swanson	Merchandise	07568 069554
Ben Littledyke	Sports Secretary	07501 076770
Sam Andrews	Website/Data Protection	07900 667638
Jacob Kirkbride	Social Media	07429 382465
Ian Todd		020-8847 2905

Sports Team Captains

Richie Cockton	Darts	darts@weardownsouth.com 07969 615031
Ian Curry	Pool	020 8337 5207
Matthew Woolston	Cricket	07795-251880
John McGirr	Cricket Fixtures	020-8301 0738
Duncan Hooper	Quiz	07808 084702
Ben Littledyke	Football	07501 076770
Kathryn Littledyke	Netball	07969 576624

London Branch Website: www.weardownsouth.com

Facebook : www.facebook.com/SAFCSALondon

Twitter/X : www.x.com/SAFCSALondon or @SAFCSALondon

Thanks to all those who contributed to this edition of the newsletter. All contributions for the next issue should be sent to : Eileen Sproates, 49 Fassett Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2TE or emailed to eileensproates@aol.com

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of Sunderland AFC Supporters' Association.

Wear Down South

Season 2025/2026 – Issue One

Editor's Bit

Well this is canny. At time of writing, we're 4th in the Premier League.

By the time this WDS reaches you though, we've probably played Liverpool and Man City, so we may have slipped down the table a bit – expected, because, after all, *'we haven't played anyone yet'*.

Back in June I asked Co-Pilot, my new AI friend, about our prospects for this season. This is what he replied – very prophetic:

"..Sunderland's survival would depend on strategic planning, tactical execution, and a touch of fortune. A cohesive team effort, backed by strong managerial guidance and fan dedication, could give them the resilience needed to achieve this goal."

(Update: when I asked just him (16th November) where we would finish in the Premier League, this is what he told me:

"As of now, Sunderland are not competing in the Premier League; they currently play in the EFL Championship, which is the second tier of English football."

Huh? He is no longer my friend.)

Anyway, that Dan Ballard. My mam always used to say, "Eee, that Burt Lancaster – he taks his shirt off every time he's on!" I'm beginning to think the same way about Dan Ballard, every time he scores. Long may it be.

With that little kissscurl, the muscles, wide jaw and the angelic features, I swear at some point Dan nips into a phone box and comes out wearing a cape and tights before going off save the world.

And that Granit. Was'er a man more suitably named?

***Happy days
Eileen***

Next issue whenever-ish - All contributions are always very welcome - contributions/ideas are welcome at any time, no need to wait for me to send out a call to arms as I file everything away for the next issue...

Membership Matters

Not much to report from me I'm afraid except to say that we continue to attract lots of fans joining the branch online. We now have about 450 members but if you include those on family memberships the figure is closer to 690.

The most common question I'm asked by those joining is about the availability of tickets for matches. I have to be honest here and point out that despite our ticket officer Andy's best efforts it is getting increasingly difficult to get tickets for games in London and the SE.

Anyway, the following have joined since the last edition of WDS:

Ian Alderson, Robert Alderson, Jake Allen, Will Allen, Jonny Armstrong, Jane Bagshaw, Jonathan Baldwin, Mark Baverstock, Ryan Blackwell, Michi Blickenstorfer, Freddie Bonnett, Mollie Bonnett, Paul Bonnett, Tony Bonnett, Alex Book, Rosie Bridger, Andrew Brotherson,

Jax Cain, Neil Cain, Sam Cain, William Calderbank, Lewis Carney, Daniel Cavanagh, Luca Citrone, Dougie Critchley, Katie Crooks, Jonny Crosby, James Davies, Alfie Davis, James Davis, Lauren Dean, Larysa Dlaboha, Theo Dlaboha-Morrison, Ted Drewett, Graeme Dutton, Sam Eccles, Ronald Edwards, Chris Elkins, Laura Ellwood, William Everett,

Johanna Farnan, Malcolm Farnan, Ray Farnan, Joseph Fawdon, Elio Fernandes, Kristian Foreman, Rory Foster, Pauline Gardiner, Tim Gillespie, James Graham, Chris Green, Robert Green, Louis Gregory, Mark Haines, Sam Hall, Greg Halliday, Paul Halstead, Paul Hardy, John Hearne, Richard Hobden, Eloise Hooper, Scott Huntley,

Malcolm Johnston, Arun Leo Joshi-Welton, Anthony Jukes, Sharon Jukes, David Kilbourn, Mark Kilcran, Daniel Lambton, Nigel Large, Luke Lawrence. David Littlefair, David Mackeith, Carol Mayne, Sean McAninly, Patrick McCann, Tessa McCarthy, James McDonald, Dave McDonough, Stephen McDonough, Andy Mckenzie, Clare Mckenzie, Leo Mckenzie, Oscar Mckenzie, Andrew McManus,

Ollie Miller, Tom Miller, Ed Nicholson, Andrew Norman, Shannon OFlynn, Jack Oliver, Alex Palmer, Tommy Parsons, Charlotte Passmore, Alex Peacock, Elizabeth Peacock, Kevin Peacock, Linda Peacock, Oliver Peacock, Matthew Pearson, Dan Phillips, Susan Philpott, Dan Priestley, Thomas Proud Jnr, Billy Proudlock, Simon Quantrill, Haizea Quantrill-Berjon, Izar Quantrill-Berjon, Mike Quinn,

Josiah Rabone, Daniel Ragg, Derek Ramsden, Liam Ramsden, Alexandra Robson, Andy Robson, David Robson, James Robson, Christina Rose, Bob Rutter, Daniel Skilbeck, Fiona Smark, John Stead,

George Tansey, Jonathan Taylor, Ethan Thoburn, George Trotter, Adam Turns, Finlay Turpin, Gareth Turpin, Nathan Upton, Matthew Vickers, Euan Wales, Martin Wales, Ben Waters, Michael Waters, David Watson, Finley Watson, Samuel Watson, Sian Watson, Mark Wesley, Greg Wilcox, Rohan Wilkin, Justine Williams, Sam Willis, Scott Wilson and Kerry Winterton.

Bernie Hutchinson
Membership Secretary
bernie.hutchinson@hotmail.com

Chairman's Chatter

Hi everyone,

At the time of writing, I'm still slightly delirious (and a bit hungover) from Chelsea — and we're 4th in the league! The rollercoaster that is Sunderland AFC shows no signs of slowing down. It's been a real pleasure watching this team grow: a blend of League One prodigies and European elites. Who'd have thought that, just a couple of years on from Accrington and co.?

Isidor, Mayenda, Xhaka, Mukiele, Hume, Alderete — all already absolute heroes, and that's just to name a few.

It's been brilliant seeing so many of you at games recently, and a huge welcome to all our new members. Please keep chatting and saying hello — it really makes a difference. We're hoping to organise more branch socials and events soon, especially with plenty of games coming up down south. The first few weeks of the new year alone include away days at Spurs, Brentford, West Ham and Arsenal. We're absolutely spoilt!

Even if you don't manage to bag one of the increasingly golden tickets, feel free to join in the pre-match pubs — everyone's welcome.

See you soon, and Ha'way the Lads!

***All the best,
Matty Foreman
Branch Chair***



Our Chairman at Chelsea





***Post-Chelsea (l-r):
Andrew Ridley, Nick Swanson, Matty Foreman, Dan Stockdale.***



Chelsea Away: 2-1

Among the many indignities inflicted on Sunderland fans in our last Premier League campaign almost a decade ago, one that sometimes slips under the radar is the farcical final day defeat at Stamford Bridge. Future Mag and gobshite Javier Manquillo actually gave us an unlikely lead, but what followed epitomised the cowardice and lack of self-respect that underlined the club at the time.

Not only did we crumble on the pitch, but we went along with Chelsea's pre-rehearsed farewell ceremony for John Terry, deliberately conceding a throw-in on 26 minutes so he could be substituted at the same time as his shirt number. I feel ashamed just typing that out.

Back in the Roaring 2020s, and this current iteration of Sunderland are not just a different beast but another species entirely. We head to West London level on points with the World Champions (even if that trophy is about as dubious as Donald Trump's bid for the Nobel Peace Prize.) Despite having a squad numbering about sixty, the home side were bereft of the talismanic Cole Palmer, who falls into the category of players I love watching against everyone else but would hate to see them play against my own team.



The men from the King's Road can be rather hit and miss, and the pressure had been lifted somewhat from Sunderland's shoulders by the win over Wolves, so we headed into this fixture with a quiet optimism that something could be on the cards.

Despite having a London-based 3pm kick off, I turned down the chance to play for my Saturday morning 11-a-side team in favour of joining the rest of the London branch early doors at the pub. We've been away from the Premier League far too long for me to be passing up the pre-match festivities in favour of running around a muddy field in Hackney. What's more, we owed it to our fellow supporters braving the long journey from the Motherland to milk this away day for all it was worth.

The charming environs of Putney made an ideal starting point, with more overpriced but homely boozers than you can shake a stick at. Just as we were settling in at the fantastic Eight Bells, we were told that we'd have to move on before midday as the bar was to be made 'Home Fans Only'. I'm not sure why this was deemed necessary as there were zero issues with the home fans all day, but we moved on up the Fulham Road towards Stamford Bridge, after a pitstop at the Durell Arms.

The only blemish on the day was the fact my away ticket hadn't arrived in the post, so there was a half-hour wait behind a number of confused-looking tourist home fans to actually gain entry, a delay which saw me miss Garnacho's opener and smug, premature celebration. Probably a blessing in disguise, really.

Any fears that we might capitulate after the early set-back were put to bed relatively quickly, as Sunderland recovered admirably to stifle the home side and look to get back into the game. One underrated aspect of watching this team is the fact that even a throw-in feels like a cause for excitement. While we're hardly alone in having a long-throw specialist, it remains a dangerous weapon when employed cleverly, as it was when Isidor prodded home Traore's volley to spark jubilation in the away end.

The second half saw a more conservative approach by Sunderland, understandable given that even a point from Stamford Bridge would be considered an excellent result, but the potential for a devastating moment is always there with this team. Time seemed to slow down as Brobbey held off two Chelsea defenders to roll it across for Talbi to curve home with aplomb, and the wild berserker-like celebrations that followed were a throwback to the ecstasy we felt in our three play-off games last season.

This result is one that will make the wider football community sit up and take notice. The list of caveats for the naysayers is growing shorter, and more and more pundits and rival fans are being forced to admit that Sunderland are just a well-run, professional outfit these days, that are worthy of more respect than we've been afforded so far.

Not that anyone was bothered as we filtered out of Stamford Bridge to continue our celebrations into the night. Our unbeaten away run against London sides now stretches all the way back to May 2018, a trend which we'll hope to continue in our numerous further games in the capital in the second half of the season.

Ben Littledyke



Chelsea website appears to take dig at Sunderland tactics

Chelsea's official website seemed to take a thinly veiled swipe at Sunderland after their **Premier League** defeat at Stamford Bridge on Saturday. In their post-match report, the London club suggested that Sunderland's defensive setup frustrated their attacking rhythm, writing that the Black Cats "defended with all 11 players within 30 yards of their own goal."

The line, interpreted by many as a subtle criticism of Régis Le Bris' tactical approach, claimed: "Chelsea were on top and dominant for much of this game, but Sunderland's stubborn habit of defending with all 11 players within 30 yards of their own goal repeatedly crowded us out of the box before we could pull the trigger or create space for a clear chance."

Sunderland Echo, 28th October



Wilson scores at Chelsea. It made him "really 'appy"

West Ham, Brentford, Aston Villa:



The Letters Page

Hi, Eileen:

What a wonderful win to start the season! After the pessimistic pundits and our own misgivings about how RLB could mould a team from so many new players.

Top of the League

My nephew David is a lifelong supporter of Spurs, and we maintain a lively transatlantic chat about the joys and sorrows of our two clubs. So imagine our joy at 5:20 UK time on Saturday, August 16, 2025, to see BOTH of our teams at the top of the Premier League. Confounding the naysayers and the gloom merchants!

Of course, I was the more delighted ... we came out on top ... alphabetically.

Deep down, we knew that this euphoria could not last ... and indeed within 2 hours Man City had won 0-4 to claim top spot. But with this wonderful start, we'll be a contender!

Richard Ingman

[As of 9th November 2025, going into the international break, Richard, we are 4th in the table. And 1 point ahead of Spurs. Just sayin' like. – Ed.]

Hi Eileen,

I've attached a photo of me and my son Nathan, both Branch members and attend home and away as often as possible.

Living in E13, I've saved Nathan from life as a Hammer. The branch has been a massive part of that. He's a passionate Sunderland supporter from League One days thanks to community and access to away tickets.

Nathan is taking his GCSEs now, and has painted his "Leavers' Shirt" with the iconic image of Wilson and the corner flag after beating the Smoggies. It's evidence of the great work the Branch does in saving poor people unfortunate enough to be born outside Sunderland.

We're part of a crack crew converting Cockneys from West Ham (or Man City 🤪) over to the Black Cats.

Mark Tucknutt



Nathan's Leaving Shirt



*and flashbacks to the
Playoff Final
Mark Tucknutt*







Here's a photo of the Ireland's Four Courts pub in Arlington Virginia.

Shout out to Colin in the North American Supporters Association who recommended a place where I could catch the Arsenal game while on a work trip.

We were vastly outnumbered by Arsenal fans (4 of us vs 50+ of them) but we were much the happier at full time. The people around me even said congrats and how nice it was to have us back in the Prem.

Emma Revell

Name that Hair

If your eyes aren't great these days, here's a quick test to help you identify our players from a distance - just by their hairdo's.

Answers on p.46

1		2	
3		4	
5		6	
7		8	
9		10	
11		12	
13		14	

11 YEARS OF SOUTHWARK BREWING COMPANY

I was asked to write something for the newsletter to mark the 10th anniversary of our branch HQ, the **Southwark Brewery**. Unfortunately due to how busy (forgetful / lazy) I've been, the brewery is now well into its 11th year...

Set up in 2014 by friends, Sunderland fans and prominent members of the SAFCSA London Branch for many years – **Peter Jackson and Andy Nichol** - the Brewery has been the headquarters for our branch ever since. The Brewery was also largely funded by various branch members buying shares at its launch.

It has been the venue for some of our most memorable social events such as the recent evening with Bob Murray and screenings of some excellent SAFC matches. It was probably the only place in London to screen Sunderland matches during our league 1 campaigns - not being amongst friends with a pint in hand would've tipped me into despair as I watched Chris Maguire score a hat trick against us for Lincoln on a Tuesday night in January 2022.

Andy has since moved back home to Sunderland but Jacko has kept the brewery very much at the forefront of the branch's activities, with the pool team playing home games there, the odd darts / quiz team appearances, match screenings and various branch social events. It's also one of our go-to pre / post match meeting places for London based SAFC fixtures.

The Brewery also helped a lot of us survive lockdown with 'Danny Driver' delivering weekly beer supplies to our homes but it's nice to be able to visit in person again and be greeted by young Luis the bar manager who has a Millwall season ticket but is a secret Sunderland fan.

The delivery service is still available online and the Brewery tap-room is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 17:00 – 22:00, Saturday 12:00 – 19:00 and Sunday 12:00 – 17:00.

You can find it at 46 Druid Street, SE1 2EZ (five minutes' walk from London Bridge station).

You'll know you're in the right place when you see the Sunderland crest on the big fermenter at the end of the bar.

Who knows what the next 10 or 11 years may bring. Champions League SAFC match screenings? Perhaps. But definitely no Chris Maguire goals against us on the screen.

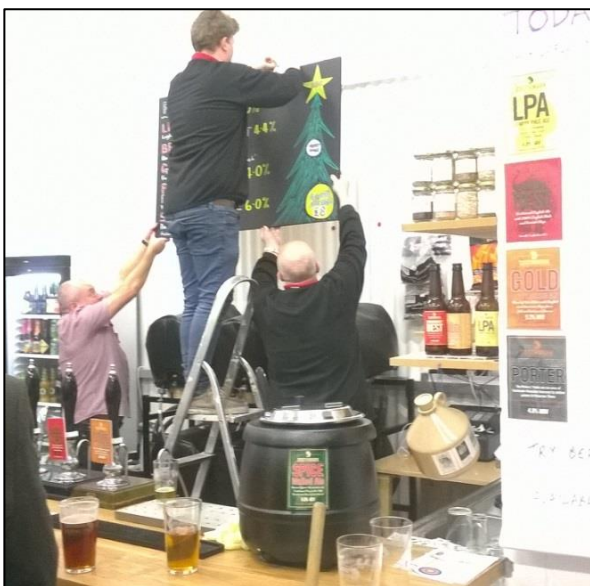
Andy McIntosh





Jacko

...and the works...





Sunlund at the Brewery



We won the Cup!

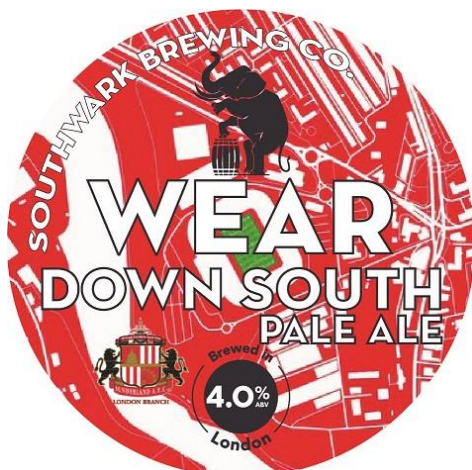
Our London Branch Quiz Team recently won the David (Jock) Clarke Memorial Cup at the Brewery



(l-r: Andy Guthrie, Thomas Ruxton, Richie Cockton, Duncan Hooper, Tom Ruxton - and Jacko in the background!)

=====

This is not just a beer...it's a Wear Down South beer



Wear Down South Pale Ale - to be found in the taproom of the Southwark Brewery...and hopefully soon even available in Sunderland!

Watch this space...

We won the Cup - 1937



Gordon Lilley does photography work and has worked on some of the pictures from 1937 – above, the Presentation to George VI, and Carter scores.

[Shame WDS is in black and white – the coloured versions are amazing – Ed.]

YOUR 1937 QUIZ

From Jeff Scott

Outside the stadium for the 1937 Cup Final at Wembley - Sunderland vs. Preston North End

- how many cars were there?
- how many motorcycles?
- how many coaches?

Answers on p.32

Facts come from 'Wembley presents 25 Years of Sport' by Tom Morgan (published 1948) and were revealed by Peter Oakes in his Speedway Star column dated 25.10.25

Branch Football Team – thriving at our new home

After a successful few years at Market Road, the Sunderland London Branch football team was facing something of a rut in the summer, with a number of key players no longer available and waning enthusiasm for competing in the same league we'd featured in since March 2023.

We made the difficult decision to withdraw from that league in search of pastures new, a move which we hoped would help bring the team back to its roots as a vehicle for SAFC fans to socialise with fellow supporters in the capital.

After a long hiatus, we finally found a new home in the shape of a Monday night 6-a-side league in Old Street. In our first game it quickly became apparent that new league would be more intense and frantic, with the smaller pitch lending itself to end-to-end clashes. A 4-4 draw was an encouraging start, and we advertised the return of the team on the branch social media.



No-one could've predicted the influx of new recruits that followed. Perhaps it's a result of the club's promotion to the Premier League prompting a wave of fresh enthusiasm for all things SAFC, but we were able to welcome no fewer than 15 new members to the team (and by extension, to the branch). Since then we've put together an impressive run of wins, including victory over a team of Newcastle fans, and the squad is going from strength to strength.



Anyone keen to get involved should contact Sports Secretary Ben Littledyke on 07501 076 770.

=====

A proud Breton who says he feels an affinity with Sunderland's working-class roots, he has a doctorate in physiology and biomechanics and made his name in academy and youth development work.

He says: 'As a coach you do not want to be the main man. That is not my main purpose. I want to give knowledge, power and responsibility to the squad. We have players on the pitch to manage micro situations.'

RLB, Observer 9th November

Post Arsenal Press Conference

Interviewer: *"Speaking of home comforts, the advertising hoardings seemed to be a little closer to the pitch. Do you know anything about that?"*

RLB: *"Are you sure?"*

Interviewer: *"They seemed to be, yeah. Fair Play. Did you know anything about that?"*

RLB: *"No - it might have been the wind?"*

BIG SPENDERS - Then and Now.

I was as delighted as any Sunderland fan by our Play-Off Final win v Sheffield United (24.05.25). However, I'm sure I wasn't the only one who soon started worrying about our chances of survival in the Premier League. Indeed, several football pundits had us down as favourites for relegation. Further evidence was that in the previous two seasons all three teams promoted to the Premier had come straight back down.

Then came the amazing spending spree by KLD and Mr. Speakman. As I write this in early August, SAFC have spent almost £140 MILLION on new players. (+) This has not only boosted the morale of our fans but also raised surprised eyebrows amongst even the most hardened pundits.

All this took me back to the early 1950s at Roker Park. Sunderland were then one of the top teams in England and had never been relegated since joining the Football League in 1890. Already noted as big spenders, in June 1953 they amazed the football world by buying three players - left-wing Billy Elliott, goalie Jimmy Cowan and centre-half Ray Daniel - for a total layout of about £70,000. The press dubbed us the Bank of England team. This was not in a complimentary way as such an amount of cash for players was seen as excessive by many.

The following season, 1953-54, Sunderland bought four more players, bringing our total transfer spend in less than a year to over £110,000, at that time an unprecedented sum. However, big money does not necessarily bring success. Sunderland played poorly most of the time, a surprising exception being our two big wins v Arsenal, 7-1 at home and 4-1 away. We finished 18th out of 22 clubs in Division 1 (the top League) and conceded 89 goals in 42 matches.

The 1954-55 season saw a big improvement, with Sunderland finishing 4th in the League and reaching the FA Cup semi-final. However, after that the decline in form continued and Sunderland suffered one major blow followed by a catastrophic one.

The maximum wage in 1955 was £15 per week. It was fairly well known that some clubs made "under the counter" payments to top up the pay of their star players. Yet it was Sunderland who became the scapegoats. On April 10, 1957, a joint FA and Football League Commission suspended our Chairman, Mr Ditchburn, three other Board members and five of our players for making or receiving illegal payments. In addition, the club was fined £5,000. (*) This caused a sensation in the football world. Just over a year later, our continued poor form on the pitch led to Sunderland being relegated for the first time in its history.

(+) According to the Sunderland Echo of 02.09.25, Sunderland spent a total of £167.1 Million on players by the end of August, 2025.

(*) The details of this Commission's decisions are taken from Arthur Appleton's Hotbed Of Soccer.

P.S. As I re-read the above on 27.10.2025, Sunderland sit in 4th position in the Premier League. Even Alan Shearer has been forced to sing our praises!

Roger Mason

Martin O'Neil at the Harrogate Literature Festival 19th October.

Martin O'Neil was at the Festival promoting his new book **The Changing Game**, so I bought a ticket and popped along to hear what he had to say. There were a couple of hundred in attendance. When the host got round to mentioning his managerial stint at Sunderland it brought a few cheers from the few Mackems in the audience. Below are some of his comments about his time with us:

I got sacked after 31 games and we had 31 points...ridiculous...Ellis Short panicked. I believe to this day we would have got the points to stay up.

They sack me for Paulo di Canio...not a bad footballer but a bang average manager.

Di Canio said the team weren't fit!

However, he did beat Newcastle which is always nice to do...but Di Canio was an absolute T...T.

Once Ellis Short left Sunderland I started to support them again.

Sunderland are doing great at the moment...they just need to stay up!

MON was very funny, brilliant to hear him talk about playing for Brian Clough and having Keane as his assistant when he managed the Republic of Ireland. He had time for everyone at end chatting and signing his book. He came across really well.

Ros Potts





Why Sunderland's success matters for the Premier League at large

Recent history has seen all three sides promoted from the Championship be relegated the same season – Régis Le Bris's side could break the spell.

Last season, all three promoted sides in the Premier League were relegated. The season before that, all three promoted sides were relegated. The fear was that the gulf between the Premier League and Championship had become too big, with the increasing stratification of the English game essentially making it impossible for the promoted sides to survive, much less to thrive.

It's a self-perpetuating issue; the longer the other 17 remain in the Premier League, fattened on television rights, the harder it will be for teams coming up to make an impression.

There was a need for the promoted sides to put up a better fight than they managed last season when, between them, Leicester, Ipswich and Southampton collected just 59 points. Nine games into this season, not quite a quarter of the way through, Sunderland, Leeds and Burnley already have 38 points between them. None of the three are currently in the relegation zone. But most striking have been the performances of Sunderland, who have taken 17 points already and, to widespread surprise, lie fourth in the table.

Their fixture list, it should be said, has been kind. Looking at the table on Saturday morning, Sunderland had faced only one side in the top half. Starting with a home game against West Ham was about as gentle as introductions come. They faced Nottingham Forest when they were locked in the strange Ange Postecoglou slump, and Aston Villa when they were still in their early-season funk. They've also beaten Brentford and Wolves at home.

Defeat at Manchester United before the international break suggested they might struggle against better opponents, which was why Saturday's game at Chelsea was so important. Could they win away? Could they challenge the elite? Was their positive start an illusion created by the fixture list?

As they went 1-0 down inside four minutes, the signs were not good. But they battled back, equalized midway through the half and won it with a classic counterattack in injury-time. A smash-and-grab? Not really: Sunderland had the better xG.

Against Villa when the left-back Reinildo was sent off and against United having gone 2-0 down, Sunderland had switched to three at the back. At Stamford Bridge,

manager Régis Le Bris started with a 5-4-1, despite the injury to centre-back Omar Alderete, who has been perhaps their greatest triumph of recruitment, a tough but classy ball-playing centre-back discovered at Getafe. That meant Dan Ballard in the middle with Nordi Mukiele to his right (it's frankly inexplicable that a central defender of such quality joined Sunderland from Paris Saint-Germain for just £9.5m (\$12.6m) plus £2.5m (\$3.3m) in potential add-ons) and the on-loan Lutsharel Geertruida to his left. Geertruida was a full-back in Arne Slot's title-winning Feyenoord side in the Netherlands, and until Saturday had played in midfield for Sunderland.

Having two players so comfortable on the ball in the back three allowed them to step up and form an extra man in midfield where necessary. The shape was 5-4-1, which Chelsea found extremely hard to break down, but it wasn't a passive system. Rather, when Sunderland chose to press they did so with ferocious conviction, inspired by Noah Sadiki, whose remarkable stamina has drawn comparison with N'Golo Kanté. In a young side, midfielder Granit Xhaka has emerged as a real leader, a player of quality and incisiveness but also steel.

Sunderland have benefited, clearly, from spending £160m (\$213m) on 13 permanent signings in the summer, although they also raised £45m (\$60m) in sales, most notably Jobe Bellingham to Borussia Dortmund. But they have spent wisely. Last season, as he oversaw the second part of Southampton's slide back into the Championship, Ivan Jurić observed that he had expected his players to be inferior technically and tactically, but he had been taken aback by how they had been physically overwhelmed. Sunderland seem to have been very aware of the potential issue, signing only notably powerful players.

But that's not to suggest they are only a physical side. Their preference, as it was in most of their better performances last season, is to sit deep, absorb pressure and play on the break. There is a clear plan and it says much for both the recruitment and Le Bris's coaching that there has been so little apparent disruption despite the arrival of the wave of new signings.

It's extremely unlikely that Sunderland will remain fourth. Their fixture list in the second half of the first half of the season is much harder than in the first, they will lose perhaps as seven players to the Africa Cup of Nations and there probably will be some sort of regression to the mean. Realistically, though, they are probably only six wins from safety and that was always the primary goal – one that, even amid the euphoria of the playoff final win over Sheffield United in May, few fans seemed to believe possible.

That's not just good for Sunderland, but also for English football. After two seasons in which the promoted sides have barely even made up the numbers, reigniting the idea that a side can come up and actually have fun is vital for the pyramid.

**Jonathan Wilson,
Guardian, 27 Oct 2025**



Safc till I die · Follow

2h · 🌐



🗣️ Wilson Isidor on his newly born daughter: "I bring a lot of Sunderland things home for her. She has a Sunderland teddy, Sunderland clothes - everything! She's a Mackem, of course!"

[Andy Sixsmith - BBC Sport]



Wilson's scores the last-minute winner against Brentford –

on his birthday, and the day after the birth of his daughter

WOMEN BLACKCATS

I write this on return from two consecutive home defeats by the Ladies, albeit one was against the team currently in second place in the table. So, it is fair, coupled with elimination from the League Cup, to say that the team is experiencing a mixed season. However, always looking on the bright side and with 14 games still to play, there are this season two automatic (and one via a play-off) promotion places available to progress to the top tier. "Till the end!"

Close season recruitment was ambitious, Head Coach Mel Reay claiming it was the most talented squad she's had to fashion towards success. With most of the 24/25 squad still available, the aim was to boost its potential by the addition of players with international pedigree and maturity and/or experience of playing in the Women's Super League.

Republic of Ireland's goalkeeper Grace Moloney and Wales centre back Rhiannon (Razza) Roberts were perhaps the most eye-catching names but that is not to diminish the potential offered by permanent additions Izzy Atkinson (from Crystal Palace), Under-19 Lioness Reanna Blades, Jamie Finn (from Birmingham City), Hannah Greenwood (from our Tyneside neighbours), and loanees Keira Barry and Evie Rabjohn (from Manchester United) and Tara O'Hanlon (from Manchester City).

Perhaps last season's signing Marissa (Maz) Sheva had some influence here since (along with Moloney) Atkinson and Finn are also Irish internationals??

As with the men's team, new players raise competition for established ones. So there will be a mix of frustration and determination for the likes of Jessica Brown, Louise Griffiths, Demi Lambourne, and Libby McInnes who are no longer getting as much game time as they enjoyed in the past.

On the positive side it has been great to see Katy Watson now seemingly establishing herself as a regular starter and the return from long-term injury of striker Eleanor Dale. Many of the squad (particularly Katie Kitching representing New Zealand) have continued to clock up the air miles represent their countries but a particular mention is deserved here to Niyah Dunbar on her first call-up, and appearances, for the England Under-19s in their UEFA Championship qualifiers.

Let's hope for a surge in results as the season progresses so that the next time we have the opportunity to support the team locally (on 15th March against Charlton Athletic) there is push for promotion well under way!

Haway the Ladies!
Ian Todd

=====

Snobs hate Long Throws

...says Brentford head coach Keith Andrews. He suggested that they are to blame for football lawmakers potentially cracking down on time-wasting from throw-ins.

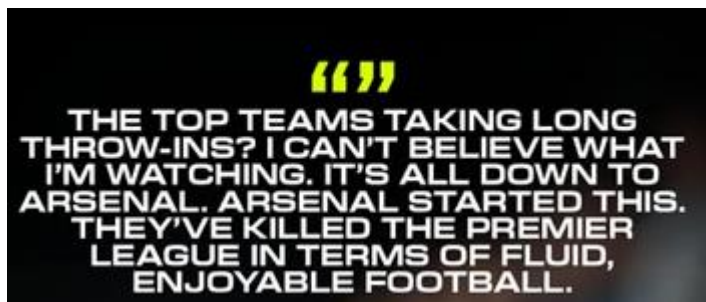
According to Opta, Brentford take an average of 25 seconds per throw- which works out at eight minutes per game

"Maybe teams that can't deal with it don't like it," says Andrews. "I feel like there's a little bit of snobbery in the game around this."

This season Ifab introduced a rule that goalkeepers would concede a corner if they held the ball for longer than 8 seconds.

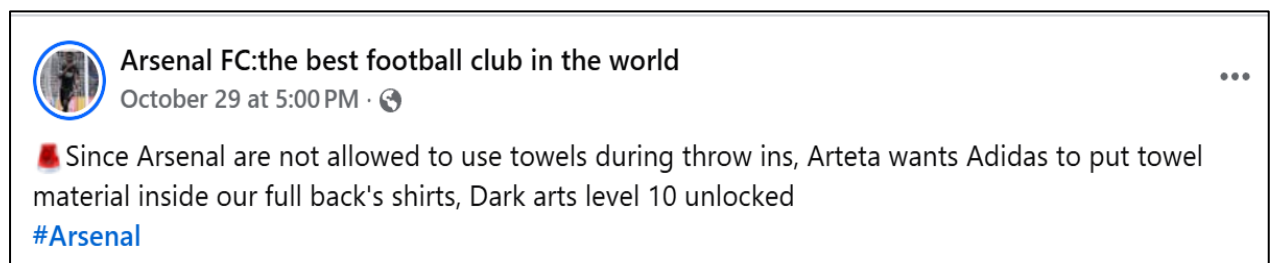
The amount of time the ball is in play has fallen in the early stages of this season. In the first 40 games, the ball was in play on average of 54 minutes 21 seconds per match, down more than 2 minutes from the same period last year.*

Times, 1st November



Jamie O'Hara, Sportbible

Arsenal were not allowed to use a towel at the Landfill – they didn't bring their own...



Nordi, Our secret weapon.

(Remember Rory Delap? He only started doing it after he left us for Stoke!)

** The Arsenal game lasted 106min 20sec, but the ball was only in play for less than half that, 51min 14sec.*

Post

Statman Dave
@StatmanDave

Nordi Mukiele vs. Wolves:

10/11 aerial duels won
8 clearances
7 recoveries
5/7 ground duels won
2/3 tackles won
2/2 dribbles completed
1 interception
1 goal

Monstrous performance. 🍌



How the season started – Sunderland 3 – West Ham 0

Ex-Lads Watch

Quote from Danny Welbeck who recently scored both goals in Brighton's 2-1 win against the Mags: *"Their [Newcastle's] fans have a little bit of banter with me during games. I've got a lot of love for the Stadium of Light and **Sunderland** as well. They played a massive part in my development as a youngster coming through."*

Back in March, after scoring the extra time winner to knock the Mags out of the FA Cup, he said going down the tunnel at the landfill: *"Someone giving me stick there. Doesn't know I'm a Mackem at heart."*



Danny for England!

Another Mags slayer, **Fabio Borini**, who scored THAT late goal in one of our many 2-1 victories against the Mags, turned up and was mobbed by the crowd at the recent Man U away game. In October 2013, he shot from 20 yards out to win the Derby at the SOL. In 2014 he scored a penalty against that lot at the landfill, and also gave us an early lead in the 2014 League Cup final at Wembley against Man City (we eventually lost 3-1).



"I do love derby games. They are different. Managers will say it's just another game. No, it's not. It's not another game. It starts a week early. Those games, they start a week, if not a couple of weeks early.. It's not the week of the derby. So the build-up is a lot bigger."

Echo, 9th October

"A special night back at the Stadium of Light. Fifteen years as a kid here, first time back as an Everton player, proud to share it with my lad. Football comes full circle."

Jordan Pickford, post 1-1 Everton game

"I had an amazing time at Sunderland...the fanbase is incredible. I have hundreds of packets of Revels sweets in my garage from Sunderland supporters, people who care about some guy who would eat a packet of them when he was done his press conference at their club."

Tony Mowbray, Times, 5th April



May 2012- Sunderland fans do the Poznan in front of Man U fans at the SOL, when Sergio Aguera scores a last minute goal to steal the title for City.

Wayne Rooney, 2012:

"When the final whistle went, we didn't really know what the score at City was. But then we heard the Sunderland fans cheering. It was sad to see that because they should be supporting their own team really. They didn't have the best of seasons so for them to be cheering like that was sad. It was something myself and a lot of the players won't forget."

"I just want to play against Sunderland. When the fixtures come out I look for three games – City, Liverpool and Everton. This time I checked the Sunderland game. If there is one team that I want to beat this season it will be Sunderland."

Wayne Rooney, MOTD, August 2025, after our 3-0 win vs West Ham.

"I think with the promoted teams, they're all doing ok, so I think it'll be a long season for them, and I've got worries that they could go down."

Shearer just sat there.

=====

Answers from p.19

Cars:	1540
Motorcycles:	26
Coaches:	513

(for comparison, at the speedway World Final held at Wembley in 1937 there were 2,531 cars, 2,246 motorcycles and 119 coaches - as an fyi, at the time, 14 of the 18 riders competing in this World Final rode for London speedway clubs)

(MORE) RANDOM REFLECTIONS

In the similar piece I wrote for the WDS Promotion Special I said “we have a very interesting summer (and late August) ahead of us”. Boy, oh Boy, wasn’t it?

Whilst there was a general acceptance our squad would need strengthening to compete in the Premier League, I haven’t yet met anyone who hasn’t been amazed at the extent, and the quality, of the recruitment we achieved. The fact, outlined by the quoted Chris Weatherspoon piece in the last WDS, that we weren’t carrying forward any Profit and Sustainability restrictions has allowed the ownership to be bold in player investment far beyond our (well mine anyway!) expectations.

Apart from the amazing acquisition of Grant Xhaka, the majority of the new signings were unknown to Sunderland fans, so we had to await the opportunity to assess their benefit to the team. Their relative anonymity, and the fact we were able to start the recruitment so soon after Wembley, is testimony to the comprehensive scouting and groundwork which must have been going on under the radar behind the scenes at the club for longer than we might have imagined. (No more deadline day Will Grigg signings!)

What became immediately apparent was a determination to create a solid rather than flair team. The absolute priority is to survive! Persistently attractive and exciting football can come once we have hopefully achieved a longer-term Premier League security. That is not to say we have been boringly defensive; on the contrary, some of our forward play, particularly in transition, has been exciting to watch. There has been a fluidity of movement from set positions (e.g. Hume and Reinildo appearing in the opposition penalty area) while, impressively, the gaps they left behind have been quickly covered by other players.

It struck me very quickly how comfortable these new players were at this level of competition. Yes, several had considerable European and, in some cases Champions League, experience but there is nothing quite comparable to the intensity of the English Premier League. Additionally, we have recruited players who are confident, even relish playing, in different roles. It is worth remembering that only Arsenal and Manchester City have conceded fewer goals than our back line which has, despite changes forced by a suspended Reinildo, an injured Alderete, and a start of the season without Geertuida, let in less than a goal per game. In midfield, our most expensive signing Diarra displayed his potential until becoming injured after only 4 games! Performances have been very much squad rather than individually based.

All of this brings into focus the restricted playing opportunities now available to past season regulars Patterson, O’Nien, Neil, Rigg, and Mayenda - and few can claim those who have replaced them have diminished our potential. But the squad “connection” (one of Le Bris favourite words) remains, emphatically demonstrated by the involvement of these players (Eliezer’s orchestration of the celebratory whoops!) In post match celebrations. Will there be chances for Cirkin, Alese and Mundle when they are fit? Opportunities will surely come for those currently sidelined, particularly when we lose several players for the Africa Cup of Nations between 21st December and 18th January.

I cannot conclude without a tribute to the amazing “This is Wearside” contributions to the matchday atmosphere, particularly that recognising Remembrance Day which included the away fans. It was just a shame that on this occasion too few listened to the

announcement that the Last Post would be followed by a period of silence. Has it become too common (automatic?) that applause is now the method of recognising the passing of former players? Surely those who have fallen in armed service to our country deserved a more dignified tribute!



One final thought - on the Keel Crossing. Yes I've used it in both directions but I'm not sure of my claim last time that it would speed the walk to catch the Grand Central train back to London. *(Incidentally from the introduction of the new winter timetable on 14th December, the post-game train will leave Sunderland at 17.32 (no longer 17.31), make an additional stop at Seaham, and arrive in London later (at 21.16 instead of 20.58)* The new crossing has certainly eased the post-match shuffle but my experience so far is that it is so popular that the reduced pressure on the old Wearmouth Bridge route may now make that the quicker walk to the station. (This may of course depend on whether you exit the Stadium on the East or Montgomery Stand side?). And how will its value be affected if the City Council ignores the many lodged objections and is allowed to build flats close to the perimeter road behind the North Stand?

Ian Todd





The official opening of the new Keel Bridge

Before the Wolves game, 18th October


Kyril and Bally lead the procession



London Branch members were shocked by the recent death of Sunderland fan and regular traveller **Mark Cole**.

Our condolences to his family, and son Danny (with Mark above).

Posts
About
Photos
More



Sunderland AFC News And Banter
Page

1h ·

Kieran Maguire has been left unimpressed by Newcastle United Women after their misconduct towards Sunderland.

He said: "Newcastle United's Women's team have been charged with misconduct by the Football Association, because they've been claimed to have made illegal approaches to six junior players contracted to Sunderland.

"Newcastle are subject potentially to fines and other sanctions should these be upheld. Newcastle are using, as their justification for what's happened, that under FA rules, they were supposed to give seven days' notice that they were going to approach these players, and these are junior players, we're not talking established players.

"[They say] it was an administrative error, and I'm always sceptical; to me, it shows a lack of professionalism at the club."

Kieran Maguire is an academic specialising in the accountancy of association football

- thanks to Karen

=====

"The container, the fence and the curious case of a £180,000 patch of land outside St James' Park"

New York Times headline

The dispute relates to a strip of land just outside the East Stand, where the owner, St James Terrace Land, placed a large container and a wooden fence, raising safety concerns and complicating future development plans.

Both have now been removed and the club have launched a civil case to secure a ruling that either fans are given private access across the strip or there is access for the general public.

'We fight to the end,'
says Newcastle
'talisman' Guimaraes



1d

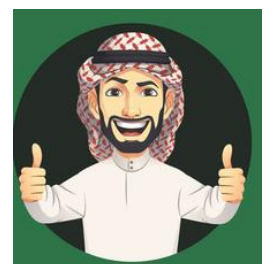


*"They can't even think of their own slogan."
- Ros Potts*

A New Look at the Landfill

Apparently the Mags are looking at changing their badge – 'As our club grows on the global stage, the symbol that represents us needs to be able to keep pace. It needs to show up clearly and confidently across everything from kits to screens to merchandise.'

*The current badge, used for 1988 to present, is based on the original N***** coat of arms, which dates back to 1400. The castle, sea horses and the flag may be replaced.*
Times, 10th May



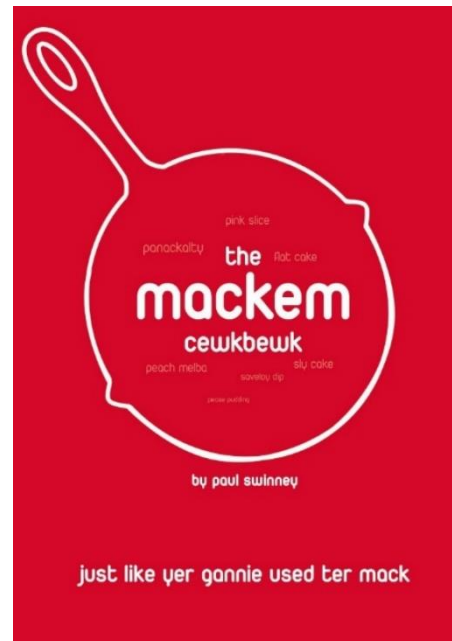
A Few Suggestions

A Taste of Home – the Mackem Cewkbewk

Whaddyer mean, yet didn't gerrer Mackem Cewkbewk off Santie last Christmas? Well fear not, they're still available. And all proceeds continue to go to the Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen.

The Cewkbewk - written by branch member **Paul Swinney** - was a massive success last Christmas, becoming Sunderland's best-selling book and raising over £20,000 for the 'Soupie' in the process.

And it doesn't just grace the kitchen work tops of Wearside. It has been sent to at least 20 countries around the world, with the Mackem diaspora spreading the word of pink slice and panackelty, and delivering a taste of home for those marooned on foreign shores.



A fair few of the London Branch have them in their homes too, celebrating our culture in the Capital.

If you're not one of them, then ask yourself these questions. Do you ever feel like you need a plate of panack to pick you up when you get off the packed Piccadilly Line? Has the crammed Hammersmith and City line been got you hankering after a ham and pease pudding flatcake (the proper word for a stottie)? If so, salvation is in reach.

And if you're not much of a cook, fear not - the Cewkbewk is much more than a cookbook. It also has a Mackem Dictionary food special, looking at Wearside specific words for bait. It looks at dialect differences within Wearside too, showing when a fish lot no longer is a fish lot, and where batter becomes scraps (I know, weird eh?). And it looks at the history of some of Sunderland's most iconic foot and drink businesses, like Vaux, Villa and Muellers bakers.

It's a must for any exiled Mackem, bringing the taste of home to Hounslow and Harringay. And for those of us who have kids born down south, it's a chance to show them what proper bait looks like. After giving them a cockney accent you owe them that at least!

So in a nutshell, buying it does two things. It gets you a beautiful hardback book celebrating Sunderland for £15. And you get to do some good back home by supporting the Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen.

It's available from A Love Supreme opposite the Stadium, and on their website at a-love-supreme.com. If that doesn't work for you then contact Paul on paulswinney@gmail.com and he can see if something else can be arranged.

Ginnan. Yer knar yer want tee.

From a Tweet by Granit Xhaka:

"[Sunderland] did everything, absolutely everything, to bring me back to England. When a club makes you feel that way, it would be almost rude not to consider it. I was so touched by the people in charge. I couldn't say no.

"Everything happened very quickly. The first contact was made one day before departure for the Bayer camp in Rio de Janeiro. At 11 pm, a Swiss number lit up on my phone. I was on my way to bed, the children were already asleep: "Hello, this is Kyril. I'm the owner of Sunderland." I played along because I thought someone was playing a prank on me. My advisor José Noguera was in America at the time, with the corresponding time difference. I gave Kyril my agent's number. The conversation was clear but brief. Ten minutes later, José called via Facetime, together with the sporting director and Kyril. Then I realized: this is serious.

"I was honest with Kyril and told him that I couldn't really imagine an immediate return to the Premier League. But after the phone call, I felt: You have to do this, Granit! The club is coming from a situation that reminded me of my parents' beginnings – from scratch.

"And I feel that this experience here will benefit me most for my future. Why? I want to pursue a career as a coach at some point. That's why it's important to experience moments of suffering and solidarity. We're going to have to suffer a lot in the coming months. That's another side of football, but it's also part of it, and it will shape me."



"Away against Chelsea, you only heard them. They're fans, not tourists. You are not in the city by chance," he said.

"Sunderland is your life. Whether you're an 80-year-old or a five-year-old, you know why you're at the stadium. They have been supporting us since the first matchday with a force that is indescribable."

Xhaka, post-Chelsea 2-1 win

2026

Coming to your screens in 2026 - a BBC mockumentary to coincide with the World Cup. By the team responsible for '2012' (about the London Olympics) and 'W1A' (the BBC), '2026' will feature Hugh Bonneville again as bumbling Ian Fletcher, the 'Director of Integrity' heading up the '*Twenty Twenty-Six Oversight Team*'. The 'F' word – FIFA will not be mentioned.

You thought Sepp Blatter was bad. Current FIFA President Gianni Infantino is passionately in love with Donald Trump. December's World Cup draw will now be held in Washington DC, in what both referred to as the 'Trump/Kennedy Center'.



Infantino was recently present as US President Donald Trump and world leaders signed a declaration for bringing peace to Gaza at a summit in Egypt. Infantino pledged Fifa's support to rebuild football infrastructure in the city of Gaza and wider Palestinian territories, as part of a wider post-war reconstruction, including rebuilding facilities destroyed during Israel's two-year military operation in Gaza.

In May of this year, Infantino met with the US President and leaders from Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

It meant the Fifa president was more than three hours late for an annual meeting in Paraguay, which led to a mid-meeting walkout in protest by senior Uefa officials.

In June, the Juventus team were forced to stand behind Trump in the Oval Office while the President briefed reporters about a possible attack on Iran, Juventus American winger Tomothy Weah said: *"I was caught by surprise, honestly. It was a bit weird. It's kind of like, I just want to play football."*

"Could a woman make your team?" asked the Leader of the Free World. *"If you were being nice?"* Awkward.

Fifa have also announced that the World Cup final will be interrupted by a half-time show for the first time in its history. As well as casting its lot with a historically unpopular US president, Fifa will also indulge in all the worst impulses of American sports.

More, more, more, until every last inch and second and ounce of the World Cup has been commercialized and monetized.



FIFA has acknowledged that the United States government has the final say on determining the safety of World Cup host cities.

The news comes after U.S. president Donald Trump said FIFA president Gianni Infantino would "very easily" move 2026 World Cup matches away from designated host cities if Trump asked him to.

Trump also indicated he would seek to move the 2028 Olympic Games away from Los Angeles if he felt the city was not safe...

From the new \$250 Visa "Integrity Fee" to expanded travel bans, to the illegal detention of (very legal) visitors, nothing says keep the hell away like a Trump immigration policy...

Because despite America being both inhospitable and unsafe as a World Cup host, FIFA president Gianni Infantino remains ever loyal. Like a good little boy, he does as Trump says and never barks back. Even when Trump worms his way to the center of team celebrations. Or keeps (steals?) trophies for himself.

Or threatens to move World Cup games away from host cities too blue for his liking.

Thesportingtribune.com, 4th November



If looks could kill...kudos to Chelsea (Club World Cup Winners)



*Chelsea away, 93rd minute:
Brian Brobbey gets hold of the ball, has a fag, does the Times
crossword, then passes to Talbi to score the winning goal.*

=====



*Ros Potts and some strange woman,
Chelsea*



The Rooves are on fire...

ROBIN ROEFS translated from Dutch means...**ROBIN ROOFS**

But! - A (sadly rejected) 2019 petition to Parliament was to "Change the plural of 'roof' from 'roofs' to 'rooves'" - because "*'Rooves' sounds much better and would be consistent with other plurals such as hoof/hoves and wolf/wolves.*"

The Editor goes down another internet rabbit-hole...



TNT Sports Football

15h ·

- ☐ 3-0 win vs West Ham
- ☒ 2-1 win vs Brentford
- ☐ 0-0 draw vs Crystal Palace
- ☒ 1-2 win vs Chelsea
- ☐ 2-2 draw vs Arsenal

Sunderland remain unbeaten against London sides 🔥



thanks to Karen for the tweets



Sunderland had a plan and stuck to it, but the statistics highlight just how impressive a result it was.

- Brobbey's equaliser for Sunderland was the first result-altering goal Arsenal have conceded in the 90th minute or later of a Premier League match since September 2024, when John Stones scored in the eighth added minute to make it 2-2 for Manchester City.
- Ballard's opener – as well as being Sunderland's first shot on target – was the first goal Arsenal had conceded in 812 minutes in all competitions, since Nick Woltemade's strike for Newcastle in September.
- It was the first time since May 2023 that the Gunners had failed to beat a promoted side in a Premier League match, ending a 14-game winning run against such teams.
- Arsenal also conceded more than once in a match for the first time this season in all competitions, with 40% of their total goals conceded coming against Sunderland in this game (2/5).

"Sunderland went physical today but within the laws of the game, apart from one moment in the first half when Dan Ballard challenged Mikel Merino in the box," MoTD pundit and former Arsenal forward Theo Walcott said.

"They were well organised and I didn't think they'd be able to keep it up for 90 minutes. There's a reason why Sunderland will be fine in this league. The Stadium of Light is not an easy place to play football. It was the most rattled I've seen Gabriel and William Saliba this season."

BBC Sport

Grump's Corner #5

Right. Away Tickets.

If you're reading this, Club, sort it out.

Have a thought for your remote branch members, over the years faithfully bringing up their second-, third- and fourth-generation offspring as loyal Mackems, in the face of all that pressure to follow Arsenal/Spurs/ManU/Liverpool etc.

With the current ticketing process, it is now impossible for anyone to EVER build up enough points to get an away ticket. Even if the away match is going on a short bus or tube ride away from your home.

Catch-22 – you can't get a ticket for an away game because you don't have enough points. You can't get enough points because you can't get a ticket for an away game.

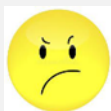
Most members can't afford to travel 300 miles to every home game, and so the next generation will probably never get to see Sunderland play live. Who can now get a ticket to take their child to their first away game? So why bother anymore?

Most of us aren't Tourist-come-lately's now that we're in the Premier League. It was never like this when we were last in the Premier. The Supporters' Branches stay alive and thrive because each new generation of members comes along, connected to the northeast and the club through tradition and family loyalty. Enthusiasm and love come from being part of the match crowd.

The Supporters' Branches are now being totally ignored in the allocation of tickets. Why can't you allocate a certain number to the branches, especially when the match is local to a branch?

So come on, throw us a crumb for our loyalty. Show a bit of loyalty back.

Disgruntled Down South



=====

Name that Hair - Answers from p.14

1	Adingra	2	Aldorete
3	Hume	4	Mayenda
5	Mundle	6	Reinildo
7	Cirkin	8	Geertruida
9	Traore	10	Isidor
11	Ballard	12	Rigg
13	Talbi	14	O'Nien

Match Reports

The West Ham Match: 6th August 2025

I thought that we'd win but blow me!
The SoL was a great place to be
as the new lads impressed
but for me what was best
was that last season's heroes scored three.

The Burnley Match: 23rd August 2025

We lost and the score doesn't lie
so let's put it behind us, not cry.
Expect more of the same
as we won't win all games
but I know that we'll give it a try.

The Brentford Match: 30th August 2025

A draw would've done me okay
but things went from okay to, "Olé!"
Xhaka and Le Fee
did the business, for me,
while Isidor's head won the day.

The Crystal Palace Match: 13th September 2025

With this point we again made it clear
that this season we've nothing to fear.
Although blunt in attack,
we were tight at the back.
On the whole this game brought us much cheer.

The Villa Match: 21st September 2025

Reinildo's red card left us sour
so we played with ten men for an hour
but Isidor's goal,
God bless his sweet soul,
made our season continue to flower.

The Forest Match: 27th September 2025

This was our best result yet, eh?
The winner came from Alderete
and the cross was from Xhaka
(another real cracker).
Relegation? There's no need to fret, yeah?

The Man United Match: 4th October 2025

The better side won, fair enough,
and we must be prepared for the rough
along with the smooth.
There are no words to soothe
as the Premier League is well tough.

The Wolves Match: 18th October 2025

I knew that we'd be in a fight.
In the end, though, things turned out all right.
Again Granit Xhaka
played like a bull's knacker.
Mukiele and Ballard shone bright.

The Chelsea Match: 25th October 2025

At one down we never looked cowed
and we fought back, spurred on by our crowd.
What shall be, just shall be
and our win - thanks, Talbi -
made our players and fans all stand proud.

Ian Mole









**Things to come - Dan Ballard takes on a random Mag.
FA Cup , January 2024**

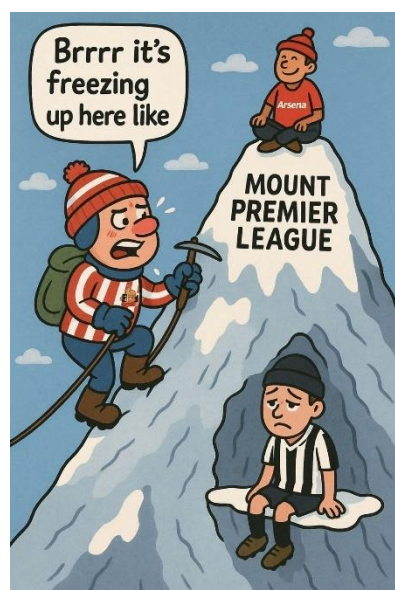


Let's Just Enjoy this for Now

Premier League, 9th November 2025

Premier League		UEFA Champions League				Scottish Premiership			Championship		League One		League Two		
Team		Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	GD	Points	Form					
1	 Arsenal	11	8	2	1	20	5	15	26	W	W	W	W	W	D
2	 Manchester City	11	7	1	3	23	8	15	22	W	W	W	L	W	W
3	 Chelsea	11	6	2	3	21	11	10	20	L	W	W	L	W	W
4	 Sunderland	11	5	4	2	14	10	4	19	W	L	W	W	D	D
5	 Tottenham Hotspur	11	5	3	3	19	10	9	18	D	W	L	W	L	D
6	 Aston Villa	11	5	3	3	13	10	3	18	W	W	W	W	L	W

13	 Everton	11	4	3	4	12	13	-1	15	D	W	L	L	D	W
14	 Newcastle United	11	3	3	5	11	14	-3	12	L	W	L	W	L	L
15	 Fulham	11	3	2	6	12	16	-4	11	L	L	L	L	W	L
16	 Leeds United	11	3	2	6	10	20	-10	11	D	L	L	W	L	L
17	 Burnley	11	3	1	7	14	22	-8	10	L	L	W	W	L	L
18	 West Ham United	11	3	1	7	13	23	-10	10	D	L	L	L	W	W



SAFC Fixtures 2025-2026 Season

Sat. 16 th . Aug.	WEST HAM UNITED	3-0	Mayenda, Ballard, Isidor
Sat. 23rd Aug.	Burnley	0-2	
Tue. 26th Aug.	HUDDERSFIELD TOWN(EFL Cup)	1-1	Guiu (5-6 pens)
Sat. 30th Aug.	BRENTFORD	1-1	Le Fee (p), Isidor
Sat. 13th Sep.	Crystal Palace	0-0	
Sun. 21st Sep.	ASTON VILLA	1-1	Isidor Reinildo sent off
Sat. 27th Sep.	Nottingham Forest	1-0	Aldorete
Sat. 4th Oct.	Manchester United	0-2	
Sat. 18th Oct..	WOLVES	2-0	Mukiele, o.g.
Sat. 25th Oct.	Chelsea	2-1	isidor, Talbi
Mon. 3rd. Nov..	EVERTON	1-1	Khaka
Sat. 8th Nov.	ARSENAL	2-1	Ballard, Brobbey
Sat. 22nd. Nov.	Fulham		
Sat. 29th Nov.	BOURNEMOUTH		
Wed. 3rd Dec.	Liverpool		
Sat. 6th Dec	Manchester City		
Sun. 14th Dec.	NEWCASTLE united		
Sat. 20th Dec.	Brighton & Hove Albion		
Sun. 28th Dec.	LEEDS UNITED		
Thu. 1st Jan.	MANCHESTER CITY		
Sun. 4th Jan.	Tottenham Hotspur		
Wed. 7th Jan.	Brentford		

