



THE TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FAMILY PODCAST PRESENTS:

Allow Me To Be Frank – A personal viewpoint by the fans for the fans

SUMMER TRANSFERS Should I stay or should I go?

by Guy Jinx

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So, another season enters the final straight with our own THFC looking likely to have no bearing upon the destiny of any silverware and no definitive reward for another nine months of hard work.

At time of writing (pre Burnley), whilst there are still mathematical possibilities, I would suggest that the majority of us don't believe that we will be gracing the Champions League next season and the arguments as to whether qualifying for the Europa League is a pro or a con, are for another day.

So... has the 2014-15 season been progressive or a treading water exercise?

I would say the former if only because we have now got a manager with a seasons experience at THFC, seemingly a plan in place and with at least one more season to look forward to (unless Daniel gets twitchy again). The close season will now of course take on great significance, as Pochettino will surely look to press on and build the squad **he** wants rather than continue to work with the players he essentially inherited.

And as fans, that's where one of the summer's regular beer garden arguments will begin:

"Who should we keep, who should we get rid of, and who shall we go for..."

Whilst everyone will have opinions on various players, when it comes to judging our own, I always feel that our occasionally irrational passion for the club can cloud our views.

What one player lacks in talent can sometimes be overlooked by many of us simply because "he's a good bloke". Similarly, another player's value to the team can often be dismissed because he doesn't beat his chest in front of the TV cameras.

This is not a criticism of any supporter; we all get sucked into letting our judgement be clouded at some point, myself included of course.

I have attempted to remove any personal preference for specific players personalities or their perceived public persona, and have come up with who I believe we should off-load and who we should keep.



" .. our occasionally irrational passion for the club can cloud our views."

Not surprisingly, I'll start with the obvious and I doubt there'll be any dissenters when I state that THFC must do all within their powers to ward off any approaches for Hugo Lloris. Probably the best keeper we've had since... Jennings, Clemence.. erm, Mimms anyone?

Whilst we've had some good goalkeepers over the years, Robinson was a personal favourite of mine; I believe that Lloris is as good a shot-stopper as I've seen at the Lane. Inevitably there will be summer rumblings amongst the mischevious and story-starved media about bigger clubs coming in for him, but Hugo has apparently stated an intention to remain where he is (for now) and in my opinion the club should be cementing that commitment with yet another improved contract.

At right-back, we have Kyle Walker and a player who has probably divided opinion as much as any other player since he returned from injury in December. I like Walker the bloke, but as I am trying to eliminate such bias, I've looked solely at what he brings as a player. Although he has not progressed as we all hoped he would after winning the PFA Young Player a couple of seasons ago, I still feel that he suits the way Pochettino plays.

Walker has pace to burn (despite suggestions that he has lost a bit since the injuries) and I for one do not get this “it’s only his pace gets him out of trouble” line. Of course it does, his pace is an asset! He can still be improved of course, but I do hope that the rumours of a summer move are unfounded.

I was a little surprised to see Naughton allowed to leave, especially as there still appears to be slight doubts over Yedlin’s development; so I would not be surprised to see another right-back bought in to push Walker, ala Davies/Rose at the start of this season. But neither full-back position would be a priority for me, with Danny Rose having apparently responded to the arrival of Davies by adding some consistency to his game, especially over the second half of the season.

Centre-Half seems to remain a bit of a problem...

On the basis that Kaboul seems surplus to requirements (and that is a decision that I entirely agree with), we currently have Vertonghen, Dier, Fazio and Chiriches scrapping it out for the two spots.

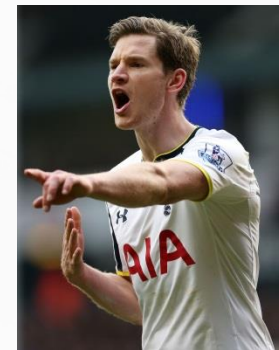
Whilst many fans seemed to have given up with Vertonghen following his not particularly well disguised strop last season, I still believe that we **must** keep him. He isn’t the first modern day footballer to express unrest at a club, and I am of the belief that if a player is worth it, then throw an arm around him and tell him he’s wonderful. Pochettino appears to have done so with Jan and for the majority of this season he has looked like the assured, ball playing centre-half we saw in his first year.

However, this then throws up a problem: who is best suited to play with Super Jan? In my eyes he needs an aggressive, ball winning no-nonsense defender next to him.

Kaboul at his very best, would probably have been the most suitable but Kaboul’s “best” was too rarely seen. A Dawson style leader would appear to be what we lack at times and when Daws was paired with the Rolls Royce that was Ledley King, we looked quite solid.

So if Vertonghen is the nearest we have to a “modern day” King, who is our new Michael Dawson? Fazio seemed to have the Dawson-esque credentials (and possibly similar failings) during a successful run of maybe fifteen games paired with Vertonghen but I always felt he had a mistake in him and a couple of Fazio errors cost definite goals before a combination of injury and a resurgent Eric Dier has kept him out of the starting line up since pre-cup final.

“Centre-Half seems to remain a bit of a problem...”



That in itself would suggest that Pochettino has reservations about Fazio which again gives rise to the question of just who sorted that particular deal out?

Dier himself has (I believe) the makings of a very good, all-round centre-half and I hope he’s with the club for many seasons to come. But is he ready to be the commanding, attacking defensive leader that Vertonghen can sweep up behind?

Chiriches has been a major disappointment for me; I’d never heard of him when he signed, but I recall seeing clips on YouTube which suggested that he too was a very capable, ball winning centre-half and I was quite excited at the thought of seeing him play alongside Vertonghen. However, for whatever reason it just has not happened for him and he has turned out to be more of a poor man’s Vertonghen rather than an imposing centre-half, often getting himself in bother by trying to play himself out of trouble at the most inappropriate times.

I believe that, like Kaboul, Vlad will be moved on in the summer and a return to a slightly less frantic, physical league will doubtless see him recapture his form in typical ex-Spurs “look at what you could have won” style.

Chiriches and Kaboul’s departures would leave us in need of a centre-half to actually push for that starting berth rather than arrive as cover. At the time of writing this, Wimmer has all but told us he’s signing for THFC, but I have to confess to knowing little about him. The one, brief media article I have seen though, does suggest that at 22 years old, Wimmer is “not yet the finished article” and as such will surely be no more or less ready to command a defence as young Dier is?

I have to confess to retaining a preference for British centre-halves when looking for the aggressive type, but off the top of my head I cannot think of anyone that fits the bill and feasibly may be available.

Next week: *Jinxy takes a look at midfield.*