

Managerial Madness

[Matt Kirkum](#) charts the increasing pressures of managing at the top level

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Whether referred to as the boss, the gaffer or the coach, the role of the football manager has long been scrutinised. Disgruntled fans probe for answers, pundits call into question their tactical credibility while impatient club owners are poised to cut short their tenure. Pressure, therefore, is the key word that encumbers such a formidable profession.

The often overwhelming necessity to succeed, regardless of the resources at their disposal, ensures that high profile managers walk the narrowest of tight ropes. Indeed, it would be something of a miracle should all twenty Premier League managers maintain their position throughout the course of a season. The weight of fans expectation sits like a sixty tonne weight on the shoulders of those in the dugouts and, thanks to the accessibility of social media, it is the supporters whose intolerant and merciless voices prove to be the most devastating.

Last week saw the departure of Sunderland manager Dick Advocaat and, perhaps more notably, Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers. Rodgers cultivated his ability under the watchful eye of Jose Mourinho at Chelsea before earning significant plaudits for his successes at Swansea. After being installed as head boss at a somewhat struggling Liverpool side, Rodgers revitalised the side and forged an intimidating outfit. The 2013-14 campaign saw Liverpool take the league by storm narrowly missing out on the title for reasons every Liverpool would wish to forget. Two seasons later and Rodgers is searching for a new employer.

So what causes such a demise? A downward trajectory which sees fans promptly overlook previous accomplishments and outlay their frustration on the man in charge. Football, more so than any other sport, is a matter of immediacy. Time is very much of the essence and supporters' memories will shorten after a string of sub-par performances. Even so, Liverpool's start can hardly be labelled disastrous. In the most exciting league in the world where anyone can supposedly beat anyone, a position of tenth at such an early stage is by no means a cause for panic.

Liverpool supporters will point to last season's disappointing Champions League and Premier League campaigns as contributing factors. For me, however, I wonder how much a desire for change plays a part in the process; an eagerness for a refreshment and a divergence from the status quo. The arrival of Jurgen Klopp provides just that. The charismatic and captivating German is poles apart from the dour yet calculated Rodgers.

Take José Mourinho as another example. All of a sudden he faces an uncertain future as Chelsea languish in unfamiliar territory at the foot of the league table. Considered one of the world's greatest managers, not even 'The Special One' can escape the ruthless nature of his supposed support. This absurd phenomena condemns past glories into disregard as the craving for change takes hold. Even the most avid of fans of England's top four clubs look on enviously as Klopp take the reins at Anfield.

The question therefore remains whether change is for the better or merely for its own sake. Klopp is certainly an astute appointment; his Champions League pedigree alone suggests a marked improvement on paper. Yet uncertainties arise when we apply the very same thought processes that prompted Rodgers' departure to Klopp's arrival. Surely Borussia Dortmund's unnerving start to last season should provide cause for concern? Yet it does not. Only time will tell if Klopp can live up to the expectation and, should he do so, it will only take a few discouraging results for the pattern to repeat itself.

It is this ever repeating managerial merry-go-round, this appetite for change that ensures a manager's future regardless of the success or failure of his previous employment. The same circumstance which sees Steve McClaren come off the back of disappointment at Derby County and straight into the helm at Newcastle. Change, in this case, is proving ill-fated.

For now, Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich has stood by Mourinho in an act uncharacteristic of stereotypical trigger happy owners. We will have to wait to and see whether Mourinho and Klopp will succeed or fail in their respective jobs. One thing is for certain, managers will continue to come and go. Arsene Wenger and Sir Alex Ferguson remain anomalies in terms of endurance for now. That said, Klopp's seven years at Borussia Dortmund suggests he possesses the trait of longevity while a legacy is the one achievement that alludes Mourinho. Both will be hoping to emulate Messrs Wenger and Ferguson in the coming years.



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