

The 2014 Summer Transfer Window: The Verdict

With the transfer window closing last Monday, the Nouse Sport team offer their thoughts on a transfer window which saw Premier League clubs spend over £800 million for the first time

By Lewis Hill, Tom Fennelly and Tom Hughes

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Manchester City will be hoping to retain the Premier League trophy, despite their rivals buying big name players. Photo: Brad Tutterow

Tom Fennelly – Sports Editor

Winners – Arsenal



Arsene Wenger has added the likes of Calum Chambers and Alexis Sanchez to his squad.

Photo: Ronnie Macdonald

The loss of Vermaelen and Sagna in defence, an area where Arsenal look weakest, were seen by some as big losses. But I've seen coalmines more active than the injury-prone Vermaelen and his replacement, Calum Chambers, is more than capable and experienced enough to fill the void in the long-term. The same can be said about the arrival of Debuchy in place of Sagna at right-back. Although their back four could do with a bit more depth, they've certainly made up for that up front. Alexis Sanchez gives them pace and skill to worry any defence, whilst the late addition of Danny Welbeck gives them the cover they need for the injured Giroud. If it hadn't have been for the signing of Welbeck in the final hours of the window, I wouldn't have opted for Arsenal - I more likely would have gone for Everton who have subtly reinforced an already established squad. However, Arsenal, despite the lack of depth in defence, should still be able to score more goals than they concede this season. Smart buying should give them a more cutting edge this season to maybe challenge for the title.

Losers- Leicester City

Ulloa and Matthew Upson from Brighton are alright signings, I guess. As is Marc Albrighton from Villa. It's unlikely you'd have heard of their other signings. So, yes, you could say that these are relatively good signings... for a Championship side. Leicester have failed to fully add Premier League experience to their ranks this summer and, although they have a respectable squad, they still lack a depth of experience and flair alone won't be enough to save them this season. Danny Simpson is the biggest name for them, but when your biggest signing is a right-back, then I'd stay pretty quiet about it. This is what sets them out as losers when compared to the other promoted teams from last season. QPR have built on their already experienced squad by signing big names like Caulker, Ferdinand, Leroy Fer, Jordan Mutch, Sandro, along with Isla and Krancjar (for the thousandth time in Harry Redknapp's career?) on loan. Burnley are in a similar position to Leicester, but they still managed to bring in Matt Gilks, Matt Taylor, Steven Reid, George Boyd, Marvin Sordell, Michael Kightly etc.; not massive names but enough to continue to embellish their squad in the top tier of English football. Leicester's failure to do this will be their downfall.

Dead Cert - Sandro

Experienced, super strong, great tackler and even capable of scoring the odd screamer - Sandro is destined to do well at QPR where he'll be first choice each week. Reunited with his old guvner 'Arry Redknapp, QPR are sure to get the best out of him. Nicknamed 'the Beast' back at Spurs, he'll certainly have a few lessons in tough tackles for his team that even Joey Barton wouldn't have heard of. This defensive rock might just be what QPR are missing as they bid to try and live another season in the Premier League.

Gamble - Adam Lallana

This deal happened so early on in the transfer window that we've almost forgot that it happened. A solid winger (or left-sided midfielder, depending on how you want to argue it) for Southampton, he looked set to go on and have a good career not only in the Premier League but also for England. That, in my mind, vanished when he was rated £25 million and sold to Liverpool with a lengthy injury. An injury can affect the confidence of a player and, if he doesn't find the form that he was in when he left Southampton, and Liverpool fans may turn on him pretty quickly. And with such a hefty price tag on his head for a 25-year-old Englishman who is largely untested at international level, will the pressure be too much for him? Probably.

Flop- Loic Remy

If you were had three league games to try and convince other clubs to buy you before the window closes, you'd think that you would make some effort. But this Frenchman offered nothing for QPR and yet was still bought by Chelsea on deadline day. Not a bad deal at £10.5 million for a striker that shows potential, but Chelsea have a healthy track record of ruining the potential of perfectly good strikers. Victims of such, Torres and Ba, have moved on, but before these two striker signed for Chelsea they showed much more form than Remy. And now he's stepped in to fill their boots behind star signing Diego Costa and Chelsea legend Didier Drogba. Remy will have limited opportunities and when they come, he'll try too hard, trip

over his own shoelaces and somehow head the ball into row Z.

Bargain – Alex Song

Yes, I appreciate that this is a loan deal, but season-long loan deals look to be the future for clubs strapped for cash or simply looking to find a loophole in Financial Fair Play rules. Judging that West Ham probably don't know what UEFA is, I suspect they did this deal for the former reason. The Hammers will probably have the option to sign Song after the season is up, which would make him an even better bargain. In the meantime, this vastly experienced and sprightly central midfielder has secured a solid move for his career as his chances looked increasingly limited at Barcelona, which surely means that he's going to work hard. And considering that he turned down bigger clubs – Tottenham and Arsenal – for the move, it means he must see something to play for at Sam Allardyce's exciting new-look squad.

One for the Future – Jamaal Lascalles

This player was first brought to my attention during a brief loan spell that he had at my local club, Stevenage. An impressive and versatile defender back then in League One (yes, when Stevenage used to be in League One), the loan move booted him into the Nottingham Forest squad and he's since been signed by Newcastle. The Magpies have since loaned him back to Forest as he continues to be a part of a team under Stuart Pearce that looks odds-on to get promoted from the Championship this season. This is a smart move by Newcastle, because this time next year he could be one of the brightest young English defenders in the league. He'll only be 21 by then.

Lewis Hill – Deputy Sports Editor

Winners – Chelsea

Jose Mourinho has got his business spot on during this transfer window. He has brought in some truly fantastic players who will no doubt contribute to what I believe will be a successful season for Chelsea. Filipe Luis and Cesc Fabregas improve the defence and midfield of Mourinho's side respectively. Diego Costa, Loic Remy and Didier Drogba have all been brought in to improve upon a strike force that was desperately lacking in fire power last season. Costa in particular has already impressed, scoring four goals in his first three appearances. He could well be the man to fire Chelsea to either league or cup glory this season.

Losers – Burnley

Burnley did not have the best of squads going into this transfer window and despite making seven permanent deals, I can't see how any of the players Sean Dyche has brought in can save Burnley from relegation. Dyche did not have the easiest job at the start of the window, after doing an incredible job securing a surprise promotion last season, Burnley hardly had cash to burn. Burnley have made some good signings on a tight budget, such as Lukas Jutkiewicz, Michael Kightly and club record signing George Boyd. However, in my opinion, Burnley have failed to bring in anyone with enough quality to lead the club away from the relegation zone. As a result, I can see them going down, which is a shame, considering the fantastic job Dyche did getting them into the Premier League in the first place.

Dead Cert – Diego Costa



Jose Mourinho will be hoping that Diego Costa's goals will fire Chelsea to glory this season. Photo: Nathan Rupert

Diego Costa is a typical Jose Mourinho signing. He is a player that is strong, quick, powerful and comfortable on the ball. What's more, Costa has plenty of goals in him, which has been displayed in his very good start to life in the Premier League scoring in each of his first three league appearances. Chelsea desperately lacked firepower last year but they have acquired a proven goal scorer in Costa. Costa's twenty seven league goals last season propelled Atlético Madrid to their first La Liga title since 1996. Furthermore, his eight goals in the Champions League helped secure Los Colchoneros their place in last season's final against city rivals and eventual winners Real Madrid. Mourinho claims that at £32 million Costa is a bargain. I'm not so sure about that, but I am certain that Costa will bag plenty of goals for the Blues this season.

Gamble -Mario Balotelli

Whether he's giving money to the homeless or setting off fireworks from his bathroom window, Mario Balotelli will always hog the headlines. Brendan Rodgers may have bitten off more than he can chew with this one as Balotelli will provide the sternest of tests for Rodgers' man management skills. At £16 million Liverpool haven't broken the bank to bring him in, but he is a risk. He did his fair share of disrupting the Manchester City squad two years ago and his behaviour both on and off the pitch were a cause for concern. If Rodgers can get Balotelli under control and scoring as many goals as he has for Milan over the past two seasons, then he is a bargain. However, his unpredictable nature means that he is a gamble.

Flop - Rickie Lambert

I'm sorry Liverpool fans, I too think it's great that Rickie Lambert has climbed through the bowels of English football to get to the Premier League and secure his dream move to his boyhood club, but I can't see it working out for him. At 32 years of his age, time is not on Lambert's side and the arrival of Balotelli plus the red hot form of Daniel Sturridge mean that his first team opportunities will be limited. Liverpool haven't spent that much to bring him in but what they have essentially bought is a fringe player who may well start more cup games than league games. I can't see him being as successful at Liverpool as he was at Southampton so he's my choice for the flop of this transfer window.

Bargain - Sandro

'Arry's only gone and done it again! I think that the deadline day signing of Sandro is a great bit of business for Harry Redknapp's QPR. Sandro is the type of player they need, a solid defensive midfielder who can provide cover for the back line and initiate attacking moves from deep positions. For just £3 million he is an absolute steal and although it was disappointing to see him frozen out at Tottenham, he is only 25 years old and has plenty of time to get his career back on track under his old boss.

One for the Future - Calum Chambers

Due to injuries and the late return of World Cup winner Per Mertesacker, Calum Chambers has already played a fair amount at his new club Arsenal. However, I think that he is the young English player to

watch out for. Competent at playing both as a full back and as a centre back, Chambers is remarkably composed on the ball for someone of just 19 years of age. He has great awareness and anticipates play well, what's more, he is a big, strong lad who is capable of outmuscling his opponent on the ball. Perhaps overshadowed by Luke Shaw at Southampton, Chambers will now be able to learn from Wenger as well as the current first choice centre backs Laurent Koscielny and Mertesacker. In two or three years' time, Chambers could well be the first choice centre back for club and country and is therefore someone to keep an eye out for.

Tom Hughes – Sports Reporter

Winners – Hull City

They may have left it late this year signing four players on deadline day, but I believe Steve Bruce has really improved the quality of his squad. Abel Hernandez and Gaston Ramirez are both Uruguayan internationals and will increase the pedigree of this Hull team. Hatem Ben Arfa on the other hand was the last signing and the most controversial. No one can doubt Ben Arfa's talent with some of his goals for Newcastle but he has had problems with his attitude, which will be the primary concern for Bruce. For a small club Hull have brought in some fantastic players.

Losers – Tottenham

After losing Gareth Bale last season and investing poorly Tottenham have again failed to make an impact in the transfer market. Needing a solid centre-half and a quality striker, they managed to bring in young, inexperienced players, who while could be good in a few seasons time, won't drive Tottenham back towards the Champions League. Ben Davies is probably the only player who has improved the quality of Spurs and he hasn't even started the opening few Premier League games. Losing Michael Dawson in the middle of the defence could also potentially be catastrophic.

Dead Cert – Cesc Fabregas

He was possibly the best midfielder in the league before he left for Barcelona and he has returned an even more complete footballer. People may overlook him as he struggled to make his mark at Barcelona, however, he has fantastic vision and can create a goal out of nothing meaning Chelsea should be able to play some attacking football this season, instead of having to rely on their defence. This signing is made even more certain by the acquisition of Diego Costa (Fabregas' international teammate) and their connection could be the difference between a successful campaign and an indifferent season.

Gamble – Mario Balotelli



Why always him? Super Mario is finally back in the Premier League, this time on Merseyside.
Photo: Piotr Drabik

Probably known more for his shenanigans off the field as much as his play on it, but one thing is certain, Balotelli has the potential to be a superstar. He has power, pace and an eye for goal which was highlighted not only in his short stint in Milan, but also at the World Cup, much to the dismay of many England fans. The real question is whether Brendan Rodgers can keep him out of trouble and keep his focus on football. Setting off fireworks and fighting with his teammates won't be tolerated by Rodgers and

some believe this could be Balotelli's last chance.

Flop – Danny Welbeck

Struggled at Manchester United and has now been snapped up by Arsenal which some people believed to be a great deal. I'm unconvinced because he didn't score many goals when surrounded by the likes of Juan Mata, Wayne Rooney and Robin van Persie which doesn't bode well for Arsenal. Many believe he has raw talent but I don't believe he carries the threat to play up front on his own. So unless Arsenal's wingers can get up alongside him he could become easily isolated and continue his poor scoring record.

Bargain – Esteban Cambiasso

Having left Inter Milan after ten years at the club, Leicester have picked up the combative midfielder for free. I think this is a steal as he's been playing at the highest level for the best part of fifteen years including for Real Madrid and over 50 caps for Argentina. He should be able to use all of his experience to control the Leicester midfield and give them a real chance of staying in the Premier League, especially for the younger players in the dressing room.

One for the Future – Lazar Markovic

A £20 million fee for a player who hasn't played in a top European league and is only just out of his teens speaks volumes about how highly rated he is. Having won three league titles in three years as a professional, Markovic has started well and has already drawn comparisons with Cristiano Ronaldo because of his lightening pace and dribbling ability. His international teammate Nemanja Matic, who plays in midfield for Chelsea, was quoted as saying, "He'll mature, and then nobody will be able to stop him!"



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