EURO 2020 FANTEAM MD5 DRAFT USING DATA MODEL

The Round of 16 was disastrous for some of the game's most popular assets. A shock victory for the Czech Republic, elimination of Sweden, Germany and France, meant that the majority of teams are precarious at best going into the Quarter Finals with only 3 Free Transfers. 6 Free Transfers between now and the final means that it is imperative to load up on players with the best odds of reaching the final. England, Spain and Denmark seem to be favourites in their respective match-ups, with England also being the bookies' favourite to win the whole thing! Could it be coming home finally?!

Due to lack of reliable resources such as FPL Review, and a lack of expected data for international events such as World Cup 22 Qualifiers, Euro 20 Qualifiers, Nations League, etc. from the normally reliable FBREF, I decided to build my ow data model for the Euro Fantasy game. There are individuals with tremendous knowledge of the analytical aspect in the FPL community, so if someone wants to build their own data model, I would highly recommend Corridor of Uncertainty FPL podcast as the starting point. A brief "peek under the hood" has been explored in the first article of this series (https://www.fanteamfocus.com/strategy/euro-2020-fanteam-md3-draft-using-data-model).

Before we have a look at the Expected Value (EV) optimised team for MD5/Quarter-Final, let's review how the EV-optimised team for MD4 performed:

The MD4 draft had an EV of **70.5 xPts** and it ended up scoring a meagre **42.1 Pts**! A no-show (in terms of performance) for the Dutch assets was a shock, which was compounded by a stale game between Belgium and Portugal. There was also no inkling from the Spanish camp or any journalist that Jordi Alba would end up being benched for Gaya, which meant that he ended up getting a -0.3 penalty for impact and -1 for goals conceded after coming on at 3-1! It also meant that Maehle's monster haul was left on the bench, which would otherwise have elevated the score to some respectability. Yarmolenko's assist was also left on the bench, with Berardi disappointing yet again.

Moving onto MD5, my current draft is the result of running optimisation algorithm on points predicted by the data model:

The team has been assembled assuming a budget of 105.0m, and costs 104.6m. Captaining Harry Kane and vice-captaining Raheem Sterling leads to an Expected Value (EV) of **62.5 xPts**.

In order to take advantage of some favourable MD5 match-ups, it is important to have a good captaincy option as well as long term assets for the Semi-finals and the final. As we go further into the tournament, the potential for huge hauls reduces with good teams playing each other to negate any potential easy route to points. This also reduces the options for differentials, unless you are willing to back the underdog team's assets. Also, a reminder that you can now have a maximum of 4 assets from any side. A short summary of the rationale behind the model for the MD5 draft team:

1. **GOALKEEPERS (GK)**

Denmark has the third-best cleansheet odds in the quarter-finals (~43%), only behind England and Spain. Kasper Schmeichel is the cheapest GK available out of those countries, with a potential for some save points and impact points as well (Denmark, again, has the third-bets odds for winning their match-up, with ~48%). He can be paired with a cheap GK like Georgiy Bushchan from Ukraine (4.5m), which also accounts for an absurd upset like Ukraine qualifying for the semi-final.

2. **DEFENDERS (DEF)**

Joakim Maehle has the best odds xG* of all defenders (14%) and the third-best odds for an assist (~17%) as well. His attractive pricing, cleansheet odds (same as Schmeichel) and the prospect of qualifying for the semifinal means that he is a shoe-in the team. Jordi Alba has the second-best odds for an assist (~18%) out of all the defenders and Spain has the second-best odds for a cleansheet (~49%) as well as for a win (~60%). Jose Gaya went off with an injury against Croatia, which increases the odds of Alba getting the full 90 minutes. Aymeric Laporte warrants a selection because of his xMin. and odds, except with a lower attacking threat. Stones and Maguire are nailed in that English backline, with a decent goal threat on corners as well. England are the odds-on favourite for a cleansheet (~56%) and for a win (69%), which further increases the points potential for the English centre-backs.

3. **MIDFIELDERS (MID)**

Raheem Sterling is nailed-on to start and has the best odds xG (~41%) of all midfielders. The cleansheet odds and impact points potential make him a very attractive captaincy option as well. Due to heavy investment in the back-line, there are some compromises that have to be made in some of the midfield spots. Lorenzo Insigne's odds xG are pretty good (28%) and Jorginho is on penalties and has decent odds xG (~15%), along with Italy being the bookies' favourite to win the game against Belgium. Pierre-Emil Højbjerg and Tomas Soucek complete the cut-price midfield, with them having decent odds for assiting (~18%) and scoring (~15%) respectively.

4. **FORWARDS (FWD)**

Harry Kane has the best odds xG of all players in the game (~66%), best assist odds (20%) and is also on penalties. He finally broke his duck against Germany, and with England having the best chance of going all the way, he is a near-essential asset and worthy of the captain's armband for this round! Martin Braithwaite also broke his duck in the RO16 game, against Wales, and he faces Czech Republic with decent odds xG (32%). He might also be on penalties, which further

enhances his appeal as a fantasy asset. Completing the lineup is Patrick Schick, who is also on penalties, has already scored 4 goals in the tournament, and has an odds xG of around 33%.

*A note about the term "**odds xG**": While it may seem to be a conflicting term, odds xG implies the xG calculated by using the odds for a player scoring exactly one goal, two goals, three goals and so on. For example, if a player has 40% probability of scoring exactly 1 goal, 15% of scoring exactly 2 goals, and 3% probability of scoring exactly 3 goals, the odds xG is (1*0.4 + 2*0.15 + 3*0.03) = 0.79.

According to the model projections, the top players for MD5 are*:

Player	Country	Price	Pos	MD5 xPts
Harry Kane	England	13.2	FWD	6.7
Raheem Sterling	England	12	MID	5.8
Martin Braithwaite	Denmark	7.4	FWD	5.3
Mason Mount	England	8.5	MID	5.2
Romelu Lukaku	Belgium	11.5	FWD	5.1
Pierre Højbjerg	Denmark	6.6	MID	5.0
Gerard Moreno	Spain	8	FWD	4.9
Jordi Alba	Spain	6.5	DEF	4.9
Lorenzo Insigne	Italy	8.1	MID	4.8
Patrik Schick	Czech Republic	5.5	FWD	4.8

*Assuming the player starts

Another valuable metric might be understanding the top value picks for MD5, which according to the model projections, are as follows:

Player	Country	Price	Pos	MD5 xPts	Value (xPts per million)
Joakim Mæhle	Denmark	4.7	DEF	4.7	0.9972
Patrik Schick	Czech Republic	5.5	FWD	4.7	0.8656
Mikkel Damsgaard	Denmark	5.6	FWD	4.6	0.8264
Simon Kjær	Denmark	5	DEF	4.0	0.8031
Tomáš Souček	Czech Republic	5.1	MID	4.0	0.7975
Vladimír Darida	Czech Republic	5	MID	3.8	0.7649
Pierre Højbjerg	Denmark	6.6	MID	5.0	0.7567
Jordi Alba	Spain	6.5	DEF	4.9	0.7426
John Stones	England	6.2	DEF	4.5	0.7274
Jannik Vestergaard	Denmark	5.4	DEF	3.9	0.7224

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