EURO 2020 FANTEAM MD4 DRAFT USING DATA MODEL

The group stage of Euro 2020 has ended with no notable exits. Round of 16 (RO16) is marked by the Wildcard which must be used between MD3 and MD4 in order to prep. for future MDs and remove any eliminated players. Only 6 free transfers (FTs) are available once the Round of 16 starts, all the way up to the final, which is why it is critical to consider good and long-term assets going ahead.

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 MD4/Round of 16, we would be remiss to not have a look at how the MD3 draft performed:

The MD3 draft had an EV of **84.7 xPts** and it ended up scoring **89.2 Pts**! A brief note on Expected Value for readers who are new to this concept - The key idea here is that we can estimate the percentage chance of several outcomes. For example, before a match we might think there is a 32% chance Cristiano Ronaldo was going to score 0 goals, 42% chance he would score 1 and a 10% chance he would score two. His mean output can be calculated to be 0.8 goals based on these beliefs. If we apply a similar concept for all avenues of returns, i.e., Gametime, Goal, Assist, Clean Sheet, OG, Cards, etc., we arrive at the EV of a player for that particular game. Its feasibility might not be relevant every time, as is apparent from the EV for the roll of a die, which is 3.5! Of course, we know that it is not possible to roll a 3.5 on a die, but it is the average result of a large number of trials for that event.

Moving onto MD4, my current draft is the result of running optimisation algorithm on points predicted by my data model:

The team has been assembled assuming a budget of 105.0m, and costs 104.9m. Captaining Depay and vice-captaining Wijnaldum leads to an Expected Value (EV) of **70.5 xPts**.

In order to take advantage of some favourable MD4 match-ups, it is important to have a good captaincy option as well as long term assets for the Quarter-finals and further. A short summary of the rationale behind the model for the MD4 draft team:

1. GOALKEEPERS (GK)

Italy have been exceptional in the Group Stage with 3 cleansheets, and are the odds-on favourite for a cleansheet in the RO16 (~56%). Donnarumma is the best GK to have for this round, due to Italy's fixture against Austria. His likely Quarter-final opponent is Belgium (~54% possibility), which will enable some save points from him in the worst-case scenario that Italy exits the tournament. Pairing him with a sub-5m GK like Olsen enables the maximum use of funds for outfield players.

2. DEFENDERS (DEF)

Denzel Dumfries has the second-best odds for scoring a goal as well as providing an assist of all defenders in MD4 (~15% and ~17% respectively). He has had his rest in MD3 as well, and should be raring to go in a favourable match-up against Czech Republic, with the 5th best cleansheet odds (~44%). Similar to Donnarumma, Bonucci is critical to the Italian defence, and should provide decent set-piece threat as well, along with 90 xMin. Jordi Alba also has a decent chance of a cleansheet (~51%) against Croatia, while providing decent attacking threat and good expected minutes due to his captaincy status. Maehle and Augustinsson complete the defence, and are good value players who are most likely to make it out of their RO16 fixture unscathed, against Wales and Ukraine respectively.

3. MIDFIELDERS (MID)

Wijnaldum plays in a far more attacking role for Netherlands as opposed to Liverpool, which shows with him racking up an impressive 0.82 npxG+A p90(non-penalty expected goals and assists per 90 minutes). Memphis Depay is the cheat code in FanTeam, with him being classified as a midfielder and having access to cleansheet points, extra point for a goal while playing up top. He is once again the captaincy choice for MD4 and also has the best odds of all midfielders for scoring (~47%) and assisting (~33%) a goal. Berardi is second-favourite for scoring a goal (~36%), which makes him a shoe-in at his price. Forsberg also has pretty good odds (~31%) for scoring, and is also on penalties. The fifth midfielder spot can go to someone besides Yarmolenko if we are betting on Sweden beating Ukraine, such as Pedri (6.0m) or Rabiot (6.0m), which would save an FT down the line.

4. FORWARDS (FWD)

Luis Enrique, the Spanish manager, finally showed faith in Gerard Moreno by handing him two starts in a row and it paid off, with Moreno being one of the best players on the pitch. His 0.65 npxG+A p90 is more than decent, and is backed up by him being the odds-on favourite striker to score a goal (~44%). Lukaku will be after that Golden Boot, and his odds of scoring (~43%) are not far behind Moreno. Completing the trifecta is Griezmann, who is the odds-on favourite striker for providing an assist (~29%), and has decent odds of scoring a goal as well. The additional point for completing 90 minutes swings the selection from Benzema to Griezmann, barring which it is very difficult to separate the two with Benzema apparently being on penalties!
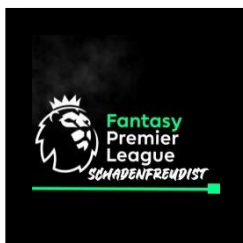
According to the model projections, the top players for MD4 are*:

Player	Country	Price	Pos	MD4 xPts
Memphis Depay	Netherlands	€ 8.5	MID	8.6
Georginio Wijnaldum	Netherlands	€ 7.1	MID	6.4
Romelu Lukaku	Belgium	€ 11.5	FWD	5.7
Antoine Griezmann	France	€ 10.4	FWD	5.6
Harry Kane	England	€ 13.2	FWD	5.5
Cristiano Ronaldo	Portugal	€ 10.2	FWD	5.5
Lorenzo Insigne	Italy	€ 8.1	MID	5.4
Domenico Berardi	Italy	€ 7.6	MID	5.4
Emil Forsberg	Sweden	€ 5.6	MID	5.4
Kylian Mbappé	France	€ 12.7	FWD	5.3

*Assuming the player starts

Another valuable metric might be understanding the top value picks for MD4, which according to the model projections, are as follows:

Player	Country	Price	Pos	MD4 xPts	Value (xPts per million)
Joakim Mæhle	Denmark	€ 4.5	DEF	4.65	1.0343
Memphis Depay	Netherlands	€ 8.5	MID	8.64	1.0163
Emil Forsberg	Sweden	€ 5.6	MID	5.40	0.9645
Maarten Stekelenburg	Netherlands	€ 4.7	GK	4.42	0.9403
Georginio Wijnaldum	Netherlands	€ 7.1	MID	6.40	0.9021
Robin Olsen	Sweden	€ 4.7	GK	4.22	0.8986
Patrik Schick	Czech Republic	€ 5.3	FWD	4.73	0.8926
Ludwig Augustinsson	Sweden	€ 4.6	DEF	4.10	0.8905
Kasper Schmeichel	Denmark	€ 5.3	GK	4.70	0.8860
Albin Ekdal	Sweden	€ 4.0	MID	3.53	0.8825

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