PREMIER LEAGUE 2021/22 FANTEAM DRAFT USING DATA MODEL – GW2

The new season has begun with an extraordinary fantasy football week for most! Fernandes, Salah, Antonio, Benrahma, and Son as well as many others started their Premier League campaigns with a bang, and the attention now turns to GW2, in order to consolidate the start. To maximise the expected gains, it's time to delve into my proprietary data model to try and help readers get just that little added edge of Expected Value (EV). The data model was developed before the Euro2020 tournament and it helped earn a tidy bit of sum on FanTeam as well as finish with an OR of 302 in the Official Euro Fantasy game. All the previous articles pertaining to the data model can be found on the FanTeam Focus site, especially the debut article in which the nuances of my data model have been discussed (https://www.fanteamfocus.com/strategy/euro-2020-fanteam-md3-draft-using-data-model). While we have resources like FPL Review for FPL, there is a distinct lack of resources for FanTeam when it comes to EV modelling. If you are interested in building your own data model, I would highly recommend Corridor of Uncertainty FPL podcast as the starting point.

FanTeam Late registration entries start on 79 points (average score) for GW2. You get unlimited free transfers, the luxury of team sheets for Liverpool and Burnley, and maybe some leaked line-ups for the mouth-watering clash at the Etihad, between Manchester City and Norwich City. You could try and regain lost ground on these late entries by getting players you wouldn't have had in your team for GW1, but are good, long-term assets. Before we have a look at the Expected Value (EV) optimised team for GW2, let's review how the EV-optimised team for GW1 performed:

The GW1 draft had an EV of **66.3 xPts** and it ended up scoring a whopping **101.4 Pts**! Double West Ham attack, led by the reliable midfield duo of Bruno Fernandes and Mo Salah, came up trumps to help cross the 100-mark in the first GW! I've entered a team that will be using purely the data model to make moves, and the optimisation algorithm suggests rolling a transfer for this team with favourable match-ups across the board once again.

Moving onto GW2, the following draft is the result of running optimisation algorithm on points predicted by the data model:

The team has been assembled assuming a budget of 100.0m, and costs 100.0m. Captaining Mohamed Salah and vice-captaining Bruno Fernandes leads to an Expected Value (EV) of **59.7 xPts**.

In order to take advantage of some tasty GW2 match-ups, it is important to have a good captaincy option. Considering all press conferences that have taken place for GW2, expected minutes (xMin) have been adjusted. The stand-out fixtures for GW2 involve Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Brentford. A short summary of the rationale behind the draft for GW2:

1. GOALKEEPERS

Brighton continue to have good underlying stats from last season, and they continue to concede the odd goal regardless! Despite that, Watford is a great match up for Brighton (with a 48% cleansheet probability), and Sanchez + Gunn enables strengthening of the team in other areas while not compromising much on GK EV. Other GKs with high EV for GW2 include Ederson (6.0m) – 5.1 xPts, Alisson (6.0m) – 4.7 xPts, E. Mendy (6.0m) – 4.1 xPts, and Raya (4.5m) – 4.0 xPts.

2. DEFENDERS

Trent Alexander-Arnold (7.5m) has had a solid start to the season and is playing Burnley, with Liverpool the clear favourites for keeping a cleansheet (62%) and second-most favourites of all teams to win (83%). Alongside him, Harry Maguire (42% cleansheet probability) has decent goal-scoring odds, with 11% probability. United have great odds for winning (61%) as well, and Maguire (5.5m) continues to seem threatening on set-pieces as well. Supporting them ably is Sergio Reguilon (5.0m), who seems to have an attacking role in the new Spurs setup. Spurs have been backed by the bookies to keep a cleansheet as well (38%), and he has somewhat of a goal threat as well. Cristian Romero's arrival should help shore up the defence as well. Adam Webster (4.5m) and Luke Ayling (4.5m) complete the quintet, with Brighton ranking high on defence ratings, and Ayling finally delivering on last season's underlying stats with an absolute belter. Other defenders with high EV for GW1 include van Dijk (6.5m) – 5.0 xPts, Tsimikas (4.0m) – 4.7 xPts, Ruben Dias (6.0m) – 4.8 xPts and Joao Cancelo (6.0m) – 4.7 xPts.

3. MIDFIELDERS

Just like last GW, get Salah (12.5m) and Bruno Fernandes (12.0m) in your team! Mo Salah is the odds-on favourite to score a goal at 63%, with Bruno not far behind at 44%. With the additional points for cleansheet, 90 minutes completed, impact and Shots on Target, they are FanTeam gold. Accompanying them are Heung-Min Son (9.5m) and Bryan Mbeumo (5.5m), who are also favourites to score with 37% and 31% respectively. Supporting them (ably) is the 4.0m midfielder Kwadwo Baah, who provides the perfect bench fodder. Other midfielders with high EV include Sadio Mane (10.0m) – 6.6 xPts, Riyad Mahrez (8.5m) – 6.9 xPts, Ferrán Torres (7.0m) – 5.9 xPts, and Kevin de Bruyne (11.5m) – 5.8 xPts.

4. FORWARDS

There is a wealth of options in the mid-priced strikers market this season. Michail Antonio (7.5m) smashed Newcastle United in GW1 to support his stratospheric underlying stats, and he has 38% odds for scoring a goal yet again in GW2. Alongside him is the championship version of an xG monster in Ivan Toney (6.0m), who has been priced very kindly, is on penalties, and has a 36% goalscoring probability against a hapless Crystal Palace. Completing the trifecta is Patrick Bamford (7.5m), who remains indispensable to the Leeds line-up, is on penalties and has great goalscoring odds (43%). Other forwards with high EV include Danny Ings (8.0m) – 5.3 xPts, Neal Maupay (6.0m) – 4.9 xPts, Dominic Calvert-Lewin (8.0m) – 4.6 xPts and Jamie Vardy (9.5m) – 4.4 xPts.

According to the model projections, the top players for GW2 are*:

Player	Pos.	Price	Club	GW2 xPts
Mohamed Salah	MID	12.5	Liverpool	8.78
Riyad Mahrez	MID	8.5	Manchester City	6.92
Sadio Mané	MID	10	Liverpool	6.57
Trent Alexander-Arnold	DEF	7.5	Liverpool	6.53
Bruno Fernandes	MID	12	Manchester United	6.33
Ferrán Torres	MID	7	Manchester City	5.88
Kevin De Bruyne	MID	11.5	Manchester City	5.79
Raheem Sterling	MID	10	Manchester City	5.64
Ivan Toney	FWD	6	Brentford	5.53
Jack Grealish	MID	7.5	Manchester City	5.40

*Assuming the player starts

Another valuable metric might be understanding the top value picks, which according to the model projections, are as follows for GW2:

Player	Pos.	Price	Club	GW2 xPts	Value (xPts per million)
Konstantinos Tsimikas	DEF	4	Liverpool	4.70	1.17
Adam Webster	DEF	4.5	Brighton and Hove Albion	4.15	0.92
Lewis Dunk	DEF	5	Brighton and Hove Albion	4.61	0.92
Ivan Toney	FWD	6	Brentford	5.53	0.92
Solly March	DEF	5	Brighton and Hove Albion	4.59	0.92
Bryan Mbeumo	MID	5.5	Brentford	5.04	0.92
David Raya	GK	4.5	Brentford	4.00	0.89
Joel Matip	DEF	5	Liverpool	4.44	0.89
Sergio Reguilon	DEF	5	Tottenham Hotspur	4.43	0.89
Trent Alexander-Arnold	DEF	7.5	Liverpool	6.53	0.87

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