

The Guardian

What we predicted

- 1  Manchester City
- 2  Liverpool
- 3  Manchester United
- 4  Tottenham
- 5  Arsenal
- 6  Chelsea
- 7  Everton
- 8  West Ham United
- 9  Leicester City
- 10  Wolves
- 11  Burnley
- 12  Southampton
- 13  Newcastle United
- 14  Brighton
- 15  Fulham
- 16  Crystal Palace
- 17  Bournemouth
- 18  Watford
- 19  Huddersfield Town
- 20  Cardiff City

What actually happened

- 1  Manchester City
- 2  Liverpool
- 3  Chelsea
- 4  Tottenham
- 5  Arsenal
- 6  Manchester United
- 7  Wolves
- 8  Everton
- 9  Leicester City
- 10  West Ham United
- 11  Watford
- 12  Crystal Palace
- 13  Newcastle United
- 14  Bournemouth
- 15  Burnley
- 16  Southampton
- 17  Brighton
- 18  Cardiff City
- 19  Fulham
- 20  Huddersfield Town

Premier League 2018-19 review: our predictions

versus reality

We thought Manchester City would pip Liverpool to the title, but we also said Watford would go down

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Manchester City: predicted 1st, finished 1st

What we said: “Pep Guardiola’s talented side look well placed to become the first team to retain the Premier League title since Manchester United did it in 2009.”

What happened: Pep Guardiola’s talented side became the first team to retain the Premier League title since Manchester United did it in 2009.

Liverpool: predicted 2nd, finished 2nd

What we said: “Jürgen Klopp has spent big to address the weaknesses exposed in the Champions League final and the squad looks well equipped to challenge Manchester City for the title.”

What happened: This prediction lark is very easy. Naby Keïta, Fabinho, Xherdan Shaqiri and Alisson gave Liverpool more solidity and more strength in depth and they pushed City all the way.

Chelsea: predicted 6th, finished 3rd

What we said: “Maurizio Sarri’s pursuit of pleasure is unlikely to be dull but there are question marks over most areas of the squad and a flock of young talents whose time might be now or never.”

What happened: Chelsea did better than expected, finishing third in the Premier League and reaching a European final, but a lot of their fans found Sarri’s brand of football extremely dull.



Maurizio Sarri's pursuit of pleasure has not been to everyone's taste. Photograph: Darren Walsh/Chelsea FC via Getty Images

Tottenham Hotspur: predicted 4th, finished 4th

What we said: “By 15 September everything will be more or less ready and Tottenham, back from their exile around the North Circular Road, will begin their new era in London’s biggest club stadium with a lunchtime fixture against Liverpool. That will, inescapably, frame

whatever Mauricio Pochettino and his squad achieve in the next nine months.”

What happened: Tottenham returned to their stadium in April and the biggest match of their season will take place in Madrid in June.

Arsenal: predicted 5th, finished 5th

What we said: “Arsenal have turned to a coach who will work relentlessly on his players’ weaknesses. There will be more intensity and Emery has spoken about shifting the emphasis from dominating possession to showing remorseless hunger off the ball. A new Arsenal are gradually starting to take form.”

What happened: Arsenal finished fifth in the league as we predicted but, crucially, they made it to the Europa League final. Emery won the trophy three times as Sevilla manager; if he does it again with Arsenal, the club will be back in the Champions League.

Manchester United: predicted 3rd, finished 6th

What we said: “José Mourinho has been a discontented figure in recent weeks and the season must start well for Manchester United if they are to challenge City.”

What happened: The season did not start well and Mourinho was gone by Christmas. Ole Gunnar Solskjær took the job and broke a bunch of records: firstly for winning games and then for losing them.

Wolves: predicted 10th, finished 7th

What we said: “Nuno Espírito Santo’s Championship winners arrive looking well-prepared for life in the top flight where - for the first time ever - they will face none of their West Midlands rivals.”

What happened: Wolves were even better than we thought. They won the best-of-the-rest mini league and narrowly missed out on an FA Cup final.

Everton: predicted 7th, finished 8th

What we said: “The high managerial turnover - Silva’s is the fifth voice Everton players will have heard in just over two years if David Unsworth’s caretaker reign is included - has inevitably left a disjointed and uncertain team. By the end of this season it will be 24 years since Everton won a trophy. That would equal the worst drought in the club’s history.”

What happened: The trophy drought goes on, but at least they made it through the whole season without sacking another manager.

Leicester City: predicted 9th, finished 9th

What we said: “Claude Puel is under pressure at Leicester after inept performances at the end of last season and the departure of Riyad Mahrez.”

What happened: Claude Puel lost his job in February and Riyad Mahrez won the title (again) in May.



Riyad Mahrez won his second Premier League trophy this season.

Photograph: Matthew Ashton - AMA/Getty Images

West Ham United: predicted 8th, finished 10th

What we said: “With a new manager and a more nuanced transfer policy in place, West Ham kick off the season with increased optimism and a maverick vibe”

What happened: West Ham kicked off the season with four straight defeats but their quality gradually came to the fore over the season and they finished in the top half of the table.

Watford: predicted 18th, finished 11th

What we said: “For the third time in four seasons, bookmakers and the Guardian’s football writers are united in the belief Watford will be relegated. Despite never being seriously threatened by demotion at any point since they returned to the top flight in 2015, neutrals have never been convinced that the club’s manager-munching model looks like an appropriate blueprint for long-term survival.”

What happened: Bookmakers and the Guardian’s football writers were wrong. Not only did Watford stay up easily, but they also made it to the FA Cup final for the first time in 35 years.

Crystal Palace: predicted 16th, finished 12th

What we said: “Limited spending and the loss of key players leaves Crystal Palace in a precarious position. But in Roy Hodgson and Wilfried Zaha, there is reason to believe they can extend their stay in the top flight.”

What happened: Crystal Palace cruised to safety, beating Manchester City at the Etihad and Arsenal at the Emirates in the process.



Andros Townsend scored one of the goals of the season when Crystal Palace beat Manchester City at the Etihad. Photograph: Stu Forster/Getty Images

Newcastle United: predicted 13th, finished 13th

What we said: “Rafa Benítez is frustrated that he has not been allowed the players he wants and that is unlikely to change as he enters the final 12 months of his contract and Mike Ashley remains in charge”

What happened: Benítez stuck around, Ashley stuck around and Newcastle stuck around in the Premier League.

Bournemouth: predicted 17th, finished 14th

What we said: “Eddie Howe looks to have made typically shrewd acquisitions and will hope his young squad can again defy expectations and thrive in the top flight”

What happened: Predictably, they finished safely ensconced in midtable. Unfathomably, they smashed Chelsea 4-0 at home before losing 2-0 at Cardiff in their next match.

Burnley: predicted 11th, finished 15th

What we said: “Having finished seventh last season, expectations have been raised at Turf Moor and Sean Dyche is among those reaching for the stars. But a lack of squad depth allied to a Europa League run could prove problematic.”

What happened: Their run in the Europa League was even more taxing than we expected - they didn't win any of their first five league games - but they recovered well later in the season and glided to safety.

Southampton: predicted 12th, finished 16th

What we said: “In the bygone eras of Mauricio Pochettino and Ronald Koeman there was an endearing fearlessness about Southampton, especially at St Mary's. After resuscitating Saints last season, now Mark Hughes must find a way to reinvigorate them.”

What happened: Mark Hughes did not reinvigorate them. He was a total disaster, with Southampton winning just one of their first 16 games in the league. Ralph Hasenhüttl took over as manager in December and helped turned things around.



Southampton were in the relegation zone when they sacked Mark Hughes. They finished 16th. Photograph: Toby Melville/Reuters

Brighton: predicted 14th, finished 17th

What we said: “In a league this competitive, with precious little to separate the majority below the top six, there is no room for complacency in a team looking to avoid second-season syndrome. Encouragingly, however, it is unlikely that will happen at a club with Brighton’s sensible mindset.”

What happened: Brighton avoided second-season syndrome, avoided complacency and avoided relegation, but still decided to sack their manager the day after the season ended.

Cardiff City: predicted 20th, finished 18th

What we said: “One of the game’s most loved – and loathed – pantomime villains is back on the big stage. An old-school manager, Neil Warnock is determined to ruffle a few feathers on his return to the Premier League with Cardiff City.”

What happened: Politically, Neil Warnock is in the leave camp. And the same goes for his attempts to remain in the Premier League.

Fulham: predicted 15th, finished 19th

What we said: “While most promoted teams are generally content with survival in their first season back in the Premier League, there is a feeling that Fulham have loftier ambitions. Only time will tell but there is already a strong argument to be made that Fulham are “winning” the current transfer window, having bolstered the side that came up with what look to be a series of extremely shrewd acquisitions.

What happened: Fulham were a total shambles this season. Their signings were disastrous, they sacked two different managers and were relegated with five games to go.

Huddersfield Town: predicted 19th, finished 20th

What we said: “Huddersfield should not deviate too far from the approach that kept them on board last season, their first among the elite for 45 years. Their challenge is to evolve a little, to survive but with a touch more panache. They could do it.”

What happened: They didn’t do it. They played 38 games, won three of them and went down with 16 points and a goal difference of -54.

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