

= 2007 ? 08 Arsenal F.C. season =

The 2007 ? 08 season was the 110th season of competitive football played by Arsenal . The club ended their Premier League campaign in third position , having led the table for two @-@ thirds of the season . Arsenal made it into the quarter @-@ finals of the UEFA Champions League , but were eliminated on aggregate score against Liverpool . The team exited the FA Cup in the fifth round to Manchester United and lost in the semi @-@ finals of the Football League Cup to Tottenham Hotspur .

Arsenal sold striker and club record goalscorer Thierry Henry to Barcelona , in the transfer window . Other departures included first team players Fredrik Ljungberg and José Antonio Reyes to West Ham United and Atlético Madrid respectively ; defender Bacary Sagna and striker Eduardo were the notable purchases from AJ Auxerre and Dinamo Zagreb , respectively .

A strong start to the season saw Arsenal top the league table by September . Defeat against Sevilla in November ended a run of 28 matches undefeated and it was not until a month after did the team lose in the league for the first time , away at Middlesbrough . Arsenal extended their league lead to five points in February , but a career @-@ threatening injury to Eduardo against Birmingham City coincided with the team going on a run of four draws in the Premier League . Manchester United soon overtook them in first and defeat to Chelsea in March moved Arsenal down in third place , where they remained at the end of the season .

32 different players represented the club in four competitions and there were 16 different goalscorers . Emmanuel Adebayor was Arsenal 's top goalscorer in the 2007 ? 08 season ; he scored 30 goals in 48 appearances .

= = Background = =

The previous season was a transitional period for Arsenal . The club transferred a number of first @-@ team players such as defenders Sol Campbell and Lauren to Portsmouth and winger Robert Pirès to Spanish club Villarreal . After lengthy negotiations , Ashley Cole moved to Chelsea on the final day of the summer transfer window , in exchange for £ 5m and defender William Gallas . Arsenal played their home games at the newly constructed Emirates Stadium and drew their first game against Aston Villa . After they were defeated by Bolton Wanderers , manager Arsène Wenger admitted that his team were unlikely to make a serious challenge for the Premier League . However , even though they were a young and inexperienced team , Arsenal reached the final of the League Cup , where they were beaten 2 ? 1 by Chelsea . Elimination in the UEFA Champions League in the knockout stage (two @-@ legged matches played home and away) and FA Cup in the space of four days followed ? the club lost three games in succession for the first time since October 2002 . Arsenal eventually finished fourth in the league , level on points with third @-@ placed Liverpool .

= = Transfers = =

At the end of the 2006 ? 07 season , Arsenal transferred Fabrice Muamba to Birmingham City and released Mart Poom , who subsequently joined Watford on a free transfer . Jérémy Aliadière moved to Middlesbrough in a £ 2 million deal and club captain and record goalscorer Thierry Henry left to join Barcelona for a reported fee of £ 16 million . Henry commented that his decision to leave Arsenal was because of the departure of chairman David Dein and the uncertainty over Wenger 's future . Midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg and striker José Antonio Reyes departed the club in July 2007 , moving to West Ham United and Atlético Madrid respectively . Other players Arturo Lupoli , Ryan Garry and Joe O 'Cearuill left the club on free transfers . Defender Matthew Connolly , who joined Colchester United on loan for a six @-@ month period later signed for Queens Park Rangers .

Legia Warsaw goalkeeper Łukasz Fabiański was the first player Arsenal recruited of the new season . Next to arrive was striker Eduardo , who signed from Dinamo Zagreb , shortly followed by French defender Bacary Sagna . Lassana Diarra was purchased on transfer deadline day from Chelsea , but later transferred to Portsmouth in January after he was frustrated at limited playing

time : " I read that the club [Arsenal] wanted to keep me . But when you want to keep someone , you do it by playing them . This hasn 't been the case . "

In

Out

Loans out

= = Pre @-@ season = =

= = Premier League = =

A total of 20 teams competed in the Premier League in the 2007 ? 08 season . Each team played 38 matches ; two against every other team and one match at each club 's stadium . Three points were awarded for each win , one point per draw , and none for defeats . At the end of the season the top two teams qualified for the group stages of the UEFA Champions League ; teams in third and fourth needed to play a qualifier .

The provisional fixture list was released on 14 June 2007 , but was subject to change in the event of clashes with other competitions , inclement weather , or matches being selected for television coverage .

= = = August ? October = = =

Arsenal started their league campaign at home to Fulham on 12 August 2007 . A mistake by goalkeeper Jens Lehmann , " screw [ing] an attempted return pass against his own knee " , allowed striker David Healy to score , just under 52 seconds . However , a late penalty scored by Robin van Persie and a goal from Alexander Hleb resulted in the team winning the match . In their next match , away to Blackburn Rovers , another error by Lehmann ? this time letting David Dunn 's shot slip through his fingers and into the goalnet , meant the team drew 1 ? 1 . Cesc Fàbregas scored the winning goal against Manchester City , ten minutes before the end of the match . The result was followed with what The Guardian described as a " fluent attacking display " at home to Portsmouth , on the first day of September . Arsenal faced local rivals Tottenham Hotspur after a week @-@ long international break and went a goal behind when Gareth Bale ? s free @-@ kick beat goalkeeper Manuel Almunia , past the net . Emmanuel Adebayor scored the equaliser in the second half , before Fàbregas " piloted a 30 @-@ yarder beyond Paul Robinson in the 80th minute . " In stoppage time , Adebayor flicked the ball up and volleyed it into the top corner of Tottenham 's goal ; the result meant Arsenal went top of the league table , for the first time in the season . A week after , Adebayor scored a hat @-@ trick (three goals) in a 5 ? 0 win against Derby County . Van Persie scored the only goal against West Ham United on 29 September 2007 to maintain the lead at the top .

Two goals from Van Persie helped Arsenal beat Sunderland 3 ? 2 at home , on the first weekend of October . Second half goals from defender Kolo Touré and midfielder Tomá? Rosický against Bolton Wanderers , gave the team a seventh straight victory in the league . Arsenal played Liverpool on 28 October 2007 , a match billed as the " first great test " of their title credentials . Steven Gerrard gave Liverpool an early lead , from a free @-@ kick , but as the match went on , Arsenal began to dominate possession , eventually rewarded when Fábregas equalised in the 80th minute , from a Hleb through ball .

= = = November ? February = = =

November began with a home match against Manchester United . Going into the match , both clubs were level on points and goal difference , at the top of the league . In the 45th minute , Gallas inadvertently scored an own goal to give United the lead , before Fábregas equalised early in the second half . Cristiano Ronaldo scored what was thought to be the winning goal , eight minutes from

the end , but Arsenal equalised for the second time in the match via Gallas . The draw pleased Wenger , who after the game noted his team were " ... still charge of the title race because we are top with a game in hand " . A win against Reading at the Madejski Stadium on 12 November 2007 brought about Arsenal 's 1,000th Premier League goal , scored by Adebayor . Reading striker Dave Kitson afterwards praised Arsenal 's performance and asserted they were " the best team on the planet " : " The thing that amazes you most is they are not just passing to each other ? they are passing so that person can run on to the ball and then his mind is already made up what he is going to do next . It is just magic , it is unbelievable . "

Late goals scored by Gallas and Rosický at home to Wigan Athletic kept Arsenal three points clear of Manchester United in the league table , at the end of November . The win at Villa Park against Aston Villa in December , moved Arsenal five points clear at the top of the league table , and provoked speculation as to whether the club could go another league season unbeaten ; Wenger responded , " People will talk ... just let us play . " The team played out a 1 ? 1 draw at Newcastle United four days after and lost against Middlesbrough , ending a record of 22 league matches unbeaten . Arsenal beat Chelsea 1 ? 0 on 16 December 2007 and needed a late goal , scored by from substitute Nicklas Bendtner to win against Tottenham Hotspur . In spite of a draw at Portsmouth on Boxing Day , which moved Arsenal down to second place , a win against Everton helped the club move past Manchester United to the first @-@ place spot .

On 1 January 2008 , Eduardo and Adebayor each scored to earn Arsenal a win against West Ham United . The team dropped two points against Birmingham City , but a 3 ? 0 victory at Fulham meant that Arsenal retained their first @-@ place status . Goals scored by Mathieu Flamini , Adebayor and Fábregas helped Arsenal beat Newcastle United in the final week of January . The team became the first to reach 60 points in February , after winning 3 ? 1 against Manchester City ; Wenger described the feat as " phenomenal " . Manchester City 's defeat of Manchester United the following week meant a 2 ? 0 win at home to Blackburn Rovers put Arsenal five points clear in first spot , with 12 matches to play .

The team then faced Birmingham City at St Andrew 's . Shortly after kick @-@ off , defender Martin Taylor was sent off and took no further part in the game , after his tackle on Eduardo . The player 's challenge left the Arsenal striker with a broken leg ; he was ruled out from action for the rest of the season . James McFadden scored through a free @-@ kick in the 28th minute , before two Theo Walcott goals in the second half put Arsenal in the lead . In stoppage time , Gaël Clichy was penalised for a foul on Stuart Parnaby in the penalty area ; McFadden scored Birmingham 's awarded penalty to draw the match 2 ? 2 . It prompted Gallas to throw a tantrum : he attacked an advertising board situated on the side of the pitch and rested alone on the pitch , while his players headed for the dressing room . Wenger after the match called for a permanent football ban on tackler Taylor ; he later retracted the comment .

= = = March ? May = = =

A late equaliser at home to Aston Villa preserved Arsenal 's lead at the top of the Premier League to only a point . A goalless draw at Wigan Athletic , was followed by a fourth consecutive draw in the league , at home to Middlesbrough . On the same day , Manchester United moved above Arsenal , who recorded a 1 ? 0 win against Derby County . Prior to the trip to Stamford Bridge to face Chelsea , Wenger believed his team 's poor form was over and asserted that Arsenal would go on to win the league as they were " the most consistent team . " After Gallas missed a chance to score in the first half , Sagna put Arsenal in front , heading the ball into the goal net , from a corner in the 59th minute . Didier Drogba equalised for Chelsea in the 73rd minute and nine minutes later scored the winner , from a Nicolas Anelka flick @-@ on . The result pushed Chelsea up into second place and moved Arsenal down one ; both clubs were five and six points behind Manchester United respectively at the top . Wenger admitted the defeat was a " big setback " , going on to express that " Chelsea played long balls and we couldn 't deal with it . " At the Reebok Stadium on 29 March 2008 , Arsenal played Bolton Wanderers . The team went two goals down in the first half , both scored by Matthew Taylor and lost Abou Diaby , who was sent off for a foul on Gréтар Steinsson . The team 's " dramatic "

comeback however , in the form of a winning goal in stoppage time , secured their first league win at Bolton Wanderers ' ground in six years .

A 1 ? 1 draw against Liverpool in early April , sandwiched in between Champions League legs between both teams " disappointed " Wenger , who refused to concede winning the title . Defeat to Manchester United at Old Trafford on 13 April 2008 , however ended any realistic chance of overtaking the leaders , as United , the champions , needed two more wins to retain the title . Arsenal beat relegation @-@ threatened Reading 2 ? 0 the week after . Adebayor scored a hat @-@ trick against Derby County on 28 April 2008 , which made him the first player to score three goals , home and away against the same side in the same season . The win secured third place , pleasing Wenger who felt the team had a " great future ? I believe we were really unlucky not to win something this year . " Arsenal won their remaining two fixtures against Everton and Sunderland by a single goal , ending the campaign four points behind champions Manchester United .

= = = Match results = = =

= = = = Classification = = = =

Source :