

= 2001 ? 02 Arsenal F.C. season =

The 2001 ? 02 season was the 104th season of competitive football played by Arsenal . Having ended the previous season as FA Cup finalists and league runners @-@ up to Manchester United , the club went one better in this campaign , by completing the domestic double ? their second in four years and third overall . Arsenal won the Premier League by a seven @-@ point margin , were unbeaten away from home and managed the unique feat of scoring in every league game . They lost only three times in the division , all of which at home . At the Millennium Stadium , Arsenal beat Chelsea 2 ? 0 to win the 2002 FA Cup Final . In Europe however , they fared poorly as they were eliminated in the second group stage of the UEFA Champions League .

In the transfer window , Arsenal sold several fringe players , notably Nelson Vivas to Internazionale and Sylvinho to Celta Vigo ; goalkeeper John Lukic was released following his decision to retire . Goalkeeper Richard Wright was signed as an earmarked understudy to David Seaman , while midfielder Giovanni van Bronckhorst and striker Francis Jeffers were purchased in big money moves from Rangers and Everton respectively . Perhaps the marked signing for Arsenal was the acquisition of defender Sol Campbell , who moved from local rivals Tottenham Hotspur on a free transfer .

Manager Arsène Wenger was named Barclaycard Manager of the Year and midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg received the player equivalent ? the Barclaycard Player of the Year , in recognition of the team 's achievement . Winger Robert Pirès was given the accolade of being the Football Writers ' Association Footballer of the Year , while Thierry Henry ended the campaign as club and the league 's top goalscorer , the latter for which he was awarded the Premier League Golden Boot . At the end of the season , club captain Tony Adams announced his retirement from football ; he was followed by fellow defender Lee Dixon and club goalkeeping coach Bob Wilson .

= = Background = =

In the 2000 ? 01 season , Arsenal finished second in the Premier League for the third consecutive season ? this time ten points behind Manchester United . The title race was as good as over by February , when Arsenal lost 6 ? 1 to United at Old Trafford . The season gave priority to cups , with the best chance of ending their three @-@ year wait for a trophy being in the FA Cup ; Arsenal beat Tottenham Hotspur in the semi @-@ finals and met Liverpool in the final . Although they dominated most of the match and went a goal up , they succumbed to two late Michael Owen goals and lost 2 ? 1 .

= = = Transfers = = =

The cup final defeat prompted manager Arsène Wenger to admit new players would be brought in during the transfer window . To fill the seemingly void left by Emmanuel Petit in the centre of midfield , Giovanni van Bronckhorst was signed from Rangers for £ 8 @.@ 5 million . Teenager Francis Jeffers was purchased from Everton in an initial £ 8 million deal . Junichi Inamoto and Richard Wright were also recruited , with Nelson Vivas and Sylvinho departing the club . After a protracted transfer saga , which involved him questioning Arsenal 's ambitions and being linked to a move with Manchester United , midfielder Patrick Vieira remained at the club .

Perhaps the marked signing of the summer was defender Sol Campbell , who moved from rivals Tottenham Hotspur on a Bosman ruling . The player 's wage demands seemed to have extinguished Arsenal 's chances of signing the player at one point . Campbell was unveiled at a midday news conference on 3 July 2001 , which journalists " presumed had been called to announce goalkeeper Richard Wright 's arrival from Ipswich . " Wenger described Campbell as the " best " , adding : " I felt we could not compete on financial basis with the top clubs but we could give him a football challenge . "

= = = = In = = = =

===== Out =====

== Premier League ==

=== August ? October ===

Arsenal 's league campaign started on 18 August 2001 , with an away fixture at Middlesbrough . Thierry Henry scored the opening goal in the 43rd minute , before teammate Ray Parlour was sent off in the second half for a second bookable offence . In spite of the man disadvantage , Arsenal was awarded a late penalty which was converted in by Robert Pirès ? it was conceded by Ugo Ehiogu for a trip on Ashley Cole , who subsequently was sent off . Substitute Dennis Bergkamp added two goals in two minutes , in what finished a 4 ? 0 victory . At home to Leeds United , Arsenal conceded within the half @-@ hour after Ian Harte ? s " low , left @-@ footed free @-@ kick " beat goalkeeper Seaman . Although Sylvain Wiltord equalised moments after , striker Mark Viduka in the second half collected a pass from Harry Kewell and used his strength to beat Tony Adams and score for the visitors . In spite of an attacking formation change and Leeds going down to nine men , as Danny Mills and Lee Bowyer were dismissed , Arsenal was unable to break down their defence . Goals from Ljungberg , Wiltord , Henry and Kanu against Leicester City moved Arsenal into third place , a point behind joint @-@ leaders Everton and Leeds .

The team could only manage a draw against Chelsea on 8 September 2001 , in a game described by The Guardian writer David Lacey as one where " the teams simply battered away at each other until one cracked . " Henry scored the winning goal away to newly promoted outfit Fulham ; the 3 ? 1 victory moved Arsenal to the top of the league for the first time in the campaign . Against Bolton Wanderers , Arsenal was held to a 1 ? 1 draw after Jeffers goal was cancelled out by Michael Ricketts . A win at Derby County , where Henry scored two goals was followed by an identical scoreline against Southampton at the new St. Mary 's Stadium . At home to Blackburn Rovers , midfielder Keith Gillespie gave the visitors the lead , before Pirès equalised and Bergkamp put Arsenal in front . A mistake by Lauren presented David Dunn the chance to shoot " from 25 yards " and score . Henry 's controlled effort looked to have been the winner for Arsenal , until a pass by Tugay caused goalkeeper Wright to " race out of his goal " ? the loose ball was collected by Dunn who shot into the empty net . Although Wenger was disappointed with the manner of the defeat , he saw some encouragement : " What 's positive for everyone is that Manchester United are dropping points as well . But we need to rectify the fact we concede goals at home . " October ended with a draw against Sunderland , where notably former Arsenal player Stefan Schwarz equalised for the home side and Patrick Vieira missed a penalty .

=== November ? February ===

Arsenal 's first fixture of November was at home to Charlton Athletic . The team conceded four goals in 20 minutes and blew several chances to " kill the game " , in what was the club 's biggest home defeat in the league under Wenger . An away trip to local rivals Tottenham Hotspur became magnified with interest , given it marked the return of Campbell following his move to Arsenal . An 81st @-@ minute goal scored by Pirès put Arsenal into the lead , before a lapse by Wright in goal allowed Gus Poyet ? s shot to squirm from his grasp and enter the goalnet . Arsenal then faced league champions Manchester United and in spite of conceding inside 14 minutes through a Paul Scholes ? strike , Ljungberg equalised for them " with a wonderful chipped finish , following Gary Neville 's wretched error . " Arsenal improved in the second half but scored in unforeseen fashion : United goalkeeper Fabien Barthez passed the ball directly into the feet of Henry , who profited from the error and scored . Five minutes later , Barthez 's failure to grasp the ball presented Henry the chance to score his second , which he did . Both Henry and Wenger defended the opposition

goalkeeper , with the former , his international teammate saying : " Of course I was happy to score the goals but it was strange . He 's my good friend and I feel sorry for him ; I would rather have got them another way . "

Arsenal beat Ipswich Town on 1 December 2001 to put the club second in the league table . A week later the team played Aston Villa , . Goals from ex @-@ Arsenal midfielder Paul Merson and Steve Stone gave the visitors a deserved lead before Arsenal produced an " enthralling " fight back , capped off by Henry , who scored the winner in stoppage time . The team drew 1 ? 1 at West Ham United and lost more ground at the top of the league table following a comprehensive home defeat to Newcastle United . Arsenal began the Christmas period with a fixture against Liverpool and the team were without Vieira , who was suspended . Striker Michael Owen thought he had scored his 100th goal for Liverpool , which was acrobatically cleared off the line by Cole . Vieira 's replacement Giovanni van Bronckhorst was sent off in the 35th minute for a dive but the man disadvantage did not stop Arsenal " catching their opponents on the break " . The team scored the first goal of the match ? a penalty , converted by Henry minutes before the interval and " uncharacteristic slackness " by Steven Gerrard allowed Pirès to beat his defender and cross the ball from the left @-@ hand side ; it was met by Ljungberg , who nipped in at the far post to double Arsenal 's lead . Jari Litmanen pulled a goal back for Liverpool but Arsenal hung on to record their first win at Anfield in Wenger 's tenure . On Boxing Day Arsenal recorded a win against Chelsea and two days after , earned three points at home to Middlesbrough , courtesy of a headed winner by Cole .

In their first league match of 2002 , Arsenal hosted Liverpool at Highbury . The match brought " little but frustration " for the home side as Liverpool scored an equaliser six minutes after Ljungberg gave Arsenal the lead . More ground was lost and the initiative was handed to Manchester United , following a second successive stalemate in the league , this time away to Leeds on 20 January 2002 . With results going in Arsenal 's favour that midweek however , the club moved second in the table after a 3 ? 1 win against Leicester City . Victory away to Blackburn Rovers , where Oleg Luzhny was sent off in the second half and his defensive partner Campbell " provided the sort of display usually described as sterling " , kept Arsenal in @-@ touch of Manchester United .

A Jo Tessem equaliser for Southampton earned the visitors a point against Arsenal on 2 February 2002 ; in hindsight this proved to be the last time they dropped points in the league season . Wiltord scored the winning goal against Everton and Arsenal moved back to second place , which was obtained by Liverpool , following a 4 ? 1 win at home to Fulham .

= = = March ? May = = =

Arsenal recorded a 2 ? 0 win against Newcastle United on 2 March 2002 . The opening goal scored by Bergkamp was described as a " really clever goal " by opposition manager Sir Bobby Robson . The move involved the striker receiving a low pass from Pirès and under pressure from his marker Nikos Dabizas , he controlled the ball with one flick and went around before placing the ball into the right @-@ hand corner . Arsenal moved to the top of the table three days after , as they beat Derby County by one goal to nil . They were displaced by Manchester United the following night , albeit with the reigning champions having played a game more . An inspired performance by Pirès against Aston Villa on 17 March 2002 kept a point behind top spot ; the win was followed up by a comprehensive defeat of Sunderland , where all three Arsenal goals were scored in the first half .

Henry scored a brace against Charlton Athletic to move Arsenal back to first spot , one clear of Liverpool with a game @-@ in @-@ hand . They then played Tottenham Hotspur on 6 April 2002 and took the lead in the opening half through Ljungberg , via a deflection off goalkeeper Kasey Keller . Teddy Sheringham equalised for Spurs from the penalty spot , before Arsenal was awarded a spot kick when Henry was adjusted to have been fouled by Dean Richards . With Henry receiving treatment and normal penalty takers Edu and Bergkamp substituted , Lauren stepped up to take the responsibility and scored what was the winner . Victory against Ipswich Town and five days later at home against West Ham United , where Ljungberg and Kanu scored meant Arsenal was two wins away from securing the title . The team beat Bolton Wanderers at the Reebok Stadium , which mathematically ruled out Liverpool 's chances of winning the league and meant Manchester United

needed to beat Arsenal the following game to have any chance of retaining it . Ruud van Nistelrooy was surprisingly named on the bench for Sir Alex Ferguson 's side , with Arsenal missing Adams and Henry . Having withstood pressure from the home side in the first half , Wiltord scored for Arsenal in the second half , receiving a pass from Ljungberg in the build up . The win secured the double for the second time in four seasons and prompted Wenger to acclaim a " shift of power " in the league . On the final day of the season , Arsenal beat Everton by four goals to three , in a match where defender Lee Dixon and goalkeeping coach Bob Wilson received warm send @-@ offs from the crowd .

= = = Match results = = =

= = = Classification = = =

Source :