

= 1999 ? 2000 Arsenal F.C. season =

The 1999 ? 2000 season was the 102nd season of competitive football played by Arsenal . The club ended the campaign second in the league , 18 points behind Manchester United . Arsenal exited both domestic cup competitions on penalties , being eliminated by Leicester City in a FA Cup fourth round replay and by Middlesbrough at the same stage of the Football League Cup . For the second consecutive season Arsenal failed to progress past the group stage of the UEFA Champions League ; a third @-@ place finish however earned them a consolation place in the UEFA Cup . Arsenal eventually reached the final to play Galatasaray in Copenhagen ? the match was overshadowed by altercations between both sets of supporters . The team lost 4 ? 1 on penalties after a goalless draw .

A number of signings were made by Arsenal in the summer transfer window , namely defenders Sylvinho and Oleg Luzhny , and striker Thierry Henry , who joined from Juventus on a club record fee . Davor ?uker departed Real Madrid to sign for Arsenal , following Nicolas Anelka 's move in the opposite direction . Steve Bould left Arsenal to play for Sunderland , while Stephen Hughes signed for Everton in the spring .

Inconsistent performances in the league , particularly away from home , meant Arsenal never posed a serious threat to Manchester United , the reigning champions . Midfielder Patrick Vieira was suspended from playing for much of late autumn after a confrontation with West Ham United player Neil Ruddock . In October , Arsenal notably staged a comeback against Chelsea , with Nwankwo Kanu scoring a hat @-@ trick in the final 15 minutes of the game . A run of eight straight wins between March and May propelled Arsenal from fifth to second and the team finished on 73 points .

= = Background = =

Arsenal ended the previous season as runners @-@ up to Manchester United in the Premier League . The club made an indifferent start to the campaign as reigning league champions and failed to progress past the group stages of the UEFA Champions League . After defeat to Aston Villa in December 1998 , Arsenal embarked on a 19 match unbeaten run (21 in all competitions) to climb up the league table . The run in all competitions ended against Manchester United in a FA Cup semi @-@ final replay . In April Arsenal moved to the top of the Premier League after beating Middlesbrough 6 ? 1 , albeit having played a match more than Manchester United . A 3 ? 1 away win against Tottenham Hotspur put Arsenal three points clear as United lost to Liverpool on the same night . Going into the final two matches of the season both clubs were on the same points , but Arsenal 's defeat to Leeds United all but ended their chances of retaining the title .

At the start of the 1999 ? 2000 season , Arsenal ended its long @-@ standing kit sponsorship with JVC . The club signed a three @-@ year deal with SEGA as replacement , worth £ 10 million . The SEGA Dreamcast name was carried on the home kit , while SEGA was embroidered on the new yellow away kit .

= = = Transfers = = =

Frenchman Rémi Garde retired from career football at the end of the 1998 ? 99 season . Kaba Diawara left Arsenal six months after joining to sign for Olympique de Marseille . Defender Steve Bould moved to Sunderland for an estimated fee of £ 500 @,@ 000 , which ended his 11 @-@ year association with Arsenal . The player felt it was the " right decision " as he wanted first @-@ team football .

In May 1999 , Nicolas Anelka stated his desire to leave Arsenal and cited the English media as a reason for wanting to leave the club as they caused him " enormous problems on a personal level . " S.S. Lazio was interested in signing the player , but the Italian club refused to pay Arsenal 's asking price of £ 23 million . After Real Madrid reopened negotiations with Arsenal and Anelka , a deal was finally reached on 1 August 1999 and the player signed for the club , the next day . Arsenal sought to strengthen the squad 's attacking options first by signing Davor ?uker from Real Madrid ; the

player was prepared to take a pay cut to join the club . The club then signed Juventus forward Thierry Henry for a club record fee of £ 11 million . Wenger , who served as the player 's protégé at Monaco believed his best position was as a goalscorer : " He was the top scorer in the Under @-@ 17s for France when I first had him and I think that , as well as having the qualities of youth , pace and power , he is a good finisher . That is something he has not worked on enough in the last two years because he has played more wide , but I think he can become a central striker again . That is what we will try to develop together . "

Other additions to the squad included Sylvinho and Oleg Luzhny . Striker Luís Boa Morte moved to Southampton in August 1999 , while midfielder Stephen Hughes completed his transfer to Everton in March 2000 .

===== In =====

===== Out =====

===== Loan out =====

== Pre @-@ season and friendlies ==

In preparation for the forthcoming season , Arsenal played a series of friendlies . The club also staged a testimonial for defender Lee Dixon once the season commenced against Real Madrid .

== FA Charity Shield ==

The 1999 edition of the FA Charity Shield was contested between Manchester United and Arsenal . The game took place at Wembley Stadium on 1 August . Manchester United went ahead seven minutes before the end of the first half , but late goals from Kanu and Ray Parlour gave Arsenal victory in the match . Wenger believed the result showed that his team were " ready for the season " and thought it was " ... psychologically important to beat United , especially after the great run they have had " .

== Premier League ==

=== August ? October ===

Arsenal began the league season with a home fixture against Leicester City . Henry started the match on the substitutes ' bench along with Overmars and Upson , while ?uker was absent as he was unfit . After a quiet first half , Leicester scored the opening goal when Neil Lennon 's intervention prompted striker Tony Cottee to " gleefully pounce from inside the six @-@ yard box " . Dennis Bergkamp equalised for Arsenal in the 65th minute and with time running out , the home team scored the winner in unexpected circumstances . Defender Frank Sinclair headed the ball into the back of his team 's goal net , after Leicester failed to deal with a corner . Three days later , Emmanuel Petit and Bergkamp scored in Arsenal 's win against Derby County ; the team 's performance was described by Wenger as " more resilient than brilliant " . Arsenal drew 0 ? 0 with newly promoted Sunderland on 14 August 1999 , in a match where Petit and Bergkamp both suffered injuries . A week after the team faced Manchester United at Highbury . It was billed as " the world 's first live interactive match " , allowing viewers of Sky Digital access to statistics and alternative camera angles . United midfielder Roy Keane scored twice to overturn Arsenal 's 41st @-@ minute lead and inflict the home team 's first defeat since December 1997 . Arsenal recovered

three days later to defeat Bradford City by two goals to nil , but lost to Liverpool at Anfield in their final game of August .

September saw Arsenal win all of their league matches . At home to Aston Villa , ?uker scored his first goals for the club and earnt the praise of his manager Wenger : ? He is just obsessed by goals . You feel when he is inside the box he hits the target . ? Away to Southampton , it was the other signing Henry who scored his first goal for Arsenal . The player , on as a substitute , received the ball from Tony Adams and with his back to goal " some 20 yards out " , turned and curled it past goalkeeper Paul Jones . Henry later admitted his failure to score for Arsenal before then was getting him down : ? My goal today was very important for me . I have missed at least 14 or 15 chances for Arsenal and my confidence was low . ? Kanu scored the only goal of the match against Watford , which moved Arsenal in third position , two points behind leaders Manchester United .

Arsenal faced West Ham United in the first weekend of October . Dixon , Nigel Winterburn and Overmars were rested for the match , replaced by Luzhny , Slyvinho and ?uker . In spite of general dominance from Arsenal , West Ham striker Paolo di Canio scored in each half to win his team the match . Patrick Vieira was dismissed during play for a foul on Di Canio . A confrontation soon after occurred between the player and Neil Ruddock . Vieira was subsequently charged , banned for six matches and fined a record £ 45 @, @ 000 by The Football Association . ?uker scored twice against Everton at Highbury on 16 October 1999 . Arsenal then travelled to Stamford Bridge to face Chelsea . Goals from Tore André Flo and Dan Petrescu seemed to have given the home side victory , before Kanu scored a hat @-@ trick in the space of 15 minutes . His first involved extending his legs and stabbing the ball past goalkeeper Ed de Goey , once it fell kindly in his direction . The equaliser came in the 83rd minute : Kanu received the ball from Overmars , which took him away from goal but hit the ball to the left of De Goey ? s dive . In injury time Kanu , in the downpour , chased down the ball and dribbled past the stranded Chelsea goalkeeper on the byline , before curling the ball over Frank Leboeuf and into the far corner of the goal net . Kanu 's teammate ?uker described the third goal as " beautiful " , while Bergkamp added : " The skills he has got , the moves he makes , are something you like to watch and learn from . I watch him in training and it is a joy . " The month ended with a goalless draw at home to Newcastle United , which left Arsenal fourth , three points behind league leaders Leeds United .

= = = November ? February = = =

Arsenal 's first fixture of November was the North London derby against Tottenham Hotspur . After 20 minutes , Tottenham were 2 ? 0 up after goals from Steffen Iversen and Tim Sherwood . Vieira scored for Arsenal from a header , but there were no further goals in the game . In the second half Ljungberg was sent off , as was Keown in stoppage time , to reduce Arsenal to nine men . The team responded with a 5 ? 1 win against Middlesbrough , in which Overmars scored three goals . Arsenal then came from behind to beat Derby County on 28 November 1999 ; they ended the month in third , three points behind Leeds United in first .

Gilles Grimandi , Dixon and Overmars scored a goal apiece in Arsenal 's victory at Leicester City in early December . Matthew Upson was forced to come off the pitch before the half @-@ hour mark , after suffering a knee injury . Arsenal only managed a draw against Wimbledon on 18 December 1999 ; Henry 's second half goal cancelled out Wimbledon 's opener ? a cross by Marcus Gayle met Carl Cort , whose shot hit goalkeeper Alex Manninger 's left leg and went in . The poor form over Christmas continued : Arsenal lost 3 ? 2 to Coventry City on Boxing Day . Rob Hughes of The Times noted his concerns about Arsenal 's defence , which : " ... conceded 17 goals last season but now , at the halfway stage , [...] have already let in 20 " , but did go on to add " there was nothing lacking in the tenacity of Arsenal . " Vieira made his return for the match against league leaders Leeds United , who were eight points in front of Arsenal . Wenger reshuffled the defence , dropping Dixon and Winterburn for Luzhny and Sylvinho , while Grimandi replaced Keown who was injured . Ljungberg and Henry scored for Arsenal in their 2 ? 0 win to put the team third at the end of 1999 . Adams suggested after the Leeds match that his opponents ' inexperience and thin squad would jeopardise their chances of winning the league : ? They are still involved in the UEFA Cup and the

FA Cup as well . So come February time they will start to feel that pressure ? and you don 't know what it is like until you have been through it . "

On 3 January 2000 , Arsenal played Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough and were held to a 1 ? 1 draw . Two concerns for Arsenal were Overmars ' ankle injury sustained during the match and the absence of Kanu , who left to represent his country in the African Nations Cup . Arsenal recorded a 4 ? 1 win against Sunderland to move level on points with Manchester United in second , though the champions had three games in hand . The first was against Arsenal at Old Trafford on 24 January 2000 . Wenger selected five midfielders in his starting team , as injuries limited his forward options . Arsenal began the match the better of the two teams and led 1 ? 0 after 11 minutes , after good play from Ljungberg . United as the game went on looked " fresher " , with substitute Teddy Sheringham equalising in the second half .

February saw Arsenal 's title challenge take a turn for the worse , with consecutive defeats . The first came at Valley Parade , away to Bradford City . Striker Dean Saunders scored the match winner in the 57th minute , which marked Arsenal 's fifth defeat in a dozen away league games . The team then lost to Liverpool at home a week later , who moved into third place . Wenger said it " had been a very bad week " for Arsenal , and noted " qualification for third place [was] not over ? it 's still possible if we get our players back in the right shape " . The month ended with a 3 ? 1 win against Southampton , in which Bergkamp and Kanu returned to the starting line @-@ up .

= = = March ? May = = =

Dixon 's late goal earnt Arsenal a point against Aston Villa on 5 March 2000 . The team , without Adams , Keown and Overmars , lost to Middlesbrough a week later . Wenger conceded afterwards his team were paying for their participation in the UEFA Cup , as ? ? the recovery time is too short . We only had two and a half days , which is not enough , especially when you are travelling " . Arsenal beat their rivals Tottenham a week later . Henry , Grimandi and Kanu each scored in Arsenal 's 3 ? 0 victory against Coventry City . After 30 games , Arsenal were in fourth position , two points behind Liverpool in third and 13 away from leaders Manchester United .

In spite of playing the second half against Wimbledon with ten men after the dismissal of Luzhny , Arsenal defeated their London rivals by three goals to one . Before the game away to Leeds United on 16 April 2000 , both clubs observed a minute 's silence to honour the two Leeds fans who were murdered in Istanbul . Wenger and his players then presented bouquets of flowers to their counterparts . Arsenal went ahead in the 21st minute ? Henry beat defender Jonathan Woodgate for pace and scored his 20th goal of the season . Further goals by Keown , Kanu and Overmars resulted in a 4 ? 0 win and lifted Arsenal above Leeds into third , with a better goal difference . Arsenal beat Watford and continued their strong finish to the season with a 1 ? 0 win at Everton to move into second place . Wenger believed Manchester United , who retained their status as champions in April , had benefited from the league being " organised " in their favour : " They had a winter break . They didn 't play in the FA Cup . It was all wrong from the start . The break was good for them because at the same time we dropped points and so did the other teams . So when they came back they had the psychological advantage . "

Petit scored a 90th @-@ minute winner for Arsenal against West Ham United and a further win against Chelsea ensured Arsenal finished second , as Leeds and Liverpool failed to win their respective matches . Arsenal played out a 3 ? 3 draw against Sheffield Wednesday , which relegated their opponents in the process . Arsenal ended their league campaign against Newcastle United at St James ' Park . Wenger rested several first @-@ team players to prioritise the 2000 UEFA Cup Final the following week . Arsenal lost 4 ? 2 , with Newcastle striker Alan Shearer notably scoring the 300th goal of his career .

= = = Match results = = =

= = = Classification = = =

Source :