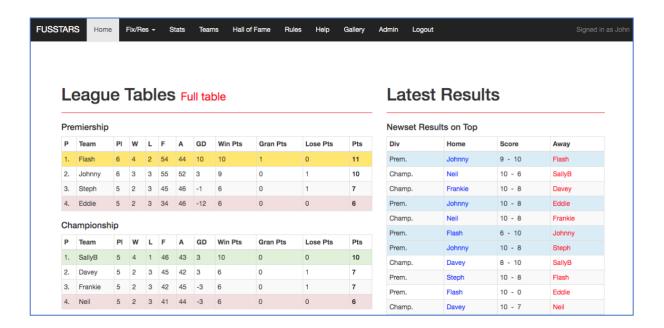I decided to write about *FusStars* in 4 parts:

1. Intro and a Thank You
2. The Story of *FusStars*
3. The Website Build, Problems and Fixes
4. Bells and Whistles

FUN FOR ALL
FUSSTARS
OFFICE FUSSBALL

FUSSTARS   Home   Fix/Res ▾   Stats   Teams   Hall of Fame   Rules   Help   Gallery   Admin   Logout   Signed in as John

League Tables Full table

Premiership

P	Team	Pl	W	L	F	A	GD	Win Pts	Gran Pts	Lose Pts	Pts
1.	Flash	6	4	2	54	44	10	10	1	0	11
2.	Johnny	6	3	3	55	52	3	9	0	1	10
3.	Steph	5	2	3	45	46	-1	6	0	1	7
4.	Eddie	5	2	3	34	46	-12	6	0	0	6

Championship

P	Team	Pl	W	L	F	A	GD	Win Pts	Gran Pts	Lose Pts	Pts
1.	SallyB	5	4	1	46	43	3	10	0	0	10
2.	Davey	5	2	3	45	42	3	6	0	1	7
3.	Frankie	5	2	3	42	45	-3	6	0	1	7
4.	Neil	5	2	3	41	44	-3	6	0	0	6

Latest Results

Newset Results on Top

Div	Home	Score	Away
Prem.	Johnny	9 - 10	Flash
Champ.	Neil	10 - 6	SallyB
Champ.	Frankie	10 - 8	Davey
Prem.	Johnny	10 - 8	Eddie
Champ.	Neil	10 - 8	Frankie
Prem.	Flash	6 - 10	Johnny
Prem.	Johnny	10 - 8	Steph
Champ.	Davey	8 - 10	SallyB
Prem.	Steph	10 - 8	Flash
Prem.	Flash	10 - 0	Eddie
Champ.	Davey	10 - 7	Neil

1 – Intro and a Thank You

I've been shifting through some old code I wrote and come across *FusStars* - A website I built in 2015.

At one time we had over 100 active players across 5 divisions, automated fixtures, league tables, leaderboards, promotions, relegations, plenty of stats and several *FusStars* champions. We even had a *FusStars* committee!

At the time of writing, it's been 5 years since the last line of code was written, however, I thought about all the fun this website brought to our office over so many years and so sharing the code with the public seemed like a nice thing to do.

If you work in an office with others, have a Fussball table and know how to send an email to IT... you know what to do!

Disclaimer: The Fussball website was built in a few weeks and the code is far from perfect, but it works!

Disclaimer 2: I've made a few tweaks since writing this piece as the code versions have moved in 5 years and it needed a few updates.

Thank You

Massive thank you to all the people who took part in *FusStars*. You all contributed in so many ways and created so many great memories.

Demo Site:

Note: The database is reset each night

http://www.stevenmcintosh.co.uk/Office-Fussball/

user: userdemo

Download:

You can find all download and install instructions on github. Enjoy the mayhem!

https://github.com/stevenmcintosh/Office-Fussball

2 - The Story of *FusStars*

A story of how it all started

Sometime ago (back in 2015) our office bought a fussball table.

It was an instant hit.

Lunch times were fun again and the kitchen area was the place to be.

It was a great laugh. Morale was high.

People were challenging others at 9am and getting their revenge by midday.

Everyone got involved. Even the bosses.

People were calling out others, there was early rivalry, side bets and plenty of thrillers.

However, remembering who you played and the scores brought much controversy. The solution seemed obvious.

Post-It Notes.

You could see them all over the office, little pink and yellow squares stuck to screens and keyboards. Jonny 10-4, Luke 10-8, Sarah 7-10.

Preying the glue would hold overnight to avoid the cleaner sweeping away your victories.

Whiteboards

It didn't take long before Post-It notes evolved to whiteboards. Names and dates, aggregated scores, pounds signs and smiley faces galore... Green for wins, red for losses. It was fun, but messy.

Unfortunately, the whiteboard couldn't do maths and erasing those important database diagrams wasn't helpful.

Excel

We quickly moved to the best tool in the world in Excel. It was the natural progression. There we could enter scores, dates, even timestamps. The Excel wizards amongst us could add endless stats, produce rankings, games played, goal averages etc, we could even conditional format all those 10-0's, highlight the biggest losers and create charts that would show the best of the best.

It was going to work and it was going to be great!

Except it didn't and it wasn't.

There were multiple sheets, shared files, different versions, duplicated games, incorrect results, broken formulas, several admins. No one knew who was doing what. It was fussball chaos.

Excel (again)

We started over. One person administrating the spreadsheet. Nothing could go wrong.

We we're naive. It was worse.

One poor admin received 100's of messages a day over email, skype and eventually SMS. God forbid they went on leave. Results were backlogged. It was mayhem.

We couldn't end the fussball though, there were too any of us and we we're too committed.

Website

I did what any web developer would do in this situation. I cancelled my social life for 2 weeks and built a fussball site.

3 - The Website Build, Problems and Fixes

When the decision was finally made to move from Excel to a website, there were 6 main problems that I could foresee.

1. We needed a website fast, like yesterday
2. Everyone wanted to play everyone
3. There was no obvious way to input victories and loses
4. There was no one to administrate the dreaded 'forgot login' issues
5. With over 100 players, it was hard to know who was at similar levels
6. Productivity was falling because everyone was playing fussball

Problem 1 – We needed a website fast, like yesterday

PHP and MySQL were my go-to languages for website builds at speed and areas I'm very strong at so that was that. I then settled on using a MVC framework model as there are hundreds of downloadable templates out there with proven track records. This meant I could get cracking straight away.

I forecasted a delivery date of 3 weeks and aimed for two (over promise, under deliver right?).

That gave me some leverage and a buffer for the imminent problems I hadn't yet thought of.

I de-prioritised aesthetics and cut some corners such as validation and user work-flow (not recommended), which allowed a MVP working version in record time. I could then come back to the above gaps at a later stage (which I did).

Problem 2 - Everyone wanted to play everyone

I built an administration area that enabled the creation of league tables (divisions). Every person was added into a division based on assumed similar ability.

The website then automated a sequential fixture list where over the course of a 'fussball season' you played each opponent in your league twice.

This ensured that everyone played the same number of games and there was a natural order to who was playing when and where.

Problem 3 - There was no obvious way to input victories and loses

I considered just asking the players to email me (or an admin) who could then enter the results, but this would create a lot of administration and noise, which was not practical.

I then considered allowing players to enter their own results, but forward thinking, this would go pear shaped at some point. Players often enter wrong results or dispute scores. More admin effort.

The solution here was allowing the players to enter their results and awaiting their opponents to either confirm or deny the result. If denied, the result was reset. If approved the result was locked in and the website was updated for everyone to see. Fully automated, no admin needed.

Problem 4 - There was no-one to administrate the dreaded 'forgot login' issues

The standard route for anyone who forgets their password to click on the 'forgotten password' link, however, this would require an email being sent to a personal email address, which the player might not be able to access from the office network. Not ideal.

The solution here was to hook the website to the local Active Directory. I used the PHP LDAP Class and read the documentation. From here I was able to connect to the office network Active Directory successfully.

Players could now log in using their Windows username and password. Problem solved. No admin needed.

Problem 5 - With over 100 players, it was hard to know who was at similar levels

I created a simple point structure. The player with the most points in their division at the end of a season was promoted and the player with the least points was relegated. This meant that players ability would soon balance out as well as extra incentive and motivation to win your games.

The player who finished top of the highest division was declared the fussball champion and entered to the Hall of Fame with eternal bragging rights.

Problem 6 – Productivity was falling because everyone was playing fussball

OK the falling productivity bit is probably not true, but it was believable at the rate is was drawing attention. But even if it was true, not all problems need to be fixed. People were taking much needed breaks, mingling with their colleagues for the first time and morale was on the up!

There was no stopping it.

As soon as the website was ready, *FusStars* was launched.

It worked beautifully. For years the fussball table commanded the best of the best. We had 7 longs seasons with thousands of goals, plenty of drama, thrillers, thrashings and misery. Perhaps most importantly, we had structure. Everything was automated. It worked so well. Fixtures were organised, leagues took shape and champions were declared.

I even managed to win the Premier League once.

To this day, *FusStars* is still going strong and the company is winning.

4 – Bells and Whistles

User:

- Homepage (league tables and latest results)
- Fixtures
- League Tables
- My Results (page to enter your results for approval by opponent)
- Stats Page (top scorers, biggest wins, averages etc)
- Player Lists (teams)
- Hall of Fame (Best players of seasons gone by)
- Rules*
- Sportsbook on teams to win*
- Help Page (FAQ etc)*
- Gallery*
- Admin Area (various settings and configs)

Admin:

- Various Settings
    - Navigation items to display
    - Number of promoted / relegated teams
    - Login method (Active Directory on/off)
    - Site Name
    - Number of results to show on homepage
    - Scoring Systems (first to X goals).
- Users
- Fixture Creator
- Divisions
- Seasons
- Teams

*These areas require manual edits/uploads

**NOTE: This is a turnkey website that is purposely built for offices using Active Directory.