



Manager Sack Race

The international break has given us the perfect opportunity to assess the current managerial situation in the Premier League and where some value might lie in the sack race. Since the 2004/05 season there has been a grand total of 122 sackings in the Premier League at a rate of 7.63 per season, not including those managers who resigned or who saw out the rest of their contract and opted out of renewing. While that has risen to 9.5 over the past six seasons, last year seemed to revert to the norm with just the seven casualties.

Watford's relegation to the Championship means we've managed to get to an eighth Gameweek before a manager has been hoisted from the dugout, though with players off on international duty this is the perfect opportunity for boards to assess the situation at their clubs, and the market leaders for the next manager to leave his post are as follows:

5/2 – Slaven Bilic

7/2 – Chris Wilder

4/1 - Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

6/1 – Scott Parker

12/1 – Sean Dyche

20/1 – Steve Bruce

25/1 –David Moyes

33/1 – Marcelo Bielsa, Frank Lampard, Roy Hodgson

For us, the candidates at longer than 33/1 aren't exactly worth considering, while even the three currently at that price look too short for us. Marcelo Bielsa is likened to a god up in Leeds for his leading role in getting them back to the Premier League after a 16-year wait. While they've gone off the boil slightly after a thunderous start to the campaign, to even consider his sacking would be blasphemous up in Yorkshire and we're happy to rule him out of the running.

Chelsea boss Frank Lampard is a surprisingly short price considering the Blues recent form. After a shaky start to the season when their new look squad was taking time to jell, they're beginning to look like a real force up top and uncharacteristically solid at the back. They've still only lost the one game in all competitions this season, coming to Liverpool when playing over half the match with 10 men, so it's looking up for Blues fans and while a dip in form could result in speculation surrounding the boss, we'd fully expect there to be a casualty before Lampard.

You know what you're going to get with Roy Hodgson. His Crystal Palace side have been a mainstay in the Premier League under his tutelage, with hard fought, tight matches the norm. Sometimes they overperform for a spell and sometimes they drop lower than expected in the table, though ultimately, they end up around mid-table and this season looks to be no different. The Eagles are currently in 8th though with how tight the table is that could easily change dramatically after a couple more matches. The only reason the board would get rid of the former England manager is if they wanted to take the club in a different direction, though there's little indication of that happening any time soon and would likely be a post season job rather than taking the risk at this time, and again looks too short for us.

Criteria

Form

Crucially when seeking out the next casualty, form is a definitive factor. Of the 94 total managers sacked within the nine months of the season (ignoring summer months of May, June & July up until 2019/20) since 2004/05, only three have been sacked off the back of a victory as boards tend to view three points as a saving grace, at least until the next fixture, while 82% of such sackings have come following a defeat. Of course, form is all relative, so we've decided to separate the 'Big Six' and the rest. Indeed, the average amount of points a 'Big Six' manager earns in their five fixtures before their mid-season departure is a quite reasonable 5.7, which lowers to a miserly 2.9 for the remaining clubs. It seemed as though last season, owners were getting less patient down the bottom, seeing an average of 4.5 ppg in their five matches before the sack while 'Big Six' managers Pochettino and Unai Emery both left after just three points in five winless matches in the league.

2019/20 Premier League Managers Form Table (as of 20/10/2020)

Manager	Club	Form	Points	Best Price
Slaven Bilic	West Brom	LDDLL	2	5/2
Chris Wilder	Sheffield Utd	LDLLL	1	7/2
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer	Man Utd	LWDLW	7	4/1
Scott Parker	Fulham	LDLWL	4	6/1
Sean Dyche	Burnley	LDLLD	2	12/1
Steve Bruce	Newcastle	WLDWL	7	20/1
David Moyes	West Ham	WDDLW	8	25/1
Marcelo Bielsa	Leeds	DLWLL	4	33/1
Frank Lampard	Chelsea	WDDWW	11	33/1
Roy Hodgson	Crystal Palace	LDWLW	7	33/1

Yellow – Nearing Average of Sacked Managers (Based on 'Big Six' & non-'Big Six' value)

Red – Below Average of Sacked Managers (Based on 'Big Six' & non-'Big Six' value)

Of the candidates above, David Moyes (8pts), Steve Bruce (7pts), Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (7pts) and Scott Parker (4pts) are above their thresholds. West Ham haven't dropped below last season's standards in any match so far, either equalling or bettering their result from their corresponding fixtures last season and there is little reason for Moyes not to be given more time, and Steve Bruce is in a similar position being just five points off the top four after eight matches. Scott Parker signed a

new three year deal at the beginning of the season, which may indicate Tony Khan will give him a little more time than he did with Slavisa Jokanovic just two years ago, and with Fulham getting relegated that year Parker may be spared via lessons being learned.

That leaves Chris Wilder (1pt), Sean Dyche (2pts) and Slaven Bilic (2pts) as the three most likely candidates for the sack in regard to recent form, while the Solskjaer saga is always ready to rear its ugly head as soon as a result doesn't go their way.

Club Expectation

Table of Club Expectations Based on 2019/20 Season

Manager	Last Season	This Season
Frank Lampard	4	5
Roy Hodgson	14	8
David Moyes	16	12
Steve Bruce	13	13
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer	3	14
Marcelo Bielsa	P	15
Scott Parker	P	17
Slaven Bilic	P	18
Sean Dyche	10	19
Chris Wilder	9	20

Red – Teams currently below their finishing place the season before (for promoted teams anything within relegation)

While recent form is often the definitive factor, the expectation of the club comes hand in hand with that. Boards want to see clubs moving in the right direction, and a basic indicator is looking at how sides perform in relation to last season. Of the candidates mentioned, four are higher up in the league than they were in 2019/20, and five have dropped off to varying degrees. Frank Lampard's side are one place lower than they finished last season, though with the new signings starting to bed in, there are really positive signs coming out of Cobham at the moment, and barring a substantial drop down the table, they are very much in the mix at the top at this early stage of the season, while Roy Hodgson and David Moyes look to have be performing better than they were last year.

Bielsa and Parker's expectations will be to, at the very least, avoid relegation. The latter currently sits outside the bottom four though a couple of poor results could see them drop back down and we'd expect the Cottagers to be fighting the relegation battle this year, while Leeds will need to be careful not to be sucked in.

Slaven Bilic remains winless on his return to the top flight, though in truth there have been improvements in recent matches that won't have gone unnoticed by the board. While they remain the joint-leakiest defence in the league, 11 of their 17 goals were conceded in their opening three matches, and they've conceded just five in six now. Karlan Grant may take some time to find his feet, though his quality is unquestionable and if he starts to fire that could be a turning point for the

Baggies. Bilic has been sacked after the November international break once before, and he'll be desperate not to do so again, and at the prices he looks a little too short for us.

Sean Dyche, Chris Wilder and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer are the managers whose sides have dropped off the, so it's no surprise to see their names all toward the top of the market. Sean Dyche's side are currently winless and in any other scenario would be much shorter than 12/1 for the sack, though that would mean Burnley making their first Premier League sacking and with Dyche being the longest serving Premier League manager by quite a distance, he's earned time to prove he can right these early season wrongs. **Chris Wilder** may be subject to the infamous second season syndrome and although the table is very congested in these early stages, his side are six points worse off than they were last season from the corresponding six matches against non-promoted sides, so it really is a tricky period for the manager that took the Premier League by the scruff of the neck last term. A slight change in power at the top may work against the Englishman too as loyalties could prove less significant.

However, there's one man that has the full weight of the media on his shoulders heading into every match, and that man is **Ole Gunnar Solskjaer**. Yes, that's part and parcel of the Man United job, and despite winning seven successive away matches, the 'Theatre of Dreams' title is waring thin at the moment considering they haven't picked up three points there in the league since victory over relegated Bournemouth back at the beginning of July. His price has fluctuated from odds-on as far as 16/1 in recent months, though a failure to pick up three points at a West Brom side who have looked more solid defensively of late could spell the end for the Norwegian. The Red Devils are only one point worse off than they were from the corresponding fixtures last season, though they would have hoped for an improvement on results at the very least, and despite a congested table and their game in hand, 14th is simply too far off the pace for a club of that stature. A string of good results could ease the pressure, though equally a couple of poor one will mount it back on so at 4/1 is certainly worth a punt.

Best Bets:

[2pts: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer @ 4/1](#)

[1pt: Chris Wilders @ 7/2](#)