

41 Competitive football

A The championship

THE PREMIER LEAGUE

As the championship **reaches** its **climax**, Manchester City and Liverpool are still challenging for the **title**. Man City's next **opponents** are Fulham, **at home**, which looks to be a **relatively** easy game. Liverpool, however, face much **tougher opposition**, **away** at Arsenal. The manager is not **underestimating** the difficulty of the task. 'Arsenal are a quality side and still **contenders** for a place in the top four, so our **priority** is just that one game, and not to think about the championship title.'

GLOSSARY

league	a group of sports clubs that compete with each other for a prize
climax	the most important and exciting part of a book, film, game, etc.: reach a climax
title	the position of being the winner in a competition, especially in sport: <i>She has three world titles in cycling.</i>
opponent	(in sports or competitions) a person/team who plays against sb
at home	If a team plays at home , they play in their own stadium. OPP away (at Arsenal, etc.); home adj , away adj : an away/home game
relatively	to quite a large degree, especially when compared with others
tough	difficult
(the) opposition	the person or team you compete against in sport
underestimate	think that sb/sth is not as strong, good, etc. as they really are OPP overestimate
contender	a person or team with a chance of winning a competition
priority	sth that is more important or you must do before anything else: a top priority

1 Underline the main stress on these words. Use the **APP** to help you.

climax	underestimate	opponent	contender
relatively	priority	opposition	overestimate

2 Answer the questions.

- If something is **relatively** easy, is it quite easy or extremely easy?
- If it's a **tough** game, is it a very physical game, or a difficult game?
- Is the **opposition**, a team you are playing against or a team you don't like?
- In a competition, is a **contender** the team who is going to win it?
- If something is a **priority**, is it quite important or very important?
- If you've observed the opposition carefully, are you likely to **underestimate** them, **overestimate** them, or judge them well?
- Does a **climax** come at the beginning or the end?
- Does a **league** involve one team or many teams?

3 Complete the sentences.

- Our in the next game are a team that have won two championships, so it will be a very match.
- After his injury, Brown's top now is to get back to full fitness.
- There are no weak teams in the League, so you should never the opposition.
- There are 20 teams in the Premier
- Last week's game was easy, but the next match will be much tougher.
- Inter Milan are playing well, so they will be again for the championship.
- We are at this week to Spurs, and at Liverpool the following week.
- With just one round of games to go, the championship is now a climax.
- Chelsea have now won three premierships in recent years.



TEST YOURSELF

B What do football supporters think?

CHELSEA

We lack a bit of **consistency** and the manager is **under pressure**. However, I still think we have a **real chance** of being in the top four and **qualifying** for The Champions League.

SPURS

We have a habit of **dominating** the opposition, then we **throw it away** at the end. Last week's **defeat** was a bad one, but I still think we **stand a chance** of getting into the top four.

MANCHESTER UNITED

The new manager has **transformed** our season, and getting players back from injury has been a **real boost**. We had **no chance** of qualifying for Europe at Christmas, but now it's a possibility.

ARSENAL

We've **sorted out** one or two problems off the **pitch**, but after three defeats **in a row**, there may only be an **outside chance** of making the top four.

GLOSSARY

consistency	the quality of always behaving in the same way or having the same standard, etc. consistent <i>adj</i> OPP inconsistent	dominate	be more powerful, important or noticeable than others domination <i>n</i> ; dominant <i>adj</i>
under pressure	in an anxious situation, often because sb is forcing you to do sth in a certain way	throw sth away	waste or not use an opportunity
qualify (for sth)	win the right to enter a competition or continue to the next stage of it qualification <i>n</i>	defeat	an occasion when sb fails to win or be successful against sb else OPP victory
transform	change sth completely, usually in a positive way transformation <i>n</i>	sort sth out	find a solution to a problem
boost	sth that helps or encourages sb/sth	pitch	an area of ground where you play certain sports: a football/rugby pitch
		in a row	one after another, without a break

SPOTLIGHT *chance*

Chance is used in many phrases.

- *There's **no chance** that we will reach Sydney before night.*
- *We've only got an **outside chance** of promotion to the Premier League. (= a very small chance) **OPP a real/good chance***
- *Do you think we **stand a chance** of winning? (= have a possibility of winning)*
- *This season could be my **big chance**. (= opportunity for success) He's retiring soon, so this is his **last chance** to lead the team. (= final opportunity)*

4 Complete the sentences.

- The noun from qualify is
- The opposite of defeat is
- The opposite of consistent is
- The noun from dominate is
- The noun from transform is
- The noun from consistent is

5 Positive or negative? Write P or N.

- It's been a real boost.
- We've sorted it out.
- Another defeat.
- He transformed the team.
- We're inconsistent.
- Three victories in a row.
- I threw it away.
- I've been under pressure.
- We've got a real chance.
- We were dominant.

6 Complete the sentences.

- Next season could be my last of winning the championship.
- The is in bad condition because of the heavy rain.
- If we win the next two games, it will be a for the players and supporters.
- One more victory and it will be three wins in a
- We just away games that we really should win easily.
- One week we play well, the next we're rubbish; we lack
- If we win on Saturday, we will for the next round in the competition.
- I know the team is under, but they have to out their problems.
- Unfortunately, in our last four games, we've had one victory and three
- I don't think we a of winning the title.

7 ABOUT YOU Do you support a team? If so, how have they been playing recently? Write sentences using vocabulary from above, or tell a partner.



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