

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 : <i>an away/home game</i>
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 to help you.

2 Answer the questions.

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

3 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Our in the next game are a team that have won two championships, so it will be a very match.
- 2 After his injury, Brown's top now is to get back to full fitness.
- 3 There are no weak teams in the League, so you should never the opposition.
- 4 There are 20 teams in the Premier
- 5 Last week's game was easy, but the next match will be much tougher.
- 6 Inter Milan are playing well, so they will be again for the championship.
- 7 We are at this week to Spurs, and at Liverpool the following week.
- 8 With just one round of games to go, the championship is now a climax.
- 9 Chelsea have now won three premiership 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 adj OPP inconsistent
under pressure	in an anxious situation, often because sb is forcing you to do sth in a certain way
qualify (for sth)	win the right to enter a competition or continue to the next stage of it qualification n
transform	change sth completely, usually in a positive way transformation n
boost	sth that helps or encourages sb/sth

dominate	be more powerful, important or noticeable than others domination n; dominant adj
throw sth away	waste or not use an opportunity
defeat	an occasion when sb fails to win or be successful against sb else OPP victory
sort sth out	find a solution to a problem
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.

- 1 The noun from qualify is
- 2 The opposite of defeat is
- 3 The opposite of consistent is
- 4 The noun from dominate is
- 5 The noun from transform is
- 6 The noun from boost is

5 Positive or negative? Write P or N.

- 1 It's been a real boost.
- 2 We've sorted it out.
- 3 Another defeat.
- 4 He transformed the team.
- 5 We're inconsistent.
- 6 Three victories in a row.
- 7 I threw it away.
- 8 I've been under pressure.
- 9 We've got a real chance.
- 10 We were dominant.

6 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Next season could be my last of winning the championship.
- 2 The is in bad condition because of the heavy rain.
- 3 If we win the next two games, it will be a for the players and supporters.
- 4 One more victory and it will be three wins in a
- 5 We just away games that we really should win easily.
- 6 One week we play well, the next we're rubbish; we lack
- 7 If we win on Saturday, we will for the next round in the competition.
- 8 I know the team is under , but they have to out their problems.
- 9 Unfortunately, in our last four games, we've had one victory and three
- 10 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.

