

Dear All

Manchester United sacked their manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer yesterday. Ole was an ex- player with Manchester United and had a strong record as player. He was manager of the club from 2019. In these two years, he took Manchester United to a second and third place position in the league, which was seen as good. He has the third best record as Manchester United Manager after Alex Ferguson and Mourinho. Someone seen as a hero a few weeks ago, is now a zero and departs. Ole spent close to 400 million pounds at Manchester United to buy players. Some pundits say that the signing of Ronaldo disrupted the team and pattern of play he had envisaged, the signing being led by the owners and not himself, after that the team has not been the same. I have been reading about the sackings of football managers for some time now and the following note contains all that I have learnt.

1. The fatality or sacking rate of English premier League managers is about 56 % , which means only half the managers see the full season through for a team. We are not at the halfway stage and already 6 of the 20 managers have been sacked. Is this true for all of football? No!. The Spanish league has seen three sackings, the Italian league has seen four sackings and the German league has seen just 1 sacking.
2. So , why is the English league different and cruel?
3. The manager of a English football club comes with immense scrutiny and pressure. The fans are die-hard fans, fans for generations, they swear by the club and want the club to win every match. The noise to signal ratio is huge thanks to social media, every fan has an opinion on who should play and what the strategy should be. TV rights money is distributed 25 % based on where the club finishes in the 20 , and 25 % of what's called facility fees, which is the number of times consumers pick the team to watch the match. It is truly led by consumer/fan watching. The broadcasters have paid 6.6 million pounds to telecast each match of the EPL matches. So there's a lot of money involved. Last year, Liverpool finished second but got more money as fans chose them over others to watch live TV. Teams also have player revolts when a prima donna player or a bunch of players gang up to say, we don't get along with the manager. Media expectations are heavy, there is constant evaluation of strategy and tactics. It's a job that's doomed from the start.
4. Another important reason for the churn is the change of ownership in EPL. Today, we have many outsiders owning the clubs and they see it more as a business proposition as opposed to growing football or the love of football. Some of the owners carry their ego on the sleeve for every match.
5. What happens to the manager after their sacking? They come back to run another club. I think every club owner also recognizes that the manager is not solely responsible for the results even though he is solely accountable.
6. The most sacked managers in the history of the game are : Jose Mourinho sacked 4 times, Roy Hodgson sacked 5 times, Carlo Ancelotti sacked 5 times, Claudio Ranieri sacked 8 times.
7. The churn is huge. Chelsea has changed 13 managers in 16 years, Manchester United has changed 4, Arsenal the least at 1. Mid- season changes are about half the changes and end of season changes are about half. Lower placed clubs tend to change managers more than the top clubs. The win percentage for a top club is about 60-70 % , when that number drops closer to 50 % , then the manager is sacked. More than the losses, it's the margin of losses that count against a top club manager. The losses were wide for Ole , 4-1, 5-0 etc, that hurts fans and sentiments like nothing else.
8. So, does the team do better after a manager is sacked? This is called the bounce effect, data over twenty years shows that the team performance improves for six matches and then goes back to the previous average. If the manager were not sacked then the results are similar, i.e. there is a bounce maybe a month ahead and then settles at average again.

9. The sacking of a manager has an impact on players as alignments get redone and the sacking has no impact on fans. Fans seem to like the merry go round. Most fans are lifetime pass holders of the club. I once saw Barcelona lose at Barcelona and was surprised when the 100,000 fans in the stadium cheered the team/gave them a standing applause despite the loss, their philosophy is very different unlike English fans who tend to talk dirty to players after every loss
10. Is this the case for all sports managers or more in EPL? The average tenure of a football manager in EPL is about 2.19 years, that of NFL,NBA etc. in America is closer to 2.5

So, the question is why do people take the job ? I think people take the job hoping they will buck the trend, because they are committed to the cause of football and the club.

Will anyone one of us take a job where we know we will be replaced in two years? The answer is NO.

One thing I have never figured is the role of players in all this. The manager is responsible for the strategy and the players for execution, but somehow the manager is accountable for both strategy and execution in the end. Football is the world's most popular game, it's the most viewed game, it's called the beautiful game, it's hardly beautiful if you are a Manager !!

Feedback welcome

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