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# FPL Gameweeks 24-27 Preview

Gavin Juviler, Volunteer Reporter

Fantasy Premier League (FPL) just had one of its longest Gameweeks ever. And, in true FPL fashion, it was far and away the most disappointing of the season.

For those who don't play, the game itself is simple: at the beginning of the year, FPL "managers" are given £100 (virtual) to spend on 15 players— two goalkeepers, five defenders, five midfielders and three forwards—and each Gameweek, you get one free transfer to swap a player for another player. Additionally, you can make an extra transfer by spending four points. Every Gameweek, you start 11 of your players, choosing one as a captain, doubling their score.

FPL managers get points based on their players' performances in actual games in the English Premier League, England's top soccer division. Players earn points for scoring goals, registering assists or keeping a clean sheet. Managers are also given the following four chips: the triple captain, which triples your captain's score, the bench boost, which allows the points scored by your four bench players to count towards your total, the wildcard, which allows you to make unlimited transfers to completely change your team and the free hit, which allows you to make unlimited transfers that will only apply for the next Gameweek. Unlike most American fantasy sports, you do not face opponents head-to-head each week, but rather play to increase your rank in mini leagues as well as the overall standings based on a running point total. If you enjoy soccer, this is a great way to become more engaged with the matches.

Personally, I'm glad that Gameweek 24 has arrived, marking the end of the hellish, never-ending Gameweek 23. My team provided just two returns, a Diogo Jota assist and an Aaron Ramsdale clean sheet, for a total of 26 points. Putting the captain's armband on Emmanuel Dennis (Watford) proved to be a huge mistake, as the striker was sent off in a 3-0 loss to Norwich City and missed out on his team's second match of the week against Burnley. I can take some solace in the fact that most managers suffered alongside me, as reliable picks like Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool), Joao Cancelo (Manchester City), Michail Antonio (West Ham United) and Jarrod Bowen (West Ham United), as well as the other popular double Gameweek option, Josh King (Watford), all underperformed. Despite the low average score this week softening the blow of my own poor effort, I still can't wait to put this week behind me.

Conveniently, the recent double Gameweek announcements present the perfect opportunity to bounce back and move up the ranks. Gameweek 25 will see two teams double, with Manchester United hosting Southampton and Brighton and Brighton facing Watford and United away. Then in Gameweek 26, eight teams will double: Liverpool (NOR(H), LEE(H)), Leeds (MUN(H), LIV(A)), Arsenal (BRE(H), WOL(A)), Wolves (LEI(H), ARS(A)), Tottenham (MCI(A), BUR(A)), Burnley (BHA(A), TOT(H)), Crystal Palace (CHE(H), WAT(A)), and Watford (AVL(A), CRY(H)).

The standout picks here are Liverpool and Arsenal, both teams in good form in the league with some very nice fixtures in this double Gameweek. Alexander-Arnold and Mohamed Salah should be locks in your teams, but there is an interesting debate between Andy Robertson and Jota for that third Liverpool spot. With the addition of Luis Diaz to the Liverpool attack in the January transfer window, Jota's minutes could be at risk, so I would say Robertson is the better option for the double. However, if Jota is already in your team, I wouldn't make the switch, as the transfer is better spent on bringing in an additional double Gameweek player, not to mention the huge potential for attacking returns against Norwich and Leeds.

From Arsenal, Ramsdale, Kieran Tierney and Bukayo Saka are my three favorite picks. Brentford and Wolves can be quite tight at the back at times, so I wouldn't expect Arsenal to score a huge number of goals in these fixtures. They do look great for clean sheet potential though, and when Arsenal score, Saka is often involved. Gabriel Martinelli is another good option if you don't have the extra £1 to get Saka, as he provides a similar attacking threat and is cheap enough to be benched when Arsenal blank in Gameweek 27.

I'll also have my eye on Tottenham players for the double. Son Heung-min and Harry Kane are the obvious options here. A defender like Sergio Reguilón or Emerson Royal could be solid, though no wingback at the club is guaranteed to start at the moment. Even though the Manchester City match will be tough, Tottenham's counter-attacking style sometimes gives the champions problems and Son or Kane could certainly bag a goal in that fixture. But most of the points potential from those two will come in the Burnley game, a match that Tottenham should dominate against the relegation favorites.

If you already own most of these players and are looking for differentials (players who are not owned by a lot of managers, allowing you to increase your rank heavily when they perform well), or plan to play your wildcard or free hit to prepare for the double, there are some fringe options to consider. Crystal Palace's Odsonne Édouard has been on fire lately and plays Watford in the double. Burnley's new striker, Wout Weghorst, has regularly been a prolific scorer in the German Bundesliga and could double in Gameweek 27 as well. Finally, Leeds winger Raphinha (though hardly a fringe option) has a tough double Gameweek. Nevertheless, he certainly has the quality to return against either United or Liverpool.

Currently, my team looks like this: David de Gea, Ramsdale; Tariq Lamptey, Alexander-Arnold, Cancelo, Reguilón, Tino Livramento, Raphinha, Jota, Phil Foden, Bowen, Demarai Gray, Ollie Watkins, Antonio and Dennis (£6.9 in the bank). I plan to bring in Bruno Fernandes for Gray ahead of Gameweek 24 for Burnley, then roll a transfer into Gameweek 25 and captain Fernandes for his double against Southampton and Brighton. In Gameweek 26, I'll switch Fernandes to Salah and Foden to Saka using my two free transfers, giving me a total of eight double Gameweek players. Like most managers, I will be looking to use my triple captain chip on Salah in that week, as he plays two of the worst defensive sides in the league. I might also take a hit to bring Tierney in for Livramento or Lamptey if I feel like I want to truly attack the double. Then, in Gameweek 27, when Liverpool and Arsenal both blank, I'll use my first free hit. The only thing I don't like about this plan is that I have to go without Salah for Gameweek 24, when he will be back from AFCON and might play, and Gameweek 25, when he will almost certainly play against Burnley. This plan probably gives me the best chance to attack the double Gameweeks, but it does break the cardinal rule of FPL: always back Salah!