
Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 10-04-2008 23:01

He doesn't have a thread on this board. Now is as good a time as any, because I just found this YouTube clip of Ajax's goals in the 94/95 Champions League. Litmanen ran the show. He had it all: defence splitting passes, crosses, quick thinking assists at short range, headed goals, beating players with ease, the ability to break the net with both the left and right foot...

The greatest Ajax player ever.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bombanero - 10-04-2008 23:14

Is he the first footballer to retire from club football in order to concentrate on his international career?

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Impact Substitute - 10-04-2008 23:20

I watched the clip that Bryan posted, showing the Ajax destruction of Bayern in the 1995 CL semi. Football at it's very best, and Litmanen quite brilliant - unmarkable, I'd say.

A wonderful footballer.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by garcia - 11-04-2008 01:42

what a preposterously brilliant team ajax were at that time.

i was happy to be there when litmanen scored his best goal for liverpool, a 25 yard shot in off the post to beat spurs 1-0 at anfield.

he was clearly the best player on the pitch that day. shortly afterwards, houlhier said he hadn't got the legs for the premiership and froze him out.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by erwin - 11-04-2008 01:56

.

(not about jl as such ...)

How lovely are Ajax's colours!? And why are they so out of it now? And will they ever get back in it?

.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Inca - 11-04-2008 03:01

Was 94-95 when they beat Real Madrid at the Bernebeu 2-0, but should have had about 8 goals?

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Gyuri - 11-04-2008 03:14

Inca,

Is this the match you were referring to? I believe it was the CL group stage in '95-'96. It was also the match that sealed my Ajax fandom. I was in school in A'dam at the time and, being the front runner that I am, got caught up in all the excitement during my first exposure to European club football.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by PSounder No. 2* - 11-04-2008 06:07

That was right about the time when you could start to find at least a little bit of football on TV here in the States. Not 100 percent certain but I think the Ajax-Milan final was the first to be shown here on ESPN.

Litmanen was great but what a team: Finidi, Rijkaard, Danny Blind, the deBoers, and the youngsters Overmars, Kanu, Seedorf, Davids, Kluivert, Reiziger. Some team.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 11-04-2008 07:25

(I'm currently trying to sign Litmanen for Wolves on Football Manager 08.)

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bombanero - 11-04-2008 08:01

Back in the day he played for Lahden Reipas, one half of Lahti's great footballing rivalry. His club was founded in Vyborg and, like Ilves Kissat in Tampere, moved wholesale to lahti when the peace treaty necessitated the evacuation of karelia.

The other club, FC Kuusysi, beat Zenit St Petersburg and FC Sarajevo in the 1986 European Cup before going out in the Quarter Finals to the eventual winners Steaua Bucharest. Kuusysi and Reipas merged to become FC Lahti, which gets smaller crowds than either club got before the merger.

As always in these situations, the junior clubs kept their identity and are the ones that coach the youth of Lahti. This gives them a 'presence' in thousands of Lahti families that FC Lahti cannot hope to achieve, and means that if they ever managed to resurrect themselves they'd have a ready-made fan base. At present Kuusysi's juniors set up a new club called 'city stars' so that they didn't have to stop playing at 18, and they are now in the third tier. Reipas have no senior side.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dogbeak - 11-04-2008 08:54

(Mighty: don't!)

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 11-04-2008 09:23

Why not? He's only 36. Could definitely do a job as an 'impact' substitute when Karl Henry runs out of steam, I reckon.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dogbeak - 11-04-2008 09:46

Without wanting to derail this thread into epic geekery, he just isn't very good.

Anyway, mid-90s Ajax, eh? I still get twinges of nostalgia for a good Ajax side, but I can't romanticise them too much seeing as they're just the Dutch equivalent of a BRC. I'd probably feel more positively disposed if they'd stayed at De Meer, instead of that horrible box they play in now.

Saying Litmanen is Ajax's best ever player would be.. controversial, surely?

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 09:56

No, I think he was. He could defend as well. And at his peak he had pace as well.

If he hadn't gotten all those injuries he could have become the greatest player, ever, anywhere.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 11-04-2008 10:38

I'm probably still going to buy him, for the reason Alex Ferguson bought Laurent Blanc despite the fact he could barely move.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 11-04-2008 11:20

Litmanen was great but what a team: Finidi, Rijkaard, Danny Blind, the deBoers, and the youngsters Overmars, Kanu, Seedorf, Davids, Kluivert, Reiziger. Some team.

It was an amazing team.

Six of them ended up at Barcelona at various times afterwards. All flopped, with the arguable exception of Reiziger.

In fact, it was seven -- I forgot the great Bogarde . . .

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 11-04-2008 11:22

Litmanen is the greatest footballer I have ever seen with my own eyes, in 40 years of watching the game. Without his depressive illness he would have become the greatest footballer of all time, IMHO.

Most young Ajax fans would have him as their best Ajacied ever, some older ones would go for Cruijff, Keyzer or Swaart,

I suspect.

**

I missed that 0 -2 game against Real Madrid because I was in Detroit for some reason, but I read press reports, and the Spanish press were full of praise for Ajax, "We have seen the football of the 21st century" was one headline I remember.

The game was also notable for a 22m Litmanen free-kick that went into the goal and came back out off a stantion, - the referee gave no goal.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 12:18

Even when he came back to Ajax in 2002, almost crippled from years of injuries, he oozed class. He had that Paul McGrath like skill of appearing, almost out of nowhere, in the perfect position.

Six of them ended up at Barcelona at various times afterwards. All flopped, with the arguable exception of Reiziger.

Frank de Boer anchored the Barca defence for five seasons. Marc Overmars did very well at Barca.

edit: Kluivert scored 90 league goals for Barca. Bogarde played two full seasons there before leaving when Van Gaal was sacked.

Litmanen spent most of his time with the physio.

So I'd say that out of the seven, only Ronald de Boer "flopped" at Barca, in that he couldn't hold down a first team place.

And I just remembered the eighth: Edgar Davids. Went to Barca for half a year and turned their season around.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 11-04-2008 13:52

Marc Overmars did very well at Barca.

What? No he didn't. He's one of the most expensive mistakes in their history.

Some genius once worked out that all Patrick Kluivert's league goals for Barcelona had won the team something like 16 points.

Bogarde played two full seasons there before leaving when Van Gaal was sacked.

Yes, and he was dreadful. Frank de Boer routinely got killed in the Champions League while there as well. You're being extraordinarily generous to some of these players.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 11-04-2008 14:01

No I don't think he is, H.B.

You need to look at your own prejudices.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by ursus arctos - 11-04-2008 14:02

I was going to defend Frank De Boer, notwithstanding his problems in Europe (which were not all his fault), but I wouldn't stand up for either Overmars or Kluivert as being other than relative flops.

The Overmars/Petit transfer remains for me Exhibit A in support of the theory that Wenger is a master at knowing exactly when to sell players. Paddy Vieira is probably Exhibit B.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 11-04-2008 14:03

The Purple Cow wrote:
No I don't think he is, H.B.

You need to look at your own prejudices.

Get off the stage, will you. You're the guy who thinks Winston Bogarde was a fantastic player.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dotmund - 11-04-2008 15:43

I perhaps wonder if Johan Cruyff is in fact the greatest Ajax player ever. Either way, I always liked Litmanen. I think Liverpool criminally underused him during his time in England.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bombanero - 11-04-2008 15:58

He's still in England. Or at least, getting paid by an English club.

If he decides to sign for FC Lahti this summer I think I might well wet myself with excitement.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Inca - 11-04-2008 16:11

dotmund wrote:

I perhaps wonder if Johan Cruyff is in fact the greatest Ajax player ever. Either way, I always liked Litmanen. I think Liverpool criminally underused him during his time in England.

I could be wrong, but the impression I've gotten from Ajax fans--mostly on here--is that Cruyff was never really loved as an Ajax player like Litmanen was.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 19:37

Why should the amount of cash paid for Overmars have anything to do with him being a successful player or not? He went to Barca and held down a first team place during his entire time there. If he had spent most of his time on the bench, then maybe you could call him a flop. Overpriced, yes. Flop, no.

Kluivert was one of the better strikers in Europe for about three seasons at Barca, averaging at least a goal every two games. His form was nearly exactly the same as it was at Ajax, where he was always in the shadow of much better players. To flop means that you haven't lived up to expectations, but Kluivert knocked in the goals just as he did at Ajax.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 11-04-2008 19:50

He went to Barca and held down a first team place during his entire time there.

Overmars made 39 league starts for Barcelona in four years. That might be your definition of holding down a first team place, but it ain't mine.

His overall form for them was also pretty unimpressive compared to the way he played for Ajax and, to a slightly lesser extent, Arsenal. I remember watching him against Atletico Madrid one night in 2001 or so and wondering had he taken a load of drugs beforehand.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 11-04-2008 20:08

Arsenal were very lucky to get two good seasons out of Overmars after his injury, but in his last season at arsenal he was a joke. at £25 million he must be the worst value for money barcelona ever had (except for maybe the £29 million for saviola)

frank de boer was far too slow to play at centre half for barcelona. To be honest you basically need to be uperman to play at centre half for them I think.

Kluivert did score a good few goals for barcelona, but I could have done that playing alongside Figo and rivaldo. Kluivert didn't score any important goals. He just got paid an outrageous sum of money, partied and generally took the piss.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 20:15

Overmars made 39 league starts for Barcelona in four years. That might be your definition of holding down a first team place, but it ain't mine.

Was Henrik Larsson a flop at Barcelona?

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 11-04-2008 20:19

hmm, free transfer, first sub, set up both goals in cl final. He was ok.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 20:21

And I am the Life wrote:

Kluivert did score a good few goals for barcelona, but I could have done that playing alongside Figo and rivaldo.

That's just what he did at Ajax, scored goals alongside Kanu, Finidi, Litmanen and Ronald de Boer. Kluivert was never

the star at Ajax.

At Milan, when he was stuck up front all by himself in the typical Italian striker role, he failed.

He wasn't any better or worse at Barcelona than he was at Ajax, so could hardly be judged to have been a flop. He did exactly what any scout worth his salt would have predicted he would do. Until, that is, he started getting this ridiculous idea about becoming a playmaker.

Frank de Boer is probably one of the best centre/fullbacks in European football of the past 15 years. I don't like him, but he was good.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 11-04-2008 20:40

hmm, free transfer, first sub, set up both goals in cl final. He was ok.

Plus Larsson was 33 by the time he went out there. Overmars was 27 and supposed to be in his prime.

De Boer (I initially typed De Bore) was a very good player in the 1990s who disimproved sharply when he went to Spain. Some of Barcelona's worst ever European defeats happened with him in the team. It wasn't all his fault, Barca had some really bad defenders around that time (Okunowo, Christanval, Bogarde, a massively over-the-hill Nadal), but in general he did not do his stuff for that club. His chronic lack of pace didn't help, though it didn't seem to do him much harm while at Ajax.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 20:58

Overmars had the knees of a 33 year old by the time he got to Barca, yet he didn't do too badly for himself.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by PSounder No. 2* - 11-04-2008 21:20

I forgot Super Edwin van der Saar. He turned out OK -- perhaps by avoiding the career-killing trip to the Catalan?

My daughter says he bears a striking resemblance to the cast of "Meerkat Manor."

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 11-04-2008 21:22

van der saar was a disaster at juventus. They sent him to the optician to see if there was something seriously wrong with his eyes. there was a reason why he wound up at fulham.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by sixmartletsandaseagull - 11-04-2008 21:26

Here, in Italy, most of the people I speak to don't rate VDS, due to his difficult time at Juve. He seems to have chosen Turin to have his post-Ajax angst.

I think he has been, is, a top keeper, as do some of more enlightened ones who think there is a world outside their

window.

Some still refuse to rate Rush highly, for the same reason.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 11-04-2008 21:30

Ferguson could have bought Van der Sar in 1999 but was too much of a cheapskate and signed Bosnich instead.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by PSounder No. 2* - 12-04-2008 06:24

Ian, or Geddy, Alex and Neil?

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 12-04-2008 07:22

"Get off the stage, will you. You're the guy who thinks Winston Bogarde was a fantastic player."

I've never said he was a fantastic player, I said he was a very good player, which he certainly was back in the day. Check out the Real - Ajax video from earlier in this thread for evidence of that.

**

Inca's got it spot on, Ajax fans admire Crujff for his obvious skills but they don't particularly like him. His personal arrogance and sheer bloody mindedness caused a lot of damage to Ajax, and arguably prevented Oranje from winning the World Cup. His recent 'return' to Ajax, which collapsed the first time Van Basten stood up to him, hasn't helped.

In contrast, the average Ajax fan's love for Jari Litmanen, is unquestioning, all-embracing, all-encompassing and undiminished by time.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 13-04-2008 03:41

Check out the Real - Ajax video from earlier in this thread for evidence of that.

I've got that game on DVD somewhere. You or I could have played in defence for Ajax that night -- they were absolutely rampant.

Just been watching a BBC2 Storyville documentary about Barcelona's 03/04 season (their first under a new boardroom regime). There's a scene where Barca's finance director, Ferran Soriano, is talking in English to somebody on the phone while driving along a motorway. It turns out that Patrick Kluivert's representatives asked for €3 million while renegotiating his contract in 2000. The club gave them €1.5 million and sort of half-promised them another €500,000 further down the line, but that half million euro has obviously become a source of some rancour.

Later, Soriano and Aitor "Txiki" Beguiristain are having a meeting about the playing-staff budget for the upcoming 04/05 season. Soriano says: "Last year we had €54 million in fixed salaries, €13 million in bonuses. This year it's €56 million fixed, €20 million in bonuses."

Beguiristain says: "Not counting the big news that could happen? We could save a lot of dough there."

Soriano: "If Patrick goes, we save 10%. He's 10% of the total."

Beguiristain: "The squad will be cheaper next year."

Soriano: "That's very difficult. We've brought in expensive new players. It'd be cheaper if Patrick and Rustu went."

Beguiristain: "Four players eat up €13 million of the fixed salaries."

Kluivert left the club for Newcastle United that summer.

The documentary also includes a clip of him heading in a close-range equaliser against Real Madrid at the Bernabeu, so he did score at least one important goal for Barcelona.

It's very entertaining -- I'll PM the Rapidshare link to anyone who wants it.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bombanero - 13-04-2008 08:27

Yes please!

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 13-04-2008 09:00

"I've got that game on DVD somewhere. You or I could have played in defence for Ajax that night -- they were absolutely rampant."

Neat piece of deliberate-point-avoiding there, HB.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 13-04-2008 11:32

I've seen that documentary about Barca when Laporte came in. Edgar Davids' performances really saved their bacon.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 13-04-2008 12:26

I've sent you a PM, Bombanero.

Neat piece of deliberate-point-avoiding there, HB.

I'm not avoiding any point.

You're holding up one game from 1995, where Ajax were so much on top they could have had Muffin the Mule playing at left-back and still won, as evidence that Bogarde was a good player.

You're refusing to face the fact that he was an absolute fucking turkey at every single other club that he played for. This guy has won polls as Milan's worst ever foreign signing. He was a dud.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 13-04-2008 12:43

Total utter and complete bollocks.

He was very solid at the back, and as a re-trained winger he was one of the fastest wingbacks I have ever seen.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 13-04-2008 13:04

Sorry, what's bollocks? That he died a death at Milan, and then at Barcelona, and then at Chelsea? Did I imagine it all?

And who cares if he was fast. Pace is no use if you can't do the other stuff competently. Dwain Chambers is fast but I wouldn't want him in my team.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 13-04-2008 15:58

Unlike you I saw him play week in week-out at Ajax and he was a fine player.

Dunno who appointed you OTF's sole arbiter of football quality.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by gerontophile - 13-04-2008 16:07

In slightly related news, Sparta are now safe after a 4-2 home thumping of Heerenveen who were 2-0 up at half-time.

Uitstekend!

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by EIM - 13-04-2008 16:27

HB - I wouldn't mind a look at that doc.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 13-04-2008 16:38

Zeker uitstekend. Maar met Sander Westerveld in het doel wat kun hun mis gaan?

Seriously though, Sparta have got some decent players for a change. Charles Dissels I like, Youri Rose, Daryl Roberts too, and that Yugoslav whose name I can never remember Planjijljovic - or something. Good team easily worth of their lower mid-table place.

If you beat AZ next sunday, you'll finish the season just 3 points behind them. I wonder what odds you would have got against that last august?

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hieronymus Bosch - 13-04-2008 18:45

Dunno who appointed you OTF's sole arbiter of football quality.

Nobody did, but I know a shit player when I see one.

EIM, there'll be a PM for you in a second.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 13-04-2008 18:46

me tooo

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 13-04-2008 21:49

I wouldn't worry about H.B., he doesn't think that Roy Keane is good enough to merit a place in an All-time Irish XI.

Bogarde wasn't brilliant, but he certainly wasn't "shit". He was a more than decent player who could do a job in a team if used properly.

Incredibly, Ajax can still win the league. This realisation, however, will soon dawn on the players and they will return to pants soiling mode under the weight of the possibility, however hypothetical it might be.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by EIM - 13-04-2008 23:38

Cheers HB.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 09:23

It's not uncommon for a deeply average player to find himself in a good team and be lauded merely through his association with the success of those around him, those who are basically carrying him.

I can draw something of an analogy with someone we have been talking about a lot recently, Dirk Kuyt. Now of course I'm not comparing current Liverpool with 90s Ajax, however because Liverpool are doing ok at the moment, I have noticed that Kuyt has started to get some positive write ups in newspapers and on here despite remaining pretty much as awful as he has been all season and playing a sort of horrible emasculated role that required nothing more than lungpower.

And I'm afraid Winston Bogarde is Dirk Kuyt to me, a player who got seriously found out once he left the familiar confines of the Ajax set up.

Now of course there are plenty of great players who transfer clubs and don't always make a success of things for a variety of different reasons. Veron at Man United is a good example here, however if you look at the entirety of his career then you see that he was successful at the great majority of his clubs. That's a decent indicator of his talent. Bogarde on the other hand could not have had a worse career post Ajax if he had deliberately tried to fuck it all up - though I do realise that trying is not part of the Bogarde lexicon. He was an embarrassment in every sense and that's how his career will rightly be remembered.

Talking about Frank De Boer's pace misses the point of him. His yards came in his head, seeing stuff before others. His problem was with his physical decline through injury which made him tentative in physical encounters, as a result he was

weak and easy to shrug off the ball.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 09:55

"I do realise that trying is not part of the Bogarde lexicon."

???

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 14-04-2008 10:01

And I'm afraid Winston Bogarde is Dirk Kuyt to me, a player who got seriously found out once he left the familiar confines of the Ajax set up.

to a certain extent this is true of all of those players. At ajax they played a system. At ajax they automatically knew beforehand where their teammates were going to be and were a bit like one of those dynamo kiev teams, and because they could hang onto the ball for a long time players like bogarde de boer and reizinger didn't have their weaknesses exposed.

They were also a perfectly balanced team. There is that photograph in a beautiful orange, where you see Kluivert pressed up against the two centre halves, with overmars on one touchline, finidi on the other with Litmanen and davids pouring over the halfway line with the ball and all you can see is all that space between the defenders and their palpable sense of panic. The man with the ball has so many options, and so much space.

Even when Van Gaal tried to recreate the moment, like a catalonian great gatsby, the players themselves were different, and no-longer prepared/able to do everything that made them unbeatable.

De Boer's problem with pace was that barcelona never offered him the protection that Ajax did when the opposition got the ball, and frequently you would see de boer on his own in the vastness of the barcelona half confronted with two or three attackers pouring past him.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 10:35

to a certain extent this is true of all of those players.

I would say it is only true of some of them. The Ajax team wasn't a team of expensive superstars, like Chelsea, Real Madrid or Milan. It was a proper, you know, team. There were some players in that team who were outstanding: Litmanen, Kanu, the de Boers, Davids, Seedorf, Van der Sar. Then there were good players who complimented them: the likes of Kluivert, Bogarde, Reiziger and Blind. The problem is that various chairmen/fans just assumed that the whole team was brilliant. If somebody thinks that Kluivert flopped at Barca, then they obviously assume he was a world beater at Ajax. But he wasn't. He was exactly the same player at Barca as he was at Ajax: a decent enough striker, but not world class at all.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 10:46

I think it's fair to say that pretty much all of that Ajax team showed their worth to varying degrees after they moved on, except Bogarde. Finidi actually did very little either to be honest, though no-one could doubt his actual talent.

The thing with Kluyvert is that he could have been a great. He had all the technical attributes, he just never had the hunger and the drive. A waste really. Kanu was similar, Inter and Arsenal were entitled to have expected more the odd flashes of brilliance they got from him.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 10:48

Hmm, I think Kanu was just thankful to be alive during his time at Inter.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 14-04-2008 11:56

I think the Bogarde detractors should read his autobiography "This Black Man Bows for Nobody" - if you want an insight into his post-Ajax career.

As I say he was a very good, solid back with pace to burn and an ability to get forward very quickly. That aside I think as a broad generalization many white people still have a problem with black men who are as uncompromising in their attitudes and beliefs as he was/is.

**

"And I'm afraid Winston Bogarde is Dirk Kuyt to me, a player who got seriously found out once he left the familiar confines of the Ajax set up."

Dirk Kuyt never played for Ajax.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 12:41

That aside I think as a broad generalization many white people still have a problem with black men who are as uncompromising in their attitudes and beliefs as he was/is.

So....making the perfect valid and pretty common assertion that Winston Bogarde was a good for nothing as a player is not only wrong in your eyes, it also verges into the realms of racism ????

"And I'm afraid Winston Bogarde is Dirk Kuyt to me, a player who got seriously found out once he left the familiar confines of the Ajax set up."

Dirk Kuyt never played for Ajax.

I know he didn't, I never said he did but I think it was quite clear what parallels I was drawing between them.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The_Liquidator - 14-04-2008 13:18

That aside I think as a broad generalization many white people still have a problem with black men who are as uncompromising in their attitudes and beliefs as he was/is.

We've done this before – it was bollocks then and is now. Do better.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 13:40

Have we done this before ? If so I'm glad I missed it.

It's hard to think of Bogarde as the uncompromising figure this book seems to suggest. He seemed perfectly supine when it came to sitting on his arse and picking up his wages while not showing a jot of professional pride in wanting to play and try to justify his pay.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hofzinsler - 14-04-2008 14:04

I don't know why it should be, but on the basis of Bryan and the Purple Cow, two posters who often say interesting things on the football forum, Ajax fans are among the most blinkered in Europe.

Among many other things, that Overmars/Larsson comparison back there was utterly laughable, suggesting that racism is behind the criticism of Winston Bogarde is nothing short of contemptible, and don't forget the continued insistence that Shota Arveladze was some sort of unparalleled footballing genius.

It's weird.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 14:26

Who let all the straw men out of the barn. I don't remember comparing Overmars to Larsson. All I said was that Larsson didn't play all the time for Barcelona. But that didn't make him a flop.

As for Shota Arveladze, he is a football genius, but not unparalleled.

This was a thread about Jari Litmanen until somebody decided to say, out of the blue, that all the 1995 generation Ajax players who ever played at Barcelona, bar one, were a "flop". That's a pretty outrageous statement when you consider that Frank de Boer and Patrick Kluivert have over 300 Barcelona appearances between them.

He seemed perfectly supine when it came to sitting on his arse and picking up his wages while not showing a jot of professional pride in wanting to play and try to justify his pay.

Chelsea gave him a four year contract worth 40 grand a week, nobody forced them to pay him money, they chose to do so. Then they didn't pick him. He still came to training every week and honoured his contract to the letter. Then they tried to see if they could piss him off into leaving by making him train with the youths or the reserves. Yet he still came to every training session and took part in every reserve match. He was an exemplary professional. Chelsea were an organisational shambles, but that's their problem, not Bogarde's.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hofzinsler - 14-04-2008 14:36

I didn't say you'd compared Larsson and Overmars as players; I meant that your argument surrounding those two was laughable.

For a start, you completely backtracked from your original assertion that Overmars established himself as a first team player at Barca when shown the stats showing he did no such thing, and instead suggested that if Overmars was considered a flop then Larsson must be too.

Larsson was signed as a 33 year old on a free transfer to augment the starting strikeforce of Eto'o and Ronaldinho. It was never on the cards that he'd be starting 40 games a season for them - that's not what he was signed for. As it was, he had a significant impact, not least when he set up two goals in the European Cup final.

Are you seriously suggesting that Barcelona paid £25 million on a 27 year old player to play a similar bit part role? And are you seriously suggesting he did anything even close in achievement to setting up two goals in the European Cup final?

Like I say, the argument was laughable, and I can only really explain it by reference to your Ajax-tinted spectacles.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 14-04-2008 14:42

Chelsea gave him a four year contract worth 40 grand a week, nobody forced them to pay him money, they chose to do so. Then they didn't pick him. He still came to training every week and honoured his contract to the letter.

If chelsea wanted to get rid of him they should have apid up his contract, but they didn't want to. Leeds had to do this even after they were in administration. but chelsea tried to PR him out of the rest of his money.

If I recall correctly ken bates wasn't very nice about this. on an entirely unrelated matter, Didn't bogarde refer to curious situations whereby implausibly attractive women would try and get him to take cocaine, but he refused because he didn't want The fate that befell Mark Bosnich, and would soon engulf adrian mutu to claim him as well.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 15:13

Are you seriously suggesting that Barcelona paid £25 million on a 27 year old player to play a similar bit part role? And are you seriously suggesting he did anything even close in achievement to setting up two goals in the European Cup final?

Like I say, the argument was laughable, and I can only really explain it by reference to your Ajax-tinted spectacles.

I admit that I overestimated the number of appearances that Marc Overmars made for Barcelona. Barcelona paid a lot of money for a player who had had two serious knee injuries, so it was always going to be a gamble, just as Man Utd shelled out all that money on Ruud van Nistelrooy. In Man Utd's case it paid off, in Barcelona's case it didn't with Marc Overmars. But to say he flopped implies that he wasn't up to the task. When he was fit he was a decent enough player for them. Sure, maybe they signed him with the hope that he'd always be fit, but it didn't turn out that way. That's not a flop, that's bad luck. My definition of a flop is Jon Dahl Tomasson at Newcastle. (edit: or better yet, Sergei Rebrov at Spurs).

Like I say, the argument was laughable, and I can only really explain it by reference to your Ajax-tinted spectacles.

If you read what I'm saying you'll note that I admit that Kluivert and Bogarde weren't top class players.

It's the statement below that I can't agree with, and I don't think it has anything to do with Ajax spectacles. Perhaps you could spend as much time debasing it as you have my overestimation of Marc Overmars' number of league starts at Barcelona.

Six of them ended up at Barcelona at various times afterwards. All flopped, with the arguable exception of Reiziger.

I mean, come on.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 15:16

Trying to suggest that the whole Chelsea escapade was the club's fault and not Bogarde's is laughable.

Yes, they were stupid enough to give him a big contract when he had been a lumbering disaster area for half a decade. They still did it with good intentions though, expecting what was after all a senior player to participate, to want to play, to show he had the slightest degree of professional pride to want to get into the first team and play a part.

But he didn't. His performances were half arsed and shambolic, he was dropped and he openly stated in a newspaper article here that he didn't care, he was happy to sit out his contract and do the minimum he had to do.

An absolute disgrace and one of those situations you do feel sorry for the clubs. The only directly comparable example I can think of was Marco Negri at Rangers, at least they got some goals out of him first.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 15:20

Yeah, we all feel sorry for poor Chelsea.

He only stated in the paper that he was going to sit out his contract after they had tried to get rid of him by using a multitude of dirty tricks and workplace intimidation.

If Chelsea didn't want him then they shouldn't have signed him in the first place. It's 100% their own fault.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 15:26

He (Bogarde)was an exemplary professional. Chelsea were an organisational shambles,

This is a contender for one of the most skewed post in the history of OTF by the way. I'm not sure if it is slightly better or slightly worse than 'Winston Boarde is a very good player'.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 15:32

If you can give me an example of Winston Bogarde acting unprofessionally at Chelsea then I'll retract it.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by garcia - 14-04-2008 15:32

it's not as ridiculous as your comparison of bogarde to kuyt.

the thing that gave me most hope when liverpool signed kuyt was that the feyenoord fans were clearly disappointed to see him go. you don't become such a hero to supporters without doing something right. when kuyt warmed up on the touchline during liverpool's pre-season friendly at feyenoord the whole place was cheering him. what a bunch of weirdos they are, on reflection.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 14-04-2008 15:37

He (Bogarde) was an exemplary professional. Chelsea were an organisational shambles,

Well he was. He turned up for training every day, and never did anything that could have been remotely considered wrong or a breach of his contract (because Chelsea definitely were checking and would have sacked him if they could)

Chelsea offered him a contract. they tried to convince him to tear it up and leave without paying him off. I can't think of a single footballer that would accept that. When he didn't just tear up his contract he was slaughtered for it.

Chelsea had no interest in playing him and were hoping to ostracise him out of the club. His attitude was "fuck you, I'll turn up to training every day and be available for selection, now fucking pay me what you owe me." Even when Leeds were completely fucked they had to honour the full value of their players contracts, even when they moved to other clubs. Why should Chelsea have been any different.

But to say he flopped implies that he wasn't up to the task. When he was fit he was a decent enough player for them.

he was poor for Arsenal in his final year there. He was a pale shadow of the player he was during his first two seasons. he really was entirely the wrong person to spend £25 million on.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by blameless - 14-04-2008 15:43

A top-class black defender who doesn't take any shit from (white) bigots? I'd agree with that.

Wait a minute, we are discussing Lilian Thuram here, right?

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 14-04-2008 15:54

I think we can all agree that Bogarde was pretty good for Ajax. If he was shit they wouldn't have gone over a year undefeated domestically and in Europe or been perhaps the most impressive team in European football over the last 20 odd years.

however outside of that system he pretty much wasn't able to function and was rather hopelessly unsuccessful at every subsequent club. His arrival at a club indicating that that club's transfer policy had lost its way and was about to go through a very rough time.

The last one of these clubs tried to force him out of the contract they had given him, but he was well within his rights to fulfil that contract to the very letter.

Would that be a fair enough summation.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 16:33

So Chelsea were to blame for wanting to try and move on someone who was just there taking the piss ?

That's how football works you find. Bogarde became such a joke that Chelsea couldn't even haggle out a deal where they could get someone else to pay even part of his wages, like a Robbie Fowler deal.

What else can a club do but put someone like him in the reserves. What sort of message does it send to the rest of the squad if you kept him in the first team squad and he was picking up bonuses for no effort.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 16:35

it's not as ridiculous as your comparison of bogarde to kuyt.

Did you actually READ the context of my comparison ? If not please do.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The_Liquidator - 14-04-2008 16:38

Chelsea gave him a four year contract worth 40 grand a week, nobody forced them to pay him money, they chose to do so. Then they didn't pick him. He still came to training every week and honoured his contract to the letter. Then they tried to see if they could piss him off into leaving by making him train with the youths or the reserves. Yet he still came to every training session and took part in every reserve match. He was an exemplary professional. Chelsea were an organisational shambles, but that's their problem, not Bogarde's.

Hahahahaha. He signed for the money and stayed for the money. In fact he was signed against the wishes of Vialli, who had identified him as the weak link in the Barca team before our match in 2000.

He'd had loads of offers from other clubs at a time when his career could still have had some legs, but he refused because none of them could match the wages he was getting here. That's the only reason he trained with the youth team. Exemplary professional my arse.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bryan - 14-04-2008 17:05

So Chelsea were to blame for wanting to try and move on someone who was just there taking the piss ?

Taking the piss would be refusing to play, not showing up for training, being drunk, etc. If Bogarde, as an employee of Chelsea, was asked to play, he would play. If asked to train with the Youth team, he'd play with the youth team. He did exactly what he was told for his entire time at Chelsea. I really don't see how this is taking the piss.

He signed for the money and stayed for the money.

Right, unlike Ballack, Essien, Drogba, Shevchenko and the rest of the true Chelsea heros. Hell, even Zola signed for the money. Welcome to the real world.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by And I am the Life - 14-04-2008 17:27

So Chelsea were to blame for wanting to try and move on someone who was just there taking the piss ?

you don't know how that started. Bogarde's account of it is very different to ken bates'. and the methods they used to try and get him to move on didn't include (i) paying up the rest of his contract like he was entitled to by law (ii) selling him on and making up the difference in his wages.

What would you have done under the circumstances?

That's how football works you find. Bogarde became such a joke that Chelsea couldn't even haggle out a deal where they could get someone else to pay even part of his wages, like a Robbie Fowler deal.

Is there any evidence that Chelsea offered to do this? Why would bogarde refuse to carry on his career somewhere else on the same wages as he would have got at chelsea.

Why the rush to automatically believe the word of Ken Bates over bogarde? If I were to draw up a list of people I'd believe before ken bates over a business matter, I might even be tempted to include silvio berlusconi on that list.

Personally I think that Chelsea made a terrible mistake in signing him for that contract. Ken Bates tried to fuck him to get out of it, and he refused point blank to be fucked by Ken Bates.

I know who my sympathies lie with.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 14-04-2008 18:39

"They still did it with good intentions though, expecting what was after all a senior player to participate, to want to play, to show he had the slightest degree of professional pride to want to get into the first team and play a part."

Christ dalliance, you posted some total utter shite in your time but this last sentence really takes the fucking biscuit.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 14-04-2008 18:44

"That's the only reason he trained with the youth team. Exemplary professional my arse."

Yeah right Liquidator, because all those other Chelsea players are only motivated by their undying love of the game, the goodwill of the owner, and their massive respect for the fans.

Do better.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 14-04-2008 19:21

As I say unlike you people, I actually watched Bogarde play in week-in week-out. So my opinion of his footballing skills is based on actual observance rather than the propaganda of known racists like Ken Bates. He was, in the day a very good, very quick, solid left back who almost nobody got past.

Now I had no great opinions on Bogarde until I read 'Deze Neger Buigt voor Niemand' - The best footballing autobiography I have ever read. Then I became a convinced fan, not so much for Bogarde as a player, but definitely as a man.

I said in a previous thread that Bogarde doesn't much like white people, but in retrospect that's an over-simplification. White people are largely irrelevant to him. He's a very proud man with a very clearly defined sense of self as a black man, and as such has attempted to live his life by his own rules and to his own morale code. He doesn't need or crave the attention of white people to fulfil himself.

To cut a long story short a succession of white people had tried to fuck over him, and almost without exception Bogarde made sure they eventually lost out.

Such a man was of course Ken Bates. Chelsea offered Bogarde a legally binding contract, lecturing him at length about the importance of sticking to the letter of this legally binding document. Then of course proceeded to break the terms of this legally binding document

That's the beauty of the story, Bogarde took on the white footbaling power structure and defeated them on their own terms. When they tried to humiliate him by making him play with the jeugd, they missed the point that he was not going to be humiliated because he was living by his own carefully nurtured code of honor. When Bates sent expensive prostitutes to his hotel room, in the hopes of entrapping him into using they cocaine they carried, he threw them out.

Bates must have hated him, that alone should make Bogarde a hero for any right-thinking person.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by dalliance - 14-04-2008 20:13

Christ dalliance, you posted some total utter shite in your time but this last sentence really takes the fucking biscuit.

Says the halfwit who embarrasses himself and this board by claiming that there is a racial motivation in criticising Bogarde.

I'm embarrassed for you and embarrassed for this Board when I read unbelievable shit like that.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 15-04-2008 05:48

Says the halfwit who embarrasses himself and this board by claiming that there is a racial motivation in criticising Bogarde.

Very good, now go back and re-read what I ACTUALLY said.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Hofzinsler - 15-04-2008 10:24

While I've no time for the racism rubbish, I totally agree that Bogarde did absolutely nothing wrong in sitting out his Chelsea contract. Why should he acquiesce in being shifted along somewhere else on lower wages just because Chelsea have decided they made a mistake? He had a contract with Chelsea and he had every right to insist that the contract be honoured.

And as aiatl suggested, taking the word of Ken Bates with regards to Bogarde's conduct, motivation etc. is totally idiotic.

Bogarde did nothing wrong whatsoever, in a moral or any other sense.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by ooh aah - 15-04-2008 10:40

I said in a previous thread that Bogarde doesn't much like white people, but in retrospect that's an over-simplification. White people are largely irrelevant to him.

Well that's all right then. Sounds like a lovely bloke.

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Lodzubelieveit - 25-04-2008 16:47

Jari sounds like an unfortunate sort of chap ... the bit about the can of Coke is quite humorous ...

=====

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by The Purple Cow - 26-04-2008 13:15

The story that I heard from someone in the Ajax organization (though admittedly it was the head of marketing) was that a lot of Jari's injuries were a cover for his worst periods of depression.

Apparently he had a lot of mysterious ankle and thigh injuries which would magically clear-up after he spent a week sailing his boat round a Finnish lake.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bombanero - 26-04-2008 14:17

In one of his lengthy absences from Malmö, Litmanen had a skate round the rink at a Lahti Pelicans game and scored two goals in the knockabout with 'old pros'. I think Hodgson was interviewed about it. he knew exactly what he was getting when he signed Litmanen - a guy who could not give a fuck about playing for his club, whichever club that happened to be. For him to start slating jari is quite unexpected, but then he must be feeling the pressure.

About Bogarde: I can't see the problem. He took the money offered and was ready to play whenever asked. I have a bigger problem with Wim Jonk, who was allowed to spend an entire season in Volendam nursing an 'injury', never once coming to the club. Bogarde sounds like he'd have been available for community work, reserve matches, coaching the youth team, whatever, so long as Chelsea had to honour his contract. I can't understand why they didn't offer to make up the difference, as nobody would accept a pay cut like that.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Tactical Genius - 26-04-2008 14:53

A few comments to make.

Firstly, Dalliance, if i read purple's criticism's of you correctly, he is not accusing you of being racist, but is accusing of blindly accepting the side of those with racist intentions (bates).

Purple, i remeber you mentioning this autobiography a while back and i was hoping you could to a translation or at least a write up of the interesting bits as i guess this is not available in English.

Regarding the Ajax players, I think that team was much better than its constituent parts and this also seem to breed a certain tactical inflexibility in the players.

They were world-beaters when playing the Dutch-Ajax way, yet struggled to show their top-class on a consistent basis.

Although playing as a defender, Frank De Boer was not much as a defender and this became more and more aparent the older he got. Just like it did on the player he replaced in the national team Koeman.

Ronald De Boer struggled as his role for Ajax was not clearly defined and he could not adapt to playing a more disciplined role at his later teams as he was not a conventional midfielder, attacker or even a second striker.

Finidi played his best football off the ball, and struggled subsequently as teams expected him to run with the ball and dribble alot which was not what made him a great player.

Overmaars did well at Arsenal and only tailed off in the last couple of months when it became aparent he was leaving. Davids had to re-invent his game before he started to become a success.

Seedorf left pretty early in his career and had the most successful and decorated career of the lot but still has detractors at milan and madrid despite having won more European cups than anyone in the history of the game (no doubt Ettiene will prove me wrong)

I could continue.....

That Ajax team was a great team, but what made them a great teams seems to have made those players incapable of playing any of their style as effectively as the structure enhanced their individual abilities whilst masking their deficiencies.

Which by the way, is what every good team should be.

In 98, when most of the Dutch players were having pretty poor seasons in Milan and Barcelona, Holland reached the World Cup semi-final.

Go-Figure.

Re:Jari Litmanen

Posted by Bombanero - 26-04-2008 15:13

I'd also be interested in the book if it were available. I don't think the racism stuff is far fetched, given the way black footballers are treated in many countries. If his ethos has enabled him to stop ken Bates fucking him over, that's fantastic, and he is a lot stronger than many black men who are fucked over by football clubs. I'd like to see Zeddy saileti (a Zambian with 14 years service for RoPs, who has taken a coaching role this year and bitchslapped the timeserving 'Finnish legend' Mika Nurmela into accepting that he has to change his role after moving from HJK) write a memoir about what he's experienced.

=====