
Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 14-04-2008 13:13

The companion "elevator" thread.

Italy: (5 weeks left; three to go down):

Torino 34
Catania 32
Cagliari 32
Parma 31*
Reggina 30
Empoli 30
Livorno 29

This is the real end of season battle here; seven clubs within five points of each other, a number of "6 pointers" between fellow strugglers on the cards (Cagliari-Empoli on Sunday) and the trend being generally positive for those at the bottom of the list and generally poor for those at the top (Toro looked abject at Genoa yesterday). Parma's game in hand is the away match to Juve that was postponed in the wake of the last ultra death. It will be played Wednesday night.

Spain: (6 weeks left; three to go down):

Mallorca 41
Getafe 41
Betis 41
Osasuna 40
Valencia 39
Valladolid 39
Huelva 37
Zaragoza 34
Murcia 29
Levante 22

Levante are down, and it looks increasingly likely that Murcia will join them. If Zaragoza can string some results together (they drew at Getafe this weekend), things could get very interesting.

Germany: (6 weeks left; three to go down):

Bochum 34
Dortmund 34
Hertha 33
Cottbus 29
Rostock 27
Duisburg 25
Bielefeld 25
Nuremberg 23*

1.FCN's match in hand is at home against Wolfsburg, Friday's match having been abandoned due to a violent storm. Duisburg and Bielefeld are classic "Fahrstuhlmannschafter", elevator teams that regularly go from 1. Liga to 2. Liga and vice versa. The two former East German clubs just above them are a further demonstration of the significant challenges faced by old DDR teams in contemporary German football (Carl Zeiss Jena and Erzgebirge Aue are in deep trouble in the 2. Liga, too).

France: (5 weeks left; three to go down):

Monaco 42
Auxerre 42
Toulouse 38
Lens 35
Paris St. Germain 35
Strasbourg 35
Metz 18

Schadenfreude at a possible relegation for PSG has gotten the French league thread moving recently. Their latest

debacle was a 2-3 home defeat to Nice last night. But VTT's boys Strasbourg have been almost as bad, and Lens haven't been much better. Toulouse got an important win in Monaco this weekend (but have to go to Bordeaux next week). Metz are the Derby County of Continental Europe.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Crusoe - 14-04-2008 14:27

What do the asterisks mean? Games in hand?

And thanks for these threads, Ursus, they're a lot more interesting (to me) than the actual title races. I'd never paid much attention until the start of the following season. I mean, I never knew that PSG had dropped so far - what happened to them?

Edit - idiot, there's a whole France football thread.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 14-04-2008 14:29

Yes, sorry. I carried that over from the "going up" thread without explaining it.

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Re:Going Down?

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

English Second Division

16 Norwich 43 -9 52
17 Barnsley 42 -10 52
18 Blackpool 43 -3 50
19 Southampton 43 -16 50
20 Coventry 43 -13 49
21 Leicester 43 -2 48

22 Sheff Wed 42 -5 48
23 Scunthorpe 43 -25 39
24 Colchester 43 -19 37

Scunny and Colchester have both gone now. Last relegation place looks to be between Blackpool, Southampton, Coventry, Leicester and Wednesday, none of whom are playing particularly well at the moment.

Wednesday keep drawing, Leicester will have one good result then two poor ones and Coventry after looking like they were pulling away have been dragged back into it. Couple of good results for Soton recently, beating Bristol City and then drawing at Charlton.

Wednesday play Plymouth at home tonight which they really need to win, and follow that with games away at Blackpool and Leicester, ending up with a home game against Norwich.

Leicester are away at Barnsley (themselves not completely safe, despite two wins in two since the Cup semi), followed by Wednesday and ending up away at Stoke.

Southampton are home against Burnley (their 'must win' game I guess), followed by away to West Brom and end up at home to Sheff Utd, whilst Coventry play away at Colchester, home to Wolves and away at Charlton.

Blackpool have the Wednesday game, followed by away to Plymouth and finish at home to Watford.

I am very nervous.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 14-04-2008 19:04

OFFS

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ant259 - 15-04-2008 06:13

I wonder what price you could get on a Valencia - PSG relegation double? If I was a betting man, that is?

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 15-04-2008 09:31

Watched the Wednesday match live on TV here last night (no idea why Romanian TV carried it, but there you go. Perhaps a deep seated interest in the drama that was the return of Paul Sturrock)

Pretty ropey al round really, the OFFS above was posted just after Plymouth scored in the 2nd minute. After that it was pretty much one way traffic (though of course every time Plymouth crossed the half way line I was having kittens), but Wednesday's vast array of on-loan strikers and Deon Burton with one eye closed could no more score a goal than they could walk on water. It was left to defender Tommy Spurr to score a spectacular long range effort with ten minutes left - (after missing a truckload of chances we actually score with something that couldn't rightfully be called a chance at all). So 7 draws in a row, and we're back out of the bottom 3 temporarily. Two 6 pointes in a row to come. Blackpool must be on a really bad run since they have only appeared on the relegation radar in the last week. So another draw then. As Barnsley have shown, you only need to win a game or two down here to actually shoot out of the race entirely. One thing seems sure - the "50 points for safety" rule is going to be broken this year. I can see someone going down with 52.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by The_Liquidator - 15-04-2008 09:47

37 points is an awful lot for the bottom team (Colchester) to have. Could they finish the season at basement of the division with over what was the traditional safety target of 40 points?

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 15-04-2008 09:50

The safety target in the bottom three divisions is usually around the 50 point mark...

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 15-04-2008 10:08

Which is the "biggest" drop in football? In England, dropping out of the Premiership is portrayed as something akin to having King Herod's army sweep into town to kill the first-born of every supporter, but in fact, history suggests that the majority of relegated clubs have bounced back after only a couple of years out, and actually seem in some cases to quite

enjoy their time at the top of the championship more than their days being torn to pieces by the big 4.

Dropping out of the League into the Conference/Blue Loo Premier seems to me to be a crueller blow, most of the top half of the Blue Loo are ex-League clubs still battling to return.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 15-04-2008 10:11

"history suggests that the majority of relegated clubs have bounced back after only a couple of years out"

Not sure that's true. Just look at the clubs in the fight against taking the third relegation spot in this year's second division. And then there's Leeds, Forest, etc etc.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 15-04-2008 10:19

well, on checking, maybe I should have said "recent history". Of the 18 teams relegated between 2001 and 2006, 9 were promoted back again before 2007-08. Alright, alright, 9 out of 18 isn't strictly a "majority". But it still doesn't seem that relegation is automatically the end of the world, either.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 15-04-2008 10:21

I would argue that the truly fatal drop is from a league that is fully professional into one where all (or at least some) of the teams are amateur or semi-amateur. History shows that clubs that have fallen that far generally end up disappearing all together, or at least re-forming.

That is exactly what Hellas Verona faces with a possible relegation to Serie C2, and why the Regionaliga clubs in Germany are quite desperate to qualify for the new 3. Bundesliga that will be introduced next year.

From what I understand of the current English set-up, one would have to fall out of the Conference to be in that kind of territory.

None of that is intended in any way to minimise the pain suffered by the likes of Leeds and Forest and their supporters, of course.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 15-04-2008 10:24

No, one wouldn't want to minimise the pain suffered by Leeds and their supporters ...

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Hofzinser - 15-04-2008 10:39

"Tommy Spurr" is a great name for a footballer. It sounds like someone out of Roy of the Rovers.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 15-04-2008 10:56

He'll get some stick if he ever signs for Arsenal.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 15-04-2008 11:02

Wash your mouth out with soap

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Felicity, I guess so - 15-04-2008 11:06

Could you tell how Luggy was received by the Weds crowd, ad hoc?

I'm sure he'd rather relegate Southampton, as would I

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by 1890 - 15-04-2008 11:06

In the Swiss Super League, things are pretty tight for the playoff spot with Thun seemingly condemned to the drop. It just seem yesterday they were playing Arsenal in the Champions League. They have been under intense scrutiny this year following a sex scandal involving underage girls and a number of players have been sacked because of that.

6. Sion 30 -6 35
7. Luzern 29 -11 34
8. Xamax 30 -9 32
9. St. Gallen 30 -24 32
10. Thun 30 -27 25

Luzern have a game in hand after the suicide of the son of the chairman. The second of his sons who commits suicide incidentally, feel sorry for the poor bloke...

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 15-04-2008 11:10

Geez, 1890, it sounds more like a soap opera than a football league.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 15-04-2008 11:16

I couldn't tell FIGS (and the Romanian commentators were not really focussed on this - to me, important- element of the game). I'd hazard a guess that he was received extremely warmly. He's still widely liked by our support. Maclean too, though he was a shadow of the player I remember. Being at Cardiff must have ruined him.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 15-04-2008 11:16

Very interesting thread. When I get home at nearly midnight tonight, if I've got the time and inclination, and if, more pertinently, I remember, I shall add the Argentine relegation battle to this mix.

I'd advise everyone to get some aspirin to hand before checking that one.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Felicity, I guess so - 15-04-2008 11:40

He's still widely liked by our support

Not sure if fans of any of the clubs he's left have a bad word to say about him, despite things not always working out. Is he the best loved ex-/sacked manager around?

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by noj - 15-04-2008 12:09

well, on checking, maybe I should have said "recent history". Of the 18 teams relegated between 2001 and 2006, 9 were promoted back again before 2007-08. Alright, alright, 9 out of 18 isn't strictly a "majority". But it still doesn't seem that relegation is automatically the end of the world, either.

Parachute payments, innit.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 15-04-2008 13:54

Wednesday's vast array of on-loan strikers and Deon Burton with one eye closed could no more score a goal than they could walk on water.

Has Sahar done anything at all for you guys yet?

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by noj - 15-04-2008 14:11

Sahar has done okay - he's scored a couple and shown some promising signs, but sometimes just looks like he gets pushed off the ball too easily. Seems quite happy though, and as far as I'm aware has shown no real mardiness (he'd easily get out-marded by Johnstone anyway).

I feel I must correct ad hoc's quote a little too - Wednesday have two on-loan strikers (unless he's counting Songo'o too, who's a winger); Sahar and Slusarski. This is mainly due to the fact that Sodje and Jeffers (thanks Ryan Shawcross) have been out for most of the season and Tudgay is also out for the season (since about a month ago). Once you get past the two loan strikers and Burton (our one fit first team striker) then you're into the youth team.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 15-04-2008 14:20

He looked better than Slusarski on last night's evidence, but that doesn't say much.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 16-04-2008 00:07

Lesson #1 in bizarre football tables of the world: Relegation in Argentina. Nine matches remain of the Clausura (except Racing who have a game in hand but have already lost it, and Gimnasia de Jujuy who have yet to play one at all - explanation below...).

Two go down automatically; the next two enter a two-legged playoff against 3rd and 4th from Primera B Nacional (aggregate draw = Primera A side stay up).

Pos. - Team - Played - Pts. - Pts.p/match

15 - Racing - 104 - 125 - 1.202*
16 - Colón - 105 - 125 - 1.190
17 - Central - 105 - 124 - 1.181
18 - San Martín - 29 - 34 - 1.172
19 - Gimnasia (J) - 104 - 119 - 1.144*
20 - Olimpo - 29 - 27 - 0.931

Racing's 2-1 loss to Estudiantes, which was called off with 13 minutes left after crowd trouble in the Racing end, STILL hasn't been made an official result by the AFA (if it was, Estudiantes and not River would currently top the Clausura). Once that's been made official, therefore, Racing and Colón are currently dead level. Gimnasia de Jujuy had a match postponed following a police shortage.

Standings are worked out on points-per-game, averaged over the last three seasons. San Martín and Olimpo have both only spent the current season (out of the last three) in this division, which is why they've only played 29 matches next to everyone else's hundred-odd.

Olimpo are down already, because they're absolutely terrible, but the way it all works out doesn't make anything mathematically certain until the last couple of matches. Gimnasia de Jujuy and San Martín both have the advantage, when playing at home against fellow strugglers (and from time to time against much better sides), of being at altitude - never a pleasant experience for opponents from sea-level Buenos Aires, La Plata or Rosario.

Until recently Newell's Old Boys were hovering around this group as well, but 11 points from a possible 15 in their last 5 matches - including a win over Colón and one over Central in the Rosario derby - have seen them pull relatively clear to 1.248, which provided they don't cock up too often should see them through. Even so it's ludicrously complicated to work anything at all out in advance.

Next season's Promedio will look starkly different even ignoring the absence of the relegated sides, principally because sides currently higher up the table - Gimnasia La Plata the most obvious - are going to find their points totals from the 2005/2006 season don't count any more. Gimnasia got 69 points that season, compared with 40 last season and 28 so far this. So whilst short-term survival can be hard to work out, forecasting who could be struggling this time next year can be made simpler with the Argentine system...

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 21-04-2008 08:59

There is no way I'm going to try Argentina, but here is a Continental European update:

Italy (4 weeks left; three to go down):

Catania 35
Cagliari 35
Torino 34
Parma 31

Livorno 30
Empoli 30
Reggina 30

Four weeks left and no one is down for sure, which means that none of the clubs above the bottom three are safe. Cagliari won their 6 pointer against Empoli; Livorno get a huge point at Roma; Reggina were thumped at Milan and Parma lost at home to Napoli in a match marked by eccentric refereeing (two penalties, Parma finishing with 8 men, Napoli with 10 and no manager). Torino have to go to Roma next week, while Cagliari visit Inter, so it may well be even tighter in seven days' time.

Spain: (5 weeks left; three to go down):

Getafe 41
Osasuna 40
Valencia 39
Valladolid 39
Zaragoza 37
Recreativo Huelva 37
Murcia 29
Levante 25

The fight is for the last relegation place, and Valencia's humiliation at Athletic means that they are still very much in the mix. Zaragoza win a six pointer at home over Recre and now inhabit the last position of safety. Valencia play Osasuna at the Mestalla, and if they manage to lose again, things will be most interesting.

Germany: (5 weeks left; three to go down):

Hertha 34
Dortmund 34
Cottbus 29
Bielefeld 28
Rostock 27
Nuremberg 26
Duisburg 25

Important wins for Nuremberg and Bielefeld mean that any of the bottom five could go down and that losing cup finalists Dortmund are not completely safe.

France: (4 weeks left; three to go down):

Sochaux 42
Auxerre 41
Toulouse 38
Lens 38
Paris St. Germain 35
Strasbourg 35
Metz 19

The France Football thread is full of rejoicing over PSG's latest debacle, a 3-0 defeat at Caen. Toulouse held out for 93 minutes against Bordeaux, only to lose in the 94th. Lens got a very important three points at home to Sochaux. PSG welcomes Auxerre to the Parc on Saturday in a must win game, while Lens visit Le Mans and Toulouse go to Lille.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 28-04-2008 09:49

This week's update:

Italy (3 weeks left; three to go down):

Catania 35
Cagliari 35

Torino 34
Empoli 33
Reggina 33
Parma 31
Livorno 30

Wins by Empoli (away to Genoa) and Reggina (at home to Parma), combined with Toro's 4-1 humiliation in Rome, Livorno's 1-4 home defeat to Milan and losses by Catania (at Udinese) and Cagliari (at Inter) mean that the fight for survival is even tighter than it was before, and virtually certain to go to the last day (if not playoffs). Next Sunday's six pointer is Catania-Reggina.

Spain: (4 weeks left; three to go down):

Getafe 42
Valladolid 42
Valencia 42
Recreativo Huelva 40
Osasuna 40
Zaragoza 38
Murcia 30
Levante 25

Levante are officially down, and Murcia are unlikely to last much longer. Valencia, Valladolid and Recre all got important wins, while Zaragoza only got a point at Espanyol.

Germany: (4 weeks left; three to go down):

Hertha 35
Dortmund 35
Cottbus 32
Bielefeld 29
Nuremberg 27
Rostock 27
Duisburg 26

Hertha and Dortmund only need one point to assure themselves of safety. Nuermberg's 2-2 home draw with Bielefeld was unsatisfactory for both clubs.

France: (3 weeks left; three to go down):

Sochaux 43
Monaco 43
Auxerre 41
Toulouse 38
Lens 38
Paris St. Germain 38
Strasbourg 35
Metz 19

A bad week for the PSG Schadenfreude brigade, as they beat Auxerre 3-1 at the Parc and then see Lens and Toulouse both lose. PSG visit Toulouse on Sunday in a match that may define both club's seasons, while Lens are at home to Monaco. Strasbourg will have to get at least a point at Nancy to have any real chance of survival.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 28-04-2008 11:20

ursus arctos wrote:

Spain: (4 weeks left)

Germany: (4 weeks left)They're both leaving it late, aren't they.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Senyor Pirotecnic - 28-04-2008 11:28

Gangster Octopus wrote:

ursus arctos wrote:

Spain: (4 weeks left)They're both leaving it late, aren't they.

4 games rather than weeks in Spain - there is a midweek jornada to come. Have already played the cup final too.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Crusoe - 28-04-2008 11:34

How on earth does that Argentinian league table work? How long is the season that teams can play 105 games, and why have two of the teams only played 30-odd games?

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 28-04-2008 11:34

Germany also has a midweek set of games (and has played the Cup Final).

Crusoe, as Sam's post notes, the Argentine table is based on a three year rolling average. Some clubs have fewer games because they weren't in the league for all those seasons.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Crusoe - 28-04-2008 11:41

Oh, what an idiot. I spent ages looking at Sam's post and still completely missed the clear and concise explanation in that paragraph. Apologies.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 28-04-2008 11:54

Copied and pasted from my post above, for Crusoe:

'Standings are worked out on points-per-game, averaged over the last three seasons. San Martín and Olimpo have both only spent the current season (out of the last three) in this division, which is why they've only played 29 matches next to everyone else's hundred-odd.'

So the season is that long because it's taken from the last three seasons - from all the matches each team has played in their current division since the start of the 2005-2006 season. There are also a couple of sides who've been in the top flight for two seasons, who've played 60-odd matches, but they're not in the relegation struggle at present.

I'll update later, when I'm home.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 28-04-2008 11:57

Ah, you noticed it anyway. Well done.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 29-04-2008 00:44

OK, next go... Argentina. Two go straight down, next two go to relegation playoffs against Primera B Nacional sides. 7 matches to play:

Pos. - Team - Played - Points - Points/game

15. - Colón - 107 - 128 - 1.196
16. - Central - 107 - 127 - 1.187
17. - Racing - 107 - 127 - 1.187
18. - Gim'sia (J) - 107 - 122 - 1.140
19. - S. M'tín - 31 - 34 - 1.097
20. - Olimpo - 31 - 30 - 0.968

Racing, amazingly, are now four matches unbeaten (still just the one win this year, mind) but still can't climb out of the playoff positions. San Martín led against Arsenal de Sarandí at half-time on Sunday but ended up losing - a win would have taken them above Gimnasia de Jujuy, dropping the latter into the automatic relegation spot. That's how close it is.

This coming weekend is key at both ends - on Sunday Boca and River will be busy making the Milan derby only the second biggest match on the planet that day, but down at this end, San Martín host Olimpo, and the two biggest clubs in the above bottom five - Racing (one of Argentina's 'Big Five') and Central (who with Newell's are one of the two big clubs in Rosario, a footballing hotbed which has given the world César Luís Menotti, Mario Kempes and Lionel Messi to name but three) clash in Rosario.

Still a long way to go but the points average means once a side's stuck in a rut they've got to fight like hell to get out.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 05-05-2008 09:39

Italy (2 weeks left; three to go down):

Cagliari 38
Torino 37
Reggina 35
Catania 35
Parma 34
Empoli 33
Livorno 30

Reggina win their six pointer at Catania in injury time, while Cagliari (against Fiorentina), Torino (vs. Napoli) and Parma (vs. Genoa) all record important home wins. Livorno go down to an injury time winner at Atalanta and may be finished. Empoli visit Reggina next Sunday and pretty much have to win to stay alive.

Spain: (3 weeks left; three to go down):

Getafe 42
Valladolid 42
Valencia 42
Zaragoza 41
Recreativo Huelva 40
Osasuna 40
Murcia 30
Levante 26

Zaragoza beat Depor and escape the relegation places; Osasuna take their place after giving up two goals to a 10 man Real Madrid in the last five minutes (thus allowing Madrid to win the title). Levante and Murcia are down, but there are six teams within two points of each other for the last ticket to the Liga BBVA. Valencia host Zaragoza on Wednesday night, and will be sweating again should they lose.

Germany: (3 weeks left; three to go down):

Dortmund 36
Cottbus 32
Bielefeld 32
Duisburg 29
Nuremberg 28
Rostock 27

Bielefeld get a crucial win against Bochum to create some daylight between them and the drop; Duisburg beat Leverkusen, but it may too late. On Wednesday, Duisburg go to Nuremberg and Bielefeld visit just-crowned champions Bayern Munchen.

France: (2 weeks left; three to go down):

Sochaux 44
Monaco 44
Auxerre 44
Lens 39
Toulouse 39
Paris St. Germain 39
Strasbourg 35
Metz 21

Toulouse get an 88th minute equaliser against PSG and ensure that the Parisians will spend another week in the relegation places. Lens only get a point at home to Monaco and are tied with those two on 39 points. Strasbourg go down 3-0 at Nancy and look to be doomed. PSG hosts St. Etienne, who are fighting for their first non-Intertoto European place in two decades, next weekend, while Lens go to Lille and Toulouse visit Rennes.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 05-05-2008 10:02

Standings are worked out on points-per-game, averaged over the last three seasons.

Two questions, Sam:

- 1) Is that three straight seasons? Like, if a team is in the top division in year 1, goes down in year 2 but comes back up in year 3, will PPG at the end of year 3 include the points from years 1 and 3 or just year 3?
- 2) Does promotion work the same way, or is it more sensible?

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 05-05-2008 19:10

AG - Both good questions. To answer:

- 1) Yes. A more accurate way of putting would be 'any seasons out of the last three that were spent in the team's current division'.
- 2) Promotion is worked out from the league table over the whole season, just the same as in any European league. As

from the current season, the divisions below the top flight in Argentina have moved to a single season-long championship - it's now only the Primera A which has Apertura and Clausura still (and that probably won't be for more than a couple more years).

Previous to this season, it was the winner of the Apertura and the winner of the Clausura (assuming the same team didn't win both) who got automatic promotion, then a combined league table was used for the playoff places.

As of the now, the top two at the end of the single season-long table will go straight up (to replace the 19th and 20th teams in the Primera A Promedio) and 3rd and 4th will play, respectively, 18th and 17th from the division above in a two-legged playoff known as the Promoción. If the aggregate scores are level, the team in the higher division stay up.

The Promedio is used to decide relegation, as far as I'm aware, only in the top flight. If it were used in the lower leagues as well it would be theoretically possible, given a bad enough couple of seasons followed by a sharp enough improvement, for a team to win promotion and be relegated in the same season. As it is, it's possible for a side to win a short championship in Primera A and be relegated in the same season (though it's not yet happened).

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 12-05-2008 09:18

It's almost over, folks:

Italy (1 weeks left; three to go down):

Catania 36
Parma 34
Empoli 33
Livorno 30

Reggina win another six pointer against Empoli and are safe, as are Torino, who won at Livorno (sending them down for sure). Catania were safe for most of yesterday until Del Piero pulled a late goal back for Juventus to get a draw.

Next Sunday promises to be the maddest in recent Serie A history, as Inter visit Parma, while Roma are at Catania. If Roma get a better result than Inter, they win the scudetto after having trailed by 11 points; Parma need to win to have any chance of staying up. Empoli play Livorno at home and can still save themselves if they win and Catania lose, as they have better head to head record.

Spain: (1 week left; three to go down):

Valladolid 44
Recreativo Huelva 43
Osasuna 43
Zaragoza 42
Murcia 30
Levante 26

Murcia and Levante are down. Any of the four teams left in the final dogfight can assure themselves of safety by winning their final match. On the last day, Huelva go to Valladolid; Zaragoza are at Mallorca and Osasuna at Santander.

Germany: (1 weeks left; three to go down):

Bielefeld 33
Nuremberg 31
Duisburg 29
Rostock 27

Duisburg and Rostock make an immediate return to the 2. Liga. Cottbus save themselves by beating fifth place HSV (and helping to set up a mad finish to the race for the UEFA Cup places, as Leverkusen, HSV, Wolfsburg and Stuttgart are all on equal points). On the last day, Bielefeld are away to Stuttgart, while Nuremberg are home to Schalke.

France: (1 week left; three to go down):

PSG 40

Toulouse 39
Lens 39
Strasbourg 35
Metz 21

As detailed on the France Football thread, things looked good for the PSG Schadenfreude brigade at half-time. PSG were trailing at home to St. Etienne and Toulouse were winning, while Lens were only one goal down at Lille. Everything went pear-shaped in the second half, though, as PSG got one back for a draw, Toulouse gave up two to Rennes to lose, and Lens lost to Lille. Strasbourg join Metz in Ligue 2. On the last day, PSG are away to Sochaux knowing that a win will ensure safety. They may not even need that much, however, as Lens have to play Bordeaux, who still have a shot at the title, at the Bollaert. Toulouse play Valenciennes at home.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 12-05-2008 09:35

In Romania the relegated clubs were U Cluj, UTA Arad (Dalliance has a bit of a thing for them if I recall), Dacia Mioveni, and Ceahlaul Piatra Neamt.

U Cluj will start the next season with -2 points for finishing below the 25 point threshold. This is a measure implemented to stop what is referred to here as "blat" (ie teams throwing matches when they have nothing to play for). Any team getting relegated with fewer than 25 points (in an 18 team league) get penalised for the season after.

One for the EPL to consider, so that chancers like Derby get penalised for their patheticness? I reckon there it ought to be

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 12-05-2008 10:46

That's an extremely interesting system, which I was previously unaware of and think is unique to Romania.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ad hoc - 12-05-2008 10:56

It's new this year. Not sure if they'll carry on with it, and it seems a bit one sided since there are clubs in the middle which are just as guilty of "blat", but who, at present, are not/cannot be punished.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by EIM - 12-05-2008 10:56

Can I just pop in here and give massive props to Torino for stayinbg up? Well done boys.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 12-05-2008 11:02

http://www.torinofc.it/images/zoom/TUIAUP/dre_7781.jpg

With you all the way EIM, and very much hope that they celebrate long and hard (Fiorentina play them on the last day).

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by EIM - 12-05-2008 11:23

And as a plus, you should be able to see an FC United flag flying from the Curva Maratona next season. Which will probably get a little more noticed than the Torino one strung up at the Cemetery End at Gigg Lane.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 19-05-2008 08:48

More or less real-time updates on the last day in each of Italy, France, Spain and Germany are on the respective threads, but just for completeness here is the final list of relegated clubs:

Italy: Empoli, Parma, Livorno
Spain: Zaragoza, Murcia, Levante
Germany: Nuremberg, Duisburg, Rostock
France: Lens, Strasbourg, Metz

Among this year's casualties are two former winners of European competitions (Parma and Zaragoza), along with a losing finalist (Birmingham City).

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 01-06-2008 02:34

San Martín de San Juan are relegated in Argentina, so there'll only be one team with that name in Primera A next season (San Martín de Tucumán having been promoted on Thursday).

Olimpo de Bahía Blanca will almost certainly follow them tomorrow, and Racing drew the derby with Independiente today - it's going to be tricky for them to avoid the playoffs. I'll update properly with the relevant bit of the Promedio table when the weekend's matches are over.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by jefe - 01-06-2008 04:38

Sam: Isn't the point of the averaging to ensure that a team like Racing never goes down? How hopeless must they be if they manage it?

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 03-06-2008 01:42

Jefe, yes it is, and trust me, they're very useless. They've also been astonishingly unlucky in a lot of matches this season - with fair refereeing they'd definitely have been safe long ago.

And it's going a bit bonkers right now. No time for a proper update at this moment in time - I need to go to sleep. But Olimpo, who have been useless for months and rock-bottom of the Promedio for virtually the entire season, have only gone and won two in a row and lifted themselves from bottom, to 17th, and within touching distance of Colón in 16th. The table's here, and I'll try and explain the permutations tomorrow if I get a quiet period in the office. The remaining fixtures are making this season absolutely insane...

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by loose cannon - 03-06-2008 11:28

Lens won the Ligue 1 title about ten years ago by goal difference over FC Metz - how fortunes change...

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 08-06-2008 14:17

Halfway through the penultimate round of matches in Argentina, we have yet another twist.

Racing somehow managed to actually win a match on Saturday afternoon, 1-0 against Huracán. This really does make things tighter than a nun's proverbial.

The win means Racing can't be relegated automatically, and - this really did seem nearly impossible a few short weeks ago - means they've got a chance to avoid even the relegation playoffs.

16th place is safe. 17th and 18th go into a playoff against 3rd and 4th of the division below. 19th and 20th go directly to Primera B Nacional.

Pos. Team --- pld. -- pts. --- ppg

16. Colón --- 112 --- 133 --- 1.188

17. Racing -- 113 --- 133 --- 1.177

18. Olimpo -- 36 ---- 42 ---- 1.167

19. Gmnsa J. -113 --- 128 --- 1.133

20. San Mtín -37 ---- 35 ---- 0.946 R

San Martín are relegated already. Racing's win means they're guaranteed at least a playoff place and thus Gimnasia de Jujuy need Olimpo to drop points in their two matches to come, and themselves to win their one remaining match. Racing are hoping that both Colón and Olimpo drop points in their matches - both sides have two left.

Now here's where it gets tasty.

One of Colón's matches in hand over Racing is today. It's away to Estudiantes, who are currently in second place, fighting for the title.

One of Olimpo's matches in hand is also today. It's away to River, who are currently in first place... fighting for the title.

(If Estudiantes beat Colón this afternoon, they'll leave Colón and Racing on exactly the same points-per-game average going into the last day. Remember this because we'll come back to it after the next paragraph.)

Olimpo's final match? At home... to Estudiantes. Who if they beat Colón today will be taking the title race right to the final weekend.

And Racing's final match, in two weeks' time? It's away... to Colón. So, Colón's final fixture of the season? Yep, you're reading this correctly. At home. Against Racing.

In other words, if Colón fail to beat Estudiantes today, the last weekend will feature one match in which the final relegation playoff place will be decided by a head-to-head. If Estudiantes and River match each other's results today (or if Estudiantes win and River don't), the title race goes to the wire, and it will also affect the relegation battle in a huge way.

If two sides finish exactly level in the Promedio, there'll be a one-match 'final' to decide who finishes in which position.

I'd like to see Sky Sports rearrange the Premier League fixtures and come up with that end-of-season finale...

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ant259 - 15-06-2008 22:28

It was a really tight thing at the bottom of the Segunda División in Spain, but in the end Racing de Ferrol and Cádiz will join already-relegated Granada 74 and Poli Ejido in Segunda B next year.

Alaves came from behind to beat Celta 3-2 in Vigo to seal their spectacular escape - last week, losing 2-1 in the 93rd minute, they were dead and buried...two injury time goals there, and today's heroics got the job done for them.

Cádiz were one up against Hércules in Alicante, but conceded an equaliser which condemned them. Yet it might have all been so different for them, because amazingly they were awarded a penalty out of nothing in the - wait for it - 95th minute!! Sadly for them, Abraham Paz could only hit the post with it, and Cádiz were doomed.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 15-06-2008 22:49

That's a shame. I like Cádiz.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by Ant van Oviedo - 16-06-2008 06:42

Michael Robinson will be gutted, too, as he was one of the consortium that got them out of Segunda B, rebuilt the new stadium and got them up to Primera.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 23-06-2008 10:49

Cádiz down? Bugger!

Argentina's domestic season is now over (but for the playoffs).

Racing lost to Colón, and now go into the Promoción, a two-legged playoff against the fourth-placed team from B Nacional, to defend their place in the Primera A. They'll play Belgrano de Córdoba, with the first leg in Córdoba on Wednesday.

Gimnasia de Jujuy drew 2-2 with San Lorenzo and are in the other playoff place. They've got two matches against Unión de Santa Fe, the first of which is in Santa Fe on Wednesday. If Unión win that, it'll be the return of the clásico santafesino (Colón vs. Unión) to the Primera A.

In the event of an aggregate draw, the side currently in Primera A stay up.

Automatically relegated: San Martín de San Juan, and Olimpo de Bahía Blanca.

Final standings for Clausura and Promedio here.

Re:Going Down?

Posted by SamLKelly - 02-07-2008 01:41

Racing beat Belgrano 1-0 on Sunday, and Gimnasia de Jujuy beat Unión by the same score, so both victorious sides remain in Primera A.

What's that I hear you asking for? A full list of all the promotions and relegations from every single division in Argentina?

Oh, alright then.

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Re:Going Down?

Posted by ursus arctos - 03-07-2008 16:10

Possible good news for the many of us who have a soft spot for Cadiz.

It appears that Hercules fielded an ineligible player in the last match of the season, and that the league is seriously considering expanding next year's Segunda to 22 clubs in order to both allow them to remain up and not to penalise Cordoba (who would go down if Cadiz were given the three points).

Latest from Marca./url]

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