

Unlikely League Winners



1) Discussion - Discuss these questions with your partner.

- a) Do you think it's easy to predict league winners at the start of the season?
 - b) In your opinion, What are the main qualities a team needs to win the league?
 - c) Are there any unexpected league winners that you can think of?
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2) Vocabulary

a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

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| 1) Peppered (verb) | A) The act of rising or climbing upwards. |
| 2) Defy (verb) | B) Keen insight or the ability to make quick, accurate judgments. |
| 3) Acumen (noun) | C) Exceptional skill or ability in a particular activity or field. |
| 4) Astronomical (adjective) | D) To challenge or resist something in a bold or unexpected way. |
| 5) Ascent (noun) | E) Extremely large, significant, or seemingly impossible. |
| 6) Prowess (noun) | F) To be scattered or filled with. |



b) Complete the sentences with the words from exercise 2a.

- 1) The history of football is _____ with moments where underdogs have won titles.
- 2) Certain players possess a tactical _____ that allows them to read the game exceptionally well.
- 3) The odds against Leicester City winning the Premier League were _____, set at 5000-1, making their triumph in the 2015-2016 season all the more astounding.
- 4) Kaiserslautern's unexpected _____ to Bundesliga glory in the 1997-1998 season remains a remarkable feat in German football history.
- 5) Lionel Messi's footballing ability _____ is evident in his unparalleled skill, technique, and goal-scoring ability, setting him apart as one of the greatest players of all time.
- 6) In football, underdog teams often strive to _____ the odds and expectations, showcasing their resilience and determination on the field.



3) Quick Read - Read the article quickly and answer the question.

- a) What common themes or qualities are highlighted by the stories of Hellas Verona, Leicester City, Kaiserslautern, and Nottingham Forest in football history?
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Football's Unlikely Winners

Football history is peppered with moments where the underdogs emerged as victors, scripting narratives that defy logic and expectation. These tales of unexpected triumphs stand as testaments to the unpredictable nature of the sport, embodying the essence of passion, teamwork, and sheer determination. Here's a glimpse into four iconic instances of unlikely league winners that left an indelible mark on the beautiful game.

Hellas Verona (1984-1985):

In the 1984-1985 Serie A season, Hellas Verona etched their name in football folklore by defying the odds and securing the Serie A title. Led by the tactical acumen of coach Osvaldo Bagnoli, Verona, lacking the star-studded lineup of traditional Italian giants, showcased resilience and unity throughout the campaign. With players like Preben Elkjær, Hans-Peter Briegel, and Antonio Di Gennaro displaying exceptional performances, Verona's triumph against the odds stands as a testament to teamwork and tactical brilliance.

Leicester City (2015-2016):

The 2015-2016 English Premier League season witnessed one of football's most sensational stories as Leicester City, a team previously battling relegation, emerged victorious against astronomical odds of 5000-1. Under the guidance of Claudio Ranieri, the Foxes, spearheaded by the electrifying Jamie Vardy, the wizardry of Riyad Mahrez, and the midfield dominance of N'Golo Kanté, exhibited unwavering determination and teamwork. Leicester's remarkable campaign showcased that with resilience and unity, even the most improbable dreams can become a reality.



Kaiserslautern (1997-1998):

Kaiserslautern's ascent to Bundesliga glory in the 1997-1998 season remains an astonishing feat in German football history. Having been promoted the previous season, the Red Devils, under the leadership of manager Otto Rehhagel, defied expectations to clinch the Bundesliga title. Players like Olaf Marschall and Andreas Brehme were instrumental in their success, showcasing grit and consistency that toppled established powerhouses like Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund.

Nottingham Forest (1978-1979):

Under the legendary Brian Clough, Nottingham Forest scripted a remarkable tale in the 1978-1979 English First Division. Newly promoted, Forest displayed tactical brilliance and unwavering determination, stunning the football world by clinching the league title. With players like Kenny Burns and John Robertson shining throughout the season, Clough's management prowess propelled Forest to an extraordinary triumph against all odds.

These instances remind us that in football, the unexpected can happen, and the pursuit of victory is not confined to the realms of logic or predictability. These victories symbolise the essence of the sport – where belief, teamwork, and sheer passion can transcend perceived limitations, etching unforgettable tales into football's rich tapestry.



4) Discussion - Discuss these questions with your partner.

- a) Which of these league winners is most impressive to you?
- b) Have there been any surprising league winners in your country?
- c) How do these stories of unexpected victories contribute to shaping the spirit and fascination surrounding football?

