

Premiership Season Preview 2006/07 - Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough

Odds: 500/1

Last Five Seasons

2005/06 - 14 (Premiership), 2004/05 - 7 (Premiership), 2003/04 - 11 (Premiership), 2002/03 - 11 (Premiership), 2001/02 - 12 (Premiership).

2005/06 Cup Progress

UEFA Cup Final vs Sevilla (n) - lost 4-0.

FA Cup Semi Final vs West Ham United (n) - lost 1-0.

Carling Cup Quarter Final vs Blackburn Rovers (h) - lost 1-0.

Top Goal Scorer 2005/06: Yakubu (striker) - 19 goals.

Players In

Julio Arca (Sunderland - ?1,750,000), Herold Goulon (Lyon - Undisclosed).

Players Out

Jimmy-Floyd Hasselbaink (Charlton Athletic - Free), Franck Queudrue (Fulham - Free), Brad Jones (Sheffield Wednesday - Loan), Danny Graham (Blackpool - Loan), Doriva (Released), Colin Cooper (Released).

Middlesbrough's league form suffered last season due to their involvement in the later stages of various cup competitions, including making the final of the UEFA Cup where they lost out to Spanish outfit Sevilla.

The Boro will start the new campaign under new management, with veteran defender Gareth Southgate taking over in place of Steve McClaren, who became the new England manager at the end of Sven Goran Eriksson's tenure.

Southgate stamped his authority on the team immediately by appointing George Boateng as captain following the Dutch midfielder's decision to sign a new three year deal in the summer. He also showed there would be no "old pals act" when he took the decision to release veteran duo Doriva and Colin Cooper, while also not offering Jimmy-Floyd Hasselbaink a new contract.

Defender Chris Riggott showed his support for Southgate's appointment by signing a new four year contract after establishing himself as a regular starter last season. He arrived from Derby County in a joint ?3 million deal with Malcom Christie in 2003 and even wore the captain's armband occasionally last term

Middlesbrough beat off interest in Espanyol to sign midfielder Julio Arca from rivals Sunderland for ?1.75 million. Arca joined the Black Cats from Argentinos Juniors six years ago for ?3.5 million and made 177 appearances for the club.

Teenage Lyon midfielder Herold Goulon joined the club on a three year deal following three years at the French National Football Academy in Clarefontaine while the club are also interested in bringing Chelsea defender Robert Huth to the club on an initial loan deal. Despite speculation linking him with moves to both Arsenal and Manchester United, last season's top goal scorer Yakubu is still at the club.

Verdict

With no involvement in Europe next season, rookie manager Southgate can concentrate solely on the Premiership and try to emulate the seventh placed finish of two seasons ago.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

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