

**FANTASY CHALLENGE
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
FINAL
2018**

14th Final



Darren
CULLEN
v
Sam
SHEW



GAMEWEEK 38 (13th May)

OFFICIAL FC MATCH PREVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

This is the 14th Champions League final the cup competition that has the most matches for a manager to get through to the final.

The Champions League sees managers having to go through 18 matches to get to the final. With the Group Stage and the two leg matches managers can lose but still remain in the competition. Some say it can be a competition of attrition other say it gives managers a second chance.

Whatever your point of view there is no doubt it takes real skill to get to the Champions League Final.

In its 14 seasons only, Omid Afzalalghom has won the competition more than once and only three managers have been to more than one final Tony Collins and Adam Pemberton achieving this feat both having won and lost the final.

Interestingly the last two seasons finals have seen managers from the lower leagues make the final With a manager from the Conference taking on manager from League Two, with both of the Conference managers coming out on top.

Today's finalist breaks that Conference and League Two domination of the last two finals also both are in their first Champions League final so we shall see a new name on the trophy.

Today's final sees Sam Shew of the Championship take on Darren Cullen of League One. Both have won major trophies so are used to the big stage although one big difference this is Sam Shew's first major final as his major trophy was the Premier League title.

Darren Cullen won the Pyramid Cup in 2012 and has become the third manager to play in both Pyramid Cup finals and Champions League Cup Finals.

Cullen's appearance in this final is further proof of the strength in depth of the FC World and also shows that the Pyramid Cup gives new managers and lower league managers a good grounding into the format of this competition with the group stage then two-legged knock out phase.

So many rookie managers and lower league managers will be looking to see how Darren fairs in this final but the fact he has got here can give them all hope that it is possible.

For Sam Shew he has a different crowd watching his father FC World legend Steve 'Shewy' Shew a 4-time major trophy winner and Champions League runner-up in 2011 can Sam go one better than his father.

So, after 18 matches it all boils down to this one game and one gameweek which will take place on 1 day something that doesn't happen often during the season and makes this cup final extra special. For the two protagonists, today all will be revealed on Sunday 13th May, both I am sure will be glued to the TV watching the scores come in.

Over the next few pages we will profile the two managers and the FC expert gives his opinion on the final.

I hope you enjoy this Champions League Final Preview Edition. Another special final as this prestigious competition enters its second decade.

I of course wish both Darren and Sam all the best in this final.

Paul Richardson

Fantasy Challenge Founder

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PLAYER PROFILES

Darren CULLEN

Joined Fantasy Challenge
Career Honours

2012
2012 Pyramid Cup Winner
2012 Pyramid Two Promoted 2nd
2013 Pyramid One Lucky Promotion 13th
2014 Pyramid Premier Promoted 2nd
2015 Conference Promoted 5th
2016 League Two Promoted 3rd

STAT ATTACK

(After Gameweek 37)

THIS SEASON

AVERAGE GAMEWEEK SCORE	57.81
HIGHEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	101
LOWEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	25
GAMEWEEKS SCORE OVER 49	23
GAMEWEEKS SCORE UNDER 50	14
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AVERAGE	57.72

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE HISTORY

2016 2nd Round
2017 Semi-Final

PYRAMID CUP HISTORY

2012 Winner
2013 Group Stage
2014 2nd Round
2015 Group Stage

ROAD TO THE FINAL

1st Round Group Stage

Group C

Dan Wyatt	43	-	37
Solomon Amos	43	-	55
Thomas Lusty	44	-	36
Ian Gredley	49	-	86
David Noel	80	-	67
Dan Wyatt	52	-	36
Solomon Amos	43	-	31
Thomas Lusty	43	-	54
Ian Gredley	43	-	63
David Noel	50	-	37

FINAL TABLE

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	Ian Gredley	10	8	0	2	594	473	121	24
2	Darren Cullen	10	6	0	4	488	502	-14	18
3	David Noel	10	4	1	5	491	492	-1	13
4	Thomas Lusty	10	4	0	6	511	513	-2	12
5	Dan Wyatt	10	4	0	6	467	521	-54	12
6	Solomon Amos	10	3	1	6	455	505	-50	10

KNOCKOUT STAGE

		1 st Leg			2 nd Leg			Aggregate		
2 nd Round	Roari Fox	71	-	56	59	-	65	130	-	121
3 rd Round	Jim Burrows	85	-	64	59	-	59	144	-	124
Quarter-Final	Dave Sinclair	101	-	88	55	-	54	156	-	142
Semi-Final	Stuart Shepherd	73	-	68	46	-	47	119	-	115

PROFILE

Going into this final Darren is sat in 4th place in League One 3 points clear of 6th but with a worse points difference. If he fails to get up it will be his longest stay in any super20 League next season will be his third at this level. Cullen has 5 successive promotion before last season one being a Lucky Promotion. Cullen has won a major trophy winning the Pyramid Cup back in 2012 he is the 3rd Manager to have reached both Pyramid Cup and Champions League final and is aiming to be the second manager to lift both trophies. Last season Cullen reached the Semi-Final further proof that whatever happens today he has seat at the top table of the FC World.

Sam SHEW

Joined Fantasy Challenge

Career Honours

2007 Conference Promoted 5th (Dropped Out)
 2012 League Two Champion
 2014 Championship Promoted 2nd

2010 Conference Promoted 2nd
 2013 League One Promoted 5th
 2015 Premier league Champion

STAT ATTACK

(After Gameweek 37)

THIS SEASON

AVERAGE GAMEWEEK SCORE	55.75
HIGHEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	97
LOWEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	5
GAMEWEEKS SCORE OVER 49	23
GAMEWEEKS SCORE UNDER 50	14
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AVERAGE	62.94

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE HISTORY

2007	3 rd Round
2011	3 rd Round
2012	2 nd Round
2013	3 rd Round
2014	Group Stage
2015	Semi-Final
2016	Semi-Final
2017	Group Stage

PYRAMID CUP HISTORY

2010	Quarter-Final
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ROAD TO THE FINAL

1st Round Group Stage

Group O

Stephen Wilson	45	-	54
Sean Conneely	32	-	38
Glen Hogwood	39	-	63
Dave Perrett	48	-	47
Paul Richardson	80	-	64
Stephen Wilson	53	-	42
Sean Conneely	52	-	43
Glen Hogwood	63	-	66
Dave Perrett	43	-	37
Paul Richardson	75	-	45

FINAL TABLE

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	Glen Hogwood	10	8	0	2	560	489	71	24
2	Sam Shew	10	6	0	4	530	499	31	18
3	Dave Perrett	10	5	0	5	472	460	12	15
4	Paul Richardson	10	5	0	5	516	532	-16	15
5	Stephen Wilson	10	4	0	6	516	509	7	12
6	Sean Conneely	10	2	0	8	426	531	-105	6

KNOCKOUT STAGE

		1 st Leg			2 nd Leg			Aggregate	
2 nd Round	Clifford Delaney	95	-	67	69	-	49	164	- 116
3 rd Round	Glen Hogwood	97	-	91	59	-	47	156	- 138
Quarter-Final	Richard Munroe	92	-	47	53	-	37	145	- 84
Semi-Final	Joseph Shalome	78	-	38	60	-	53	138	- 91

PROFILE

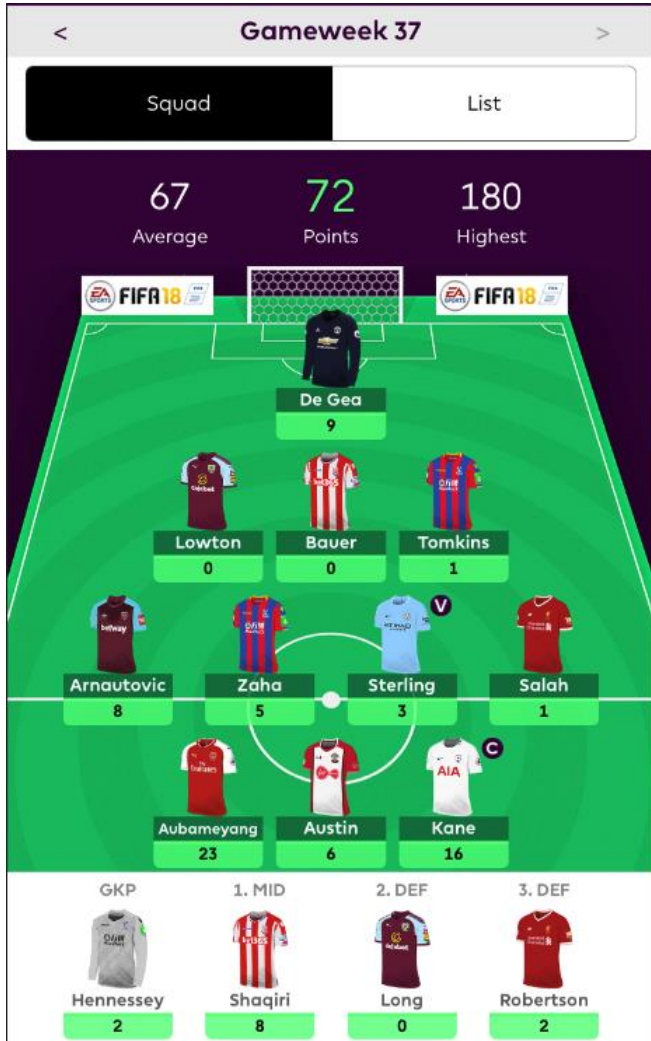
Sam Shew son of FC Legend Steve 'Shewy' Shew, he might not have the trophy count of his father but when he won the 2015 Premier league title in 2015 no one was surprised and he sat at the very top table of the FC World. Amazingly the very next season Sam was relegated and struggle din the Championship last season receiving a lucky survival. Sam can turn his full attention to this cup final and claim a second major trophy. This final also represents and end to semi-Final defeats two in the Champions League and one in the Super20 cup. Win or Lose this final represents a return to the top of the game for Sam of course if does win he will have done something his father hasn't.



FC EXPERT MATCH ANALYSIS

We asked the Fantasy Challenge Expert to give us his thoughts on this year's Champions League Final. We have managed to give the FC Expert the two team line-ups from Gameweek 37.

Darren CULLEN



Sam SHEW



STAT ATTACK

56
16
10
17
45
5 (-16 Points)
3-4-3

SCORE
CAPTAIN
DEFENCE
MIDFIELD
ATTACK
TRANSFERS
FORMATION

53
16
12
14
27
0
3-4-3
(before Automatic Substitution)

CHIP PLAYED

NONE

NONE

CHIPS LEFT

Bench Boost

Wildcard
Bench Boost

Darren Cullen score adjusted due to 5 transfers losing 16 points

THE ANALYSIS

This next bit of text you will have seen on the FC Cup final Analysis and I will be using it for all of this seasons Match Analysis of the final as it is very relevant.

It is now the third season that the FA Premier League Fantasy game has employed the Chips there is no doubt the chips have had a major effect in all of the Fantasy Challenge competitions Cup finals. Many Managers have stored their chips for such key moments in the season like cup finals and today's contest is no different.

Both managers have saved their Bench Boost but Sam Shew also has a wildcard to play.

As in this seasons FC Cup Final Preview I am going to use that new format. Going through the key components of each managers team. As you can see from above if the two teams had met in Gameweek 37 Darren Cullen would have come out on top in a close contest 56-53.

Like last season Gameweek 37 had an incredible number of fixtures and producing an average over 75 last season that average was above 100 points through the Fantasy Challenge game.

With several clubs having two fixtures the managers took advantage of this with teams full of players who playing twice in the gameweek.

It does leave me to wonder what relevance Gameweek 37 will actually have on this final which will take place on Sunday 13th May with just 10 fixtures taking place all at the same time. Also, with Sam Shew having that wildcard to play.

That said it would be remiss of me to dismiss what happened in Gameweek 37. So, let's go through those key components.

DEFENCE

Darren Cullen

(De Gea, Lowton, Bauer, Tomkins – On the Bench Hennessey, Long, Robertson)

Only a 10 point return from this defence is not a great score and was the worst part of Cullen's team in Gameweek 37.

Sam Shew

(Lloris, Lowton, Lascelles, Tarkowski – On the Bench Foster, Schindler, Chillwell)

Lloris with two clean sheets scored as many points as the Cullens entire defence. For Sam though that was the story of his defence with only Lascelles gaining positive points. The defence totalled 12 points.

Comparison

Both managers deployed a back 3 in Gameweek 37. Interestingly there is lots of differences between the two defences with only Lowton being in both teams. Cullen should have selected Robertson of Liverpool would have gained an extra couple of points. Sam will look at his bench Foster also scored 10 points which will please him but he left Schindler on the bench who scored 8 points. Both managers could have gained more points with their selections.

For The Final

Cullen is bound to play his bench boost from a defensive perspective 4 points from the bench was not a great return and he may well be looking to make a transfer here both with the bench boost he doesn't have to worry too much about Robertson not playing and whether to play him, wondering what selection Klopp will make for Liverpool's last fixture of course Liverpool do still need points to claim that last Champions League place. As for Sam well, a common theme is going to run here and I am going to say look at "That's Interesting" because of his options!

MIDFIELD

Darren Cullen

(Arnautovic, Zaha, Sterling, Salah – On the Bench Shaqiri)

Arnautovic was the star of the midfield scoring 8 points although he only got 3 points against Manchester United he looked lively at the end. Zaha hit 5 with an assist. Worrying for Cullen Salah looked tired only gaining a single point. He also would have been upset that Sterling was dropped not even on the bench against Huddersfield.

Sam Shew

(Sterling, Salah, Young, Willian, Kennedy (Automatic Substitute), – On the Bench NONE)

A 14-point return from a 5-man midfield is not a fantastic return not one goal amongst them, Sam also suffered like Cullen from Sterling being dropped for the second match of the week.

Comparison

Both managers have Sterling and Salah both have been high scorers this season. Then you have Cullen who has Arnautovic and Zaha midfielders from two struggling teams who are now both safe with the argument that could be made these players have made the difference. Then Shaqiri from Stoke who are now relegated. Sam has Young playing mainly in defence and Kennedy who has shown glimpses in his loan spell for Newcastle. Willian back in the Chelsea team and doing well although only 3 points from two matches was not a great return in gameweek 37.

For The Final

Cullen has two concerns in midfield. Salah is the big question in the midfield, the Egyptian having such a great season has shown some tiredness in the last couple of fixtures Liverpool have that champions league final but that defeat to Chelsea means they have not secured qualification for next season. The big question will Klopp play him knowing he will have two weeks of rest before that final, Liverpool have Brighton last day of the season who have survived, could Liverpool go on a crazy goal spree then rest players? The other concern for Cullen is Sterling being dropped will he play the last match, that is the question that has to be answered although City have secured the title they want that points record and seem to be goal hungry again after the goal less draw against Huddersfield. As for Sam before I go to that common theme he needs to be aware that Kennedy will not play as Newcastle face Chelsea his parent club so he is ineligible to play. One last thing the common theme look at "That's Interesting" because of his options!

ATTACK

DARREN CULLEN

(Aubameyang, Austin, Kane (Captain))

Simply wow 45 points from 3 players if Cullen can get anywhere near this in the final surely The Champions League is his. Aubameyang 23-point return from two games was simply amazing

Sam Shew

(Kane (Captain), Vardy, Lukaku (Selected but didn't play so automatically substituted out))

1 27-point return from two players is more than decent and at any other time would see me saying Sam has the advantage here but Cullen's forward line smashed gameweek 37.

Comparison

Both managers have Kane but the rest are different which is great. Both forward line also delivered with a combined 72 points a fantastic return from both. So Aubameyang and Austin versus Lukaku and Vardy.

For The Final

I do not see Cullen making any changes although Kane has received some criticisms in recent weeks as a Fantasy manager it shows he wants goals and goals mean points although Tottenham have qualified for Champions League Kane will want goals. Aubameyang looks on fire and wanted to say goodbye to Wenger in style and Austin for Southampton needs goals to keep them in the Premier League no transfer required here three hungry strikers that Cullen will be hoping can repeat the heroics of Gameweek 37. For Sam Lukaku is a worry with the Premier League website saying that he is not due back until May 19th from his foot injury after the gameweek is finished. The other thing to mention look at "That's Interesting" because of his options!

CAPTAIN

Darren Cullen

(Kane)

A decent return of 16 points but actually Cullen should have selected Aubameyang who would have hit a massive 46 points as Captain. Arnautovic and Shaqiri on the bench also would have matched Kane's total. Pleading for Cullen there are options there.

Sam Shew

(Kane)

As with Cullen 16 points from your captain is a good return but also like Cullen he did have a player scoring more Vardy would have scored 22 points if he had been captain. Also, goalkeeper Lloris would have outscored Kane.

Comparison

Cullen will be pleased although if he had selected Aubameyang he would have scored an extra 30- points he might view that as a one off. Sam will also be thinking about choosing Kane over Vardy interestingly Tottenham play Leicester in the last gameweek.

For The Final

I think Cullen will not be able to forget what happened in Gameweek 37 and will be looking at Aubameyang and Kane with a potential eye on Salah as Liverpool have something to play for. Good news though is he has many options for captain and if like in gameweek 37 a substitute as Shaqiri did hit 8 points he will be getting those points with his bench boost. Sam well-read below.

THAT IS INTERESTING

After reading what you have I am sorry to leave you waiting but I am going to start with Darren Cullen. Cullen obviously had this final in mind in Gameweek 37 as he made 5 transfers costing 16 points considering Darren is chasing promotion this was a big risk but he managed to win his league game and actually move into the promotion places with one fixture remaining. The clarity in this thinking is quite striking and shows Cullen as a very brave manager. He saved his Bench Boost for this final and decided to go for those extra transfers to setup his team. Now he hopes that the decisions in Gameweek 37 will see him across the line in two competitions.

So what is so interesting about Sam Shew's decisions in Gameweek 37, well it is more about the decision he didn't make. When I looked at the two managers the most interesting thing now is to see what chips the managers have left when I looked at Sam's I saw he still has a wildcard to play and his Bench Boost. Immediately I thought on well the verdict is going to be easy a wildcard and bench boost Sam Shew is the winner all the way but almost immediately I realised he can't play both chips. Yes, has Sam Shew made the same mistake and save his wildcard and chips for the final. This is a big mistake the decision to make would have been to play his wildcard in gameweek 37 he could have doubled up in the gameweek and looked at what players are required for the Final. This would probably have secured him victory in the Championship and would have meant that promotion was still possible but defeat means that it is no longer mathematically possible for him to get promoted. Also, after going through his team you will have seen that Kennedy doesn't play in the final gameweek as Newcastle play Chelsea the wildcard would have rectified this issue. I can not be sure but I think Sam has held back both chips thinking he can play them in the final but he can only play one.

After doing the analysis of the two teams in Gameweek 37 Darren Cullen would have come out on top in a tight contest.

Once more look at what the chips are we know that they will once again play a big part in this final. I have highlighted the rule which is copied from the Premier league website that you can't play two chips in one gameweek including your wildcard.

THE CHIP EFFECT

CHIP	EXPLANATION
Wildcard	The Wildcard chip can be used twice a season, once in the first half of the season and once in the second half of the season. The Wildcard chip is played when confirming transfers that cost points and can't be cancelled once played.
Bench Boost	All the Players on your Substitute Bench score points for that gameweek
Free Hit	You can make unlimited transfers in the gameweek you play your free hit. When the gameweek finishes your team will revert to how it was setup the previous gameweek. You will lose any saved transfers so will only have 1 free transfer after a free hit has been played.
Triple Captain	Instead of the normal double points your Captains Points are tripled
OTHER INFORMATION	<p>Can I Play More than One Chip in a Gameweek Only one chip may be active in a Gameweek. For example, it is not possible to make transfers with your Wildcard chip and then use your Bench Boost chip in the same Gameweek</p> <p>The following chips can only be played once per season Bench Boost, Free Hit and triple Captain</p> <p>What happens to my Triple Captain chip if my captain doesn't play The triple point's bonus will be passed to your vice-captain. If your vice-captain doesn't play either then the bonus is lost, the chip isn't returned.</p>

Both managers will need to take a look at the fixtures below of the final day of the season to try and figure out who will be really trying and whose season is over. The selection of captain could be vital to gaining success in this final.

THE FIXTURES FOR GAMEWEEK 38

Sunday 13th May

Burnley	V	AFC Bournemouth
Crystal Palace	V	West Bromwich Albion
Huddersfield Town	V	Arsenal
Liverpool	V	Brighton & Hove Albion
Manchester United	V	Watford
Newcastle United	V	Chelsea
Southampton	V	Manchester City
Tottenham Hotspur	V	Leicester City
Swansea	V	Stoke City
West Ham United	V	Everton

THE VERDICT

I am going to make the quickest verdict I think I have ever done in any final here today and it is based all around that decision from Sam Shew to save his chips and then not be able to use them both. Darren Cullen has his one free transfer and has that Bench Boost which he will surely play. For me his single transfer has to be a defender removing either Long of Burnley or Bauer of Stoke to try and ensure some more points. I always say it is about the manager who has options interestingly I think Cullen has great options, the Bench Boost one transfer focused on defence then who is captain he has good options. Sam has one big decision to make does he play the wildcard and then go 11 against 15. Or does he leave the wildcard and play the Bench Boost to cancel Cullen's Bench Boost. By not making a transfer Sam has the consolidation of having two transfers but we know he has to transfer out Kennedy who will not be playing and then he has Lukaku injured so his two transfers are going to be forced I would suggest he has to bring in Aubameyang to cancel out Cullen's forward line threat. Whatever way you look at it one decision in Gameweek 37 would have probably made Sam the favourite but he didn't make it.

. FINAL VERDICT: - Cullen to come out on top but the final could be very close depending on what decisions Sam makes but can he really be rewarded for the decision he didn't make in Gameweek 37.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING AND GUARANTEED

The feat of Tony Collins to be the first manager to make consecutive Champions League finals is an amazing achievement but what we have not mentioned so far is that he actually beat Dan Varrow in the Semi-Final last seasons runner-up. Dan Varrow would have been very disappointed with last season’s final going down 61-27. Who would believe that this season Semi Final would give him the opportunity to gain revenge. For Varrow it was not meant to be as he and Collins went head to once again with the chance of becoming the first manager to make consecutive finals. Collins went on to win both legs he held a 9-point lead after the first leg and won the second quite easily by 31 points 61-31. Dan Varrow achievement of reaching consecutive Semi-Finals is a remarkable one and deserved mention. It is amazing that in 13 seasons no manager had made a consecutive final and this it was guaranteed with this semi-final.

IN THE EVENT OF A DRAW

In the event of a draw the match will go into a penalty Shoot-Out. A penalty shoot-out will take place, each team’s top five point scorers will go head to head to produce a result. If the best five scorers’ in the two teams cannot produce a result sudden death will take place with the next highest point scorers being next.

HISTORY

PREVIOUS FINALS

YEAR	WINNER	MATCH SCORE			RUNNER-UP
2005	Omid Afzalalghom	33	-	28	Paul Dwinfour
2006	Adam Pemberton	68	-	57	Jeff Aldersea
2007	Andy McLaren	65	-	56	Andrew Hilliard
2008	Nigel Finch	59	-	55	Dave Sinclair
2009	Oliver Shanks	62	-	32	Tim Walters
2010	Omid Afzalalghom	71	-	65	Joe Higgins
2011	Michael Carleton	38	-	36	Steve Shew
2012	Mark Angliss	56	-	44	Adam Pemberton
2013	Kojo Amofa	53	-	50	Kaska Porczyk
2014	Matt Hansell	59	-	48	Michael Lynn
2015	Andreas Themistocleous	56	-	43	Alistair Shields
2016	Tony Collins	61	-	27	Dan Varrow
2017	Hans Hayrynen	97	-	90	Tony Collins

WINNERS

Omid Afzalalghom	2
Adam Pemberton	1
Andreas Themistocleous	1
Andy McLaren	1
Hans Hayrynen	1
Kojo Amofa	1
Mark Angliss	1
Matt Hansell	1
Michael Carleton	1
Nigel Finch	1
Oliver Shanks	1
Tony Collins	1

FINALISTS

Adam Pemberton	2	Kaska Porczyk	1
Omid Afzalalghom	2	Kojo Amofa	1
Tony Collins	2	Mark Angliss	1
Alistair Shields	1	Matt Hansell	1
Andreas Themistocleous	1	Michael Carleton	1
Andrew Hilliard	1	Michael Lynn	1
Andy McLaren	1	Nigel Finch	1
Dan Varrow	1	Oliver Shanks	1
Darren Cullen	1	Paul Dwinfour	1
Dave Sinclair	1	Sam Shew	1
Hans Hayrynen	1	Steve Shew	1
Jeff Aldersea	1	Tim Walters	1
Joe Higgins	1		