

**FANTASY CHALLENGE
NEW LIFE CUP
FINAL
2023**



**Charlie
BALL**

VERSUS

**David
CURTIS**

10th Final

GAMEWEEK 38 (28th May)

OFFICIAL FC MATCH PREVIEW

INTRODUCTION

It is amazing to think that the New Life Cup will complete its first decade with today's final.

The Cup competition the newest to be formed that gives all those managers that finished third in their Champions League or Pyramid Cup groups get a chance for glory and chance to sample a knockout tournament over two legs.

Last season I made mention of the fact it was a sixth successive season where we had managers from both of the feeding competitions, which has enhanced the reputation of this fantastic cup competition.

We made mention that the Champions League managers were dominating the competition and that Matt Coe from the Pyramid Cup who made last season's final was trying to become the first manager from the Pyramid Cup to win the competition since 2017. Matt Coe delivered to finally see a manager from the Pyramid Cup get their name on this trophy (Shield)

With that victory we wondered if there was going to be a changing of the guard in this competition and this year's final is pointing to this fact. As for the first time in the competitions history we have two players from the Pyramid Cup in the final so another Pyramid Cup victory is guaranteed.

The Pyramid Cup players still have work to do as in the past there have been two all Champions League finals.

Not only is this is first final with two Pyramid Cup manager but this final sees two rookie managers take the stage on a major final, to think that one of these managers will win a major trophy in their first season is a massive achievement.

Trying to achieve this magnificent feat are Charlie Ball and David Curtis.

Charlie Ball by virtue of signing up early to the season managed to join the FC World in Pyramid Two, he is not going to get promoted and is clear of relegation this cup run representing a fantastic performance in his first season and that chance of a major trophy in his rookie season.

David Curtis joined in the bottom division Pyramid Three, he has a real outside chance of promotion 2 points adrift of 5th place but lying in 9th place he is going to need a minor miracle to claim that promotion. This final represents a great chance to cap an amazing rookie season.

As you may be aware that this competition was named after the Sunday Football team that Fantasy Challenge had sponsored New Life United. The trophy is in fact a shield of the club badge of New Life United FC. Fantasy Challenge founder Paul Richardson is club chairman of New Life United. With the close links between Fantasy Challenge and New Life United we like to give all the Fantasy Challenge managers and update on the club in recent season have seen some turbulent times for the club and the update have not been that in depth I am happy to say that this year you will find at the end of this preview a real in depth update on NewLife United.

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

Before I sign off, I want to apologise for any spelling and or grammatical mistakes in this preview the timeframes are just getting tighter every season the alternative is no preview.

I hope you enjoy this Champions League Final Preview Edition.

I wish both managers all the best in this final.

Paul Richardson

Fantasy Challenge Founder

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PLAYER PROFILES

Charlie Ball

Career Honours

Honourable Mention

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE HISTORY	PYRAMID CUP HISTORY	NEW LIFE CUP HISTORY
2023	Group Stage	

STAT ATTACK

(After Gameweek 37 – Champions League Average does not include 0-0 draw week)

AVERAGE GAMEWEEK SCORE	66.62	GAMEWEEKS SCORE OVER 49	29
HIGHEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	132	GAMEWEEKS SCORE UNDER 50	8
LOWEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	38	CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AVERAGE	67.76

ROAD TO THE FINAL

PYRAMID CUP

1st Round Group Stage

Group A

Max Murley	66	-	68
Daniel Turner	60	-	36
Sean Doyle	69	-	66
Cameron Wong	72	-	76
Gareth Turnbull	38	-	44
Max Murley	0	-	0
Daniel Turner	63	-	60
Sean Doyle	94	-	59
Cameron Wong	65	-	87
Gareth Turnbull	41	-	85

FINAL TABLE

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	Cameron Wong	10	8	1	1	607	488	119	25
2	Max Murley	10	8	1	1	607	503	104	25
3	Charlie Ball	10	4	1	5	568	581	-13	13
4	Sean Doyle	10	3	1	6	533	552	-19	10
5	Gareth Turnbull	10	2	1	7	470	550	-80	7
6	Daniel Turner	10	2	1	7	469	580	-111	7

NEW LIFE CUP

		1 st Leg			2 nd Leg			Aggregate	
2 nd Round	Adam Pemberton	81	-	73	66	-	43	147	- 116
3 rd Round	Matt Hansell	104	-	61	56	-	48	160	- 109
Quarter-Final	Rikki Bodhani	43	-	44	77	-	69	120	- 113
Semi-Final	Stuart Shepherd	57	-	29	100	-	110	157	- 139

PLAYER PROFILES

David Curtis

Career Honours

Honourable Mention

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE HISTORY		PYRAMID CUP HISTORY		NEW LIFE CUP HISTORY	
2023		Group Stage			

STAT ATTACK

(After Gameweek 37 – Champions League Average does not include 0-0 draw week)

AVERAGE GAMEWEEK SCORE	60.10	GAMEWEEKS SCORE OVER 49	26
HIGHEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	127	GAMEWEEKS SCORE UNDER 50	11
LOWEST GAMEWEEK SCORE	35	CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AVERAGE	60.93

ROAD TO THE FINAL

PYRAMID CUP

1st Round Group Stage

Group F

Louis Irvine	51	-	61
Neil Williams	59	-	35
Joe Rudd	66	-	55
Andy Goozee	57	-	28
Louis Irvine	0	-	0
Neil Williams	43	-	61
Joe Rudd	53	-	65
Andy Goozee	50	-	40

FINAL TABLE

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	Louis Irvine	8	5	1	2	385	363	23	16
2	Neil Williams	8	5	0	3	512	455	57	15
3	David Curtis	8	4	1	3	379	345	34	13
4	Joe Rudd	8	3	1	4	410	430	-20	10
5	Andy Goozee	8	1	1	6	348	442	-94	4

NEW LIFE CUP

		1 st Leg			2 nd Leg			Aggregate		
2 nd Round	Jatin Joshi	90	-	77	51	-	47	141	-	124
3 rd Round	Maris Cars	81	-	83	42	-	30	123	-	113
Quarter-Final	Stephen West	84	-	38	49	-	62	133	-	100
Semi-Final	Nurul Hussain	37	-	33	101	-	86	138	-	119



FC EXPERT MATCH ANALYSIS

We asked the Fantasy Challenge Expert to give us his thoughts on the New Life Cup Final. We have managed to give the FC Expert the two team line-ups from Gameweek 37.

CHARLIE BALL

Gameweek 37

Squad List

52 Average **73** Points 128 Highest →



DAVID CURTIS

Gameweek 37

Squad List

52 Average **74** Points 128 Highest →



STAT ATTACK

73	SCORE	74
12	CAPTAIN	10
24	DEFENCE	23
36	MIDFIELD	29
13	ATTACK	22
0	TRANSFERS	1
3-5-2	FORMATION	3-4-3
NONE	CHIP PLAYED	NONE
NONE	CHIPS LEFT	NONE

THE ANALYSIS

Often the hardest Preview to do and most definitely in recent seasons. The hardest because the last Gameweek of the season sees three cup finals take place which makes it a magical Gameweek but as the FC expert it is a lot to get through. This season like the last couple also has the difficulty of Gameweek 37 finishing on Thursday evening

and waiting for the Premier League website to be updated before I can take a look at the two competing managers teams.

like the Champions League and Pyramid Cup Preview I will take a look at the key areas for this final.

After looking at the two teams in Gameweek 37 let's hope that the teams are as closely matched in this final as David Curtis would have come out on top by just a single point over Charlie Ball winning 74-73 seeing this close score has me excited that there is a real chance of a final going to a penalty-shoot out the worst-case scenario for the two-competing managers but what an amazing spectacle for the FC World.

One thing for the two managers if it was to go to a penalty shoot-out their names will forever go down in history of the game like Daniel Sherry and Omid Afzalghom have done from the FC Cup final which went to a replay.

As with the previous two previews this season finals is so intriguing as we know who the Premier league Champions are who has qualified for Champions League football and who has Cup finals to play, meaning that potentially two Premier League teams could be resting players, Manchester City and Manchester United (Alphabetically before anyone queries) will be thinking about next week's FA Cup Final.

I am going to go through three categories that I think will decide this final.

FINANCE / TRANSFERS / OPTIONS

CHARLIE BALL		DAVID MURPHY	
FINANCE	TRANSFERS	FINANCE	TRANSFERS
£105.2	2	£101.3	1

Over the seasons I always go on about the options available to the two managers and looking at the finances and transfers available we see a big difference in the options available to the two managers. Charlie Ball has two transfers and healthy bank balance with £2.8 Million in the bank to add to nay players value. David Murphy has just one transfer available and just £0.6 Million in the bank. I am going to keep this part short as what this represents will be looked at in the rest of the analysis but let's saw Charlie Ball has the greater options and with £2.8 Million in the bank can really make some interesting transfers and look to find the differentials in this final.

SQUAD SAME – LOOKING FOR THE DIFFERENTIALS

CHARLIE BALL	DAVID MURPHY
Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool)	Trent Alexander-Arnold (Liverpool)
Luke Shaw (Manchester United)	Luke Shaw (Manchester United)
Kaoru Mitoma (Brighton & Hove Albion)	Kaoru Mitoma (Brighton & Hove Albion)
Mo Salah (Liverpool)	Mo Salah (Liverpool)
Marcus Rashford (Manchester United)	Marcus Rashford (Manchester United)
Erling Haaland (Manchester City)	Erling Haaland (Manchester City)
Kieran Trippier (Newcastle United)	Kieran Trippier (Newcastle United)

Both managers have 7 of the same players in their 15-man squads. Then as we widen the scope, we see that Both managers have defenders from Brighton Ball has Pervis Estupinan and Murphy has Lewis Dunk. There are similarities in the forward line with both having Newcastle forwards Ball has Alexander Isak and Murphy has Callum Wilson. We need to look to the differentials but before we can do that once more I must bring up that all Manchester FA Cup Final. Ball has 5 players from those two clubs whilst Murphy has 6. Both managers have Luke Shaw who I am sure is going to be rested for the Cup final having taken a knock in the last game. This means that Murphy could be forced to use his one transfer on Shaw, however with his other defenders the same he could go with a back three of Alexander-Arnold, Trippier and Dunk. Leaving him looking at his midfield. Ball I think has one obvious transfer to make surely, he has to cover Murphy's Brighton forward Evan Ferguson meaning that he also has to find a differential in midfield. Upon reflection I am now convinced that Murphy has to bring someone into midfield probably removing Marcus Rashford and that Ball will also look to this are either removing Fernandes or Rashford and looking for that differential player.

CAPTAIN – (Points for the Could have selected have been doubled)

CHARLIE BALL

Haaland (Manchester City) 12 Points

COULD HAVE SELECTED

Fernandes (Manchester United) 11 Points

Luke Shaw (Manchester United)) 10 Points

Kaoru Mitoma (Brighton & Hove Albion) 7 Points

Marcus Rashford (Manchester United)) 7 Points

Kieran Trippier (Newcastle) 9 Points (On Bench)

DAVID MURPHY

Riyad Mahrez (Manchester City) 10 Points

COULD HAVE SELECTED

Evan Ferguson (Brighton & Hove Albion) 14 Points

David De Gea (Manchester United)) 10 Points

Luke Shaw (Manchester United)) 10 Points

Marcus Rashford (Manchester United)) 7 Points

Kaoru Mitoma (Brighton & Hove Albion) 7 Points

Erling Haaland (Manchester City) 6 Points

Kieran Trippier (Newcastle) 9 Points (On Bench)

A quick look at the team's from Gameweek 37 tells us that both managers got their captain picks wrong which is always a worrying sign ahead of a final. Ball had 5 players who would have outscored his captain whilst Murphy had 7 players doing better than his captain selection this is virtually 50% of his squad doing better. You can take two opinions of this he got it very wrong or look at the options he has for this final. With just one point separating these two managers in gameweek 37 we see how important this selection is going to be. The fact that Ball's captain outscored Murphy's captain by 2 points which would have made the difference in Gameweek 37. I have to say this just substantiates my thought that we have a real chance of a first ever penalty shoot-out for a major final. It is really going to come down to who is feeling brave or not, I do not see with either of these managers naming a Manchester City or Manchester United (Alphabetical) player as captain the big question is will they both go for the safe option of their Liverpool stars Trent Alexander-Arnold or Mo Salah. I do wonder if Murphy will gamble that Brighton teenage sensation can repeat his Gameweek 37 performance.

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 28th May

Arsenal	V	Wolverhampton Wanderers
Aston Villa	V	Brighton & Hove Albion
Brentford	V	Manchester City
Chelsea	V	Newcastle United
Crystal Palace	V	Nottingham Forest
Everton	V	Bournemouth
Leeds United	V	Tottenham Hotspur
Leicester City	V	West Ham United
Manchester United	V	Fulham
Southampton	V	Liverpool

THE VERDICT

Honestly, I am struggling to separate these two managers and just have this amazing feeling that this cup final could go down in the record books as I can see it going to a penalty shoot-out. I have never had this feeling before.

In the end I can't help but feel that the better bank balance and two transfers for Ball is going to be the deciding factor in this final

FINAL VERDICT: -

Charlie Ball

That Bank Balance and transfers making the difference although if it doe sgo to penalties will they make the difference.

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

2014	Steve Haley (CL)	62	-	50	Dan Smith (PC)
2015	Hakan Bedir (CL)	53	-	44	Andrew Burchell (CL)
2016	Jonathan Strack (CL)	42	-	33	Steve Shew (CL)
2017	Kin Chau (PC)	110	-	74	Jonathan Strack (CL)
2018	Dan Jopp (CL)	83	-	72	Peter Ward (PC)
2019	Joe Higgins (CL)	61	-	55	Martin Stuart (PC)
2020	Martyn Dewick (CL)	73	-	61	Triona Reilly (PC)
2021	Steven McIntosh (CL)	69	-	50	Kin Chau (PC)
2022	Matt Coe (PC)	71	-	66	Aubrey Davis (CL)

The CL by a manager's name means he was in that seasons Champions League competition. The PC by a manager's name means he was in that seasons Pyramid Cup competition

WINNERS		FINALISTS	
Dan Jopp	1	Jonathan Strack	2
Hakan Bedir	1	Kin Chau	2
Joe Higgins	1	Andrew Burchell	1
Jonathan Strack	1	Aubrey Davis	1
Kin Chau	1	Charlie Ball	1
Martin Dewick	1	Dan Jopp	1
Matt Coe	1	Dan Smith	1
Steve Haley	1	David Curtis	1
Steven McIntosh	1	Hakan Bedir	1
		Joe Higgins	1
		Martin Dewick	1
		Martin Stuart	1
		Matt Coe	1
		Peter Ward	1
		Steve Haley	1
		Steven McIntosh	1
		Steve Shew	1
		Triona Reilly	1

WHAT COMPETITION DID THEY COME FROM?

WINNERS		RUNNER-UP	
Champions League	7	Champions League	4
Pyramid Cup	2	Pyramid Cup	5

- The Champions League is still showing its dominance in this competition having won 7 out of the 9 finals.
- For the first time in Six Season, we have two finalists from the same competition.
- For the first time ever an all Pyramid Cup Final

NEW LIFE UNITED FC Review – 2021 - Present

You may remember that we informed you two seasons ago that New Life United FC had reformed.



We mentioned that the reformation had not gone smoothly, in truth it had been a difficult time for the club. At times we wondered if there was a future for New Life United.

Struggling to get a team out and then disciplinary issues affecting the very future of the club. Discipline got to breaking point when a full FA hearing was called after a match. Resulting in several players receiving lengthy bans, this meant manager Nicky Balancy had to review discipline within the squad.

The club managed to get through the 2021-22 season finishing 7th out of 8 teams in WESFA (Woolwich and Eltham Sunday Alliance) Division 6. Losing 10 of their 14 league matches, 3 league victories was all the club had to hold onto. With the season over WESFA took the decision to not renew New Life United's membership of the league, quoting disciplinary reasons. In truth a re-structuring of the leagues at WESFA would see many other clubs not have their membership renewed either.

The next board meeting it was generally thought that would be the end of NewLife United FC. Manager Nicky Balancy informed the board that he felt that he had a squad of players and that the club was ready to be turned around.

Club Chairman Paul Richardson was not convinced but gave his blessing, the board voted unanimously in that meeting for the club to look for a new League.

The Club was accepted into the Metropolitan Sunday Football League, where they would join the bottom division. Division Two in a four-tier league system.

The season did not start well, losing their opening league fixture 4-1 followed by defeat in the cup a week later. After the clubs opening 9 fixtures, they had lost 7 matches and managed just 1 victory amazingly, they had gained a draw against top of the table AFC SEL. New Life United had scored 13 goals in those games but had conceded a massive 23 goals.

Training was being well attended but attendances at matches was fluctuating it was another point in the history of the club where you wondered if the club would survive the season let alone have a team for next season.

Thankfully a league victory happened in the next game and hope was once more alive but then a week later a 5-1 defeat to AFC Sel saw a new low in the history of the club. Phone conversations took place between club chairman and manager Nicky Balancy, once more the chairman wondered if all of Nicky's effort was worth it appeared that it was one step forward but two if not three back. From that moment though the club has moved forward a four game unbeaten run set the club up to go the second half of the season with just 4 defeats in 10 matches.

Club Chairman Paul Richardson: - "I have to concede I had my doubts after the issues of last season if this club was worth fighting for it was the first time in the history, I had felt this way. It was also difficult due to the pandemic I had not managed to meet the new squad of players so felt detached from everything. Then a change of personal circumstances saw me move further away from the club physically. Which has meant I have not been able to commit my time and get to see and training sessions or matches. I have always been impressed with Nicky's drive and ambition for this club but when the season started and the results were coming in and hearing about various attendance issues I wondered if all the hard work was paying off and I genuinely thought that potentially it would be best for everyone to cut our losses. Nicky though always remained confident in this group of players and assured me that they were getting it right. I felt a change in the group chat around the turn of the year although results did improve immediately there did seem to be a different vibe around the club. Then as we moved into the second half of the season things really turned around, I have to say suddenly Sunday was all about looking out for the New Life texts and finding out how they had got on. There were defeats but somehow, they seemed positive and then

victories started to happen. I have to take my hat off to Nicky for turning this around but the players have to take massive credit, I have played and managed at this level and it can be soul destroying turning up every week and losing but for this squad to keep their heads up and to keep battling well it has certainly lifted my spirits. The team finished just below mid table but I can honestly say that if you take the season as a whole it has been a successful one. At the start of the season, I asked the manager for two things, an improvement in discipline and an improvement on the field both have been delivered. I want to take this opportunity to thank Nicky and all the players who have played their part in turning round this club's fortunes. We can look forward to next season now that a solid base has been found, I really think the club can attain a top half finish and who knows even push for promotion."

NEW LIFE UNITED SEASON STATS

LEAGUE TABLE

@ 21st May 2023

After New Life United's final league fixture

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	AFC SEL	20	14	4	2	90	31	59	46
2	Petts Wood Seniors Black Vultures	18	15	1	2	59	24	35	46
3	Kidbrooke Kings	20	9	4	7	33	45	-12	31
4	Catford FC (Sun)	18	8	5	5	35	30	5	29
5	Red Lion Shooters Hill	20	8	4	8	38	44	-6	28
6	Avery Hill Athletics Res	20	7	3	10	39	48	-9	24
7	New Life United	20	6	4	10	42	48	-6	22
8	Bromley Road	20	6	4	10	46	56	-10	22
9	Haywards FC	20	5	6	9	37	50	-13	21
10	Orpington Athletic	20	6	3	11	32	55	-23	21
11	South London Doves	20	4	2	14	41	61	-20	14

LEAGUE RESULTS

Petts Wood Seniors Black Vultures	1	-	4	Avery Hill Athletic Res	3	-	2
AFC SEL	2	-	2	Catford (Sun)	2	-	2
Kidbrooke Kings	1	-	2	Bromley Road	1	-	1
South London Doves	1	-	2	Kidbrooke Kings	3	-	2
Orpington Athletic	4	-	1	Avery Hill Athletic Res	1	-	2
Red Lion Shooters Hill	2	-	3	Catford (Sun)	1	-	2
Bromley Road	2	-	5	Haywards FC	5	-	2
Orpington Athletic	0	-	3	Petts Wood Seniors Black Vultures	3	-	4
South London Doves	3	-	1	Red Lion Shooters Hill	5	-	2
AFC SEL	1	-	5	Haywards FC	1	-	1

PLAYER STATS

PLAYER	APPEARANCES	GOALS
Adrian Francis	20	4
Joshua King	20	4
Moussa Ndaou	20	1
Tyler Coleman	18	6
Craig Palmer	17	11
Shane Scotter (GK)	17	
Harrison Woods	17	4
Abdu-Karim Jalloh	16	
Paul Scotter	16	
Cona Beck	14	2
Ecian King	12	
Shawn Bromfield	12	

A SEASON OF TWO HALVES

FIRST HALF OF SEASON

POS	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
11 th	10	2	1	7	17	28	-11	7

SECOND HALF OF SEASON

POS	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
7 th	10	4	3	3	25	20	5	15

LEAGUE TABLE

@ 15th February 2023

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	AFC SEL	11	8	3	0	43	15	28	27
2	Petts Wood Seniors Black Vultures	10	8	1	1	29	12	17	25
3	Red Lion Shooters Hill	12	5	3	4	25	25	0	18
4	Bromley Road	7	5	1	1	28	18	10	16
5	Orpington Athletic	13	4	2	7	27	40	-13	14
6	Kidbrooke Kings	10	3	3	4	17	28	-11	12
7	Haywards FC	11	2	5	4	17	21	-4	11
8	Catford FC (Sun)	6	3	1	2	12	13	-1	10
9	South London Doves	12	3	1	8	26	29	-3	10
10	Avery Hill Athletics Res	12	2	3	7	18	30	-12	9
11	New Life United	10	2	1	7	17	28	-11	7

LEAGUE TABLE

Matches played after 15th February 2023

POS	TEAM	PLD	WON	DRW	LST	FOR	AGST	+/-	PTS
1	Petts Wood Seniors Black Vultures	8	7	0	1	30	12	18	21
2	AFC SEL	9	6	1	2	47	16	31	19
3	Catford FC (Sun)	12	5	4	3	23	17	6	19
4	Kidbrooke Kings	10	6	1	3	16	17	-1	19
5	New Life United	10	4	3	3	25	20	5	15
6	Avery Hill Athletics Res	8	5	0	3	21	18	3	15
7	Red Lion Shooters Hill	8	3	1	4	13	19	-6	10
8	Haywards FC	9	3	1	5	20	29	-9	10
9	Orpington Athletic	7	2	1	4	5	15	-10	7
10	Bromley Road	13	1	3	9	18	38	-20	6
11	South London Doves	8	1	1	6	15	32	-17	4