

# EXTRA EXTRA!

## READ ALL ABOUT IT

### The old ways are best, says unlikely FPL champion

This is an edited version of a story from  
© The Guardian [29/3/2025]

**It is a game for the football geeks, computer scientists and the data-lovers. But the current leader of the Fantasy Premier League (FPL), which allows participants to play at being Premier League managers, is none of the above!**

Susan Clarke, a 67-year-old woman who uses a pen and paper to choose her team each week, has beaten millions of competitors to the top!

The FPL, which gives players a budget to form their own teams of Premier League footballers, attracts more than 11 million players around the world.

"It's like winning the EuroMillions," says Mitch Murphy, the co-founder of the Lazy FPL newsletter.

Lazy FPL contacted Clarke after seeing her success. When asked how she felt about being FPL's top dog in week 29, she said was "shocked but enjoying the reaction of my family and friends".

Asked for her magic formula when picking her team, she said: "At the ripe old age of 67 (you can call me old fashioned!) my weekly lists with pen and paper seem to be the secret to my success!"

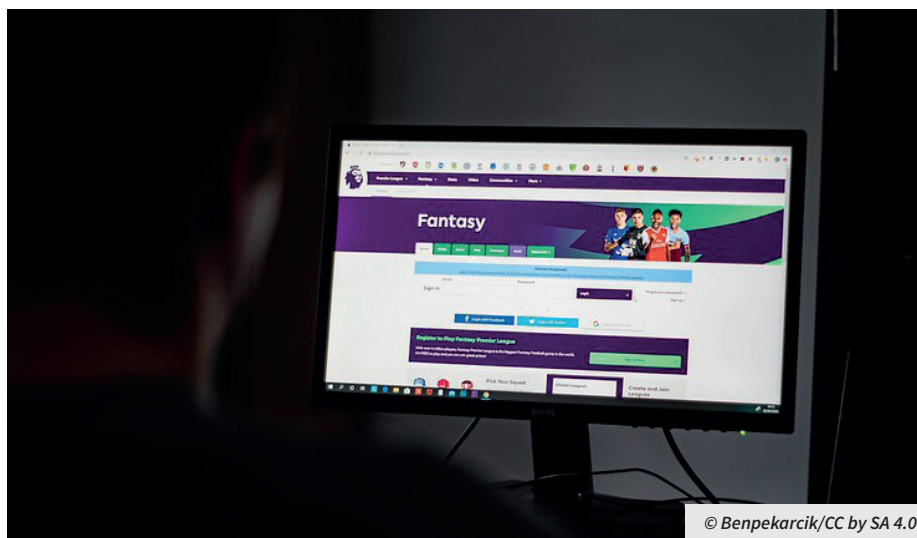
That success has delighted other players because it goes against the increasing use of artificial intelligence to help choose the best players, says Murphy.

"The game is becoming more data driven, more AI-powered, more automated, more head than heart," he said. "And then there's Susan, who has got a pen and paper and everything she touches turns to gold."

The FPL has grown rapidly since it launched with about 70,000 players in August 2002. There are now 11.4 million players worldwide, with the largest number of managers in England, Egypt, Nigeria, Malaysia and the US.

Famous FPL players include tennis star Andy Murray, chess champion Magnus Carlsen, and rapper Stormzy — who even listens to a sports psychology podcast to help choose his team!

Given the competition it is, says Murphy, unlikely that Clarke will win the fantasy league this season. But he's rooting for her. "What we really love is when someone like Susan comes along and demonstrates the randomness of football."

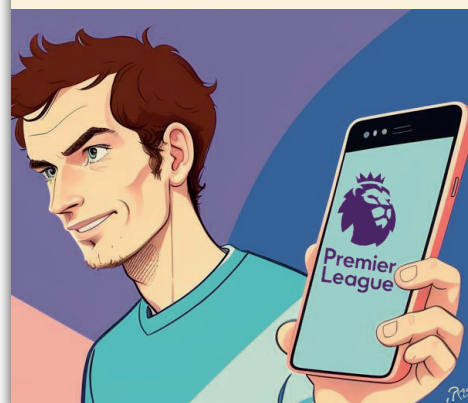


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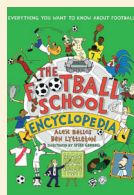
## FIND THE TRUTH?

**Not all news is based on truth. Do you think this story is based on true or false news?**

Andy Murray considers FPL more important than Wimbledon.

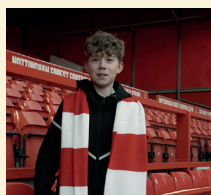


## READ MORE



The Football School Encyclopedia by Alex Bellos  
Walker Books

## LEARN MORE



### Learn

Watch [this report](#) on Nottingham Forest's surprising Premier League success!

This worksheet is available every weekday at 6:30am London time from <https://theday.co.uk/resources/news-detectives>.  
For any feedback or help please contact [newsdetectives@theday.co.uk](mailto:newsdetectives@theday.co.uk). Thank you.

Answer to Find the truth. Not quite! He said: "I'd probably go with Wimbledon, but it's tight!" Read [more here](#).



# CHECK YOUR FACTS

1

**WHAT**  
countries have  
the most FPL  
players?

**ANSWER:**  
England,  
Egypt, Nigeria,  
Malaysia, US

**WHO**  
uses a podcast  
to pick their  
team?

**ANSWER:**  
Stormzy

**WHERE**  
is the FPL  
played?

**ANSWER:**  
Online

**WHEN**  
does the  
competition  
end?

**ANSWER:**  
At the end of  
the Premier  
League season  
in May

**WHY**  
does Susan say  
her approach is  
old-fashioned?

**ANSWER:**  
She uses pen  
and paper

**HOW**  
do other users  
pick their  
teams?

**ANSWER:**  
Data analysis,  
artificial  
intelligence,  
strategising

2

## KNOW YOUR KEYWORDS

1. Sports psychology

2. Data

3. Probability

4. League

A. Likelihood of something

B. A group of competing teams

C. Using emotions to improve performance

D. Facts, numbers and statistics

1=C

2=D

3=A

4=B

3

## LOOK AT ALL SIDES

Answers are subjective and may vary.  
The below is just a guide.

### Susan Clarke



Excited



Happy



Surprised

### Susan's competitors



Sad



Angry

### People using 'modern' strategies



Surprised

### Traditionalists



Happy

Team Pekarcik	
Pete Carroll @Gum	Team Pekarcik
260.5	260.6
140.4	133.8
Wk 16	
Proj -	
P. Mahomes KC @Sea, 31-38 Final 273 YDS, 3 TD	28.2 QB 28.5
A. Kamara NO Pit, 31-28 Final 23 YDS, 2 TD	26.5 RB 23.2
J. Samuels Pit @NO, 28-31 Final 53 YDS, 2 TD	15.4 RB 18.7
R. Wilson Sea KC, 38-31 Final 271 YDS, 3 TD	
C. Anderson LAR @Ari, 31-9 Final 167 YDS, TD	
S. Barkley NYG @Ind, 27-28 Final 42 YDS, TD	

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