

Open Management

1. Introduction

Open Management is a postal football game based on United. United was invented by Alan Parr and although his original rules form the basis of these rules I have used ideas from many other sources, notably Ryk Downes, Peter Stanton and Martin Draper.

2. Mechanics

Each team in a match must contain 11 players. There must be precisely 1 goalkeeper (GK), at least 2 defenders (DF) and midfielders (MF) and forwards (FW) (exception see blanket defence). A team may also contain a sweeper (SW) and one linkman (LK). Each player has a skill level, which can range from 0 to 20 for all positions apart from linkman, 0 to 15 in the case of a linkman. Each player should have a name, which should be made up of alphabetic characters only and be a maximum of 12 characters long. The position and current level of all players will be disclosed to all managers.

The Linkman (LK) must play in midfield and adds his levels to either DF or FW. Only one linkman may play in a match. For instance should you be qualifying an apprentice or schoolboy linkman at level 0 and you already owned a level 10 linkman, your level 10 LK could not play in the same team, even as a basic level 10 MF with no addition to another area.

Teams get a number of shots at goal depending on the levels of areas of play

- a) If a teams FW area is higher than the opposing (DF + SW) area they get shots equal to the difference.
- b) The team with the highest MF area gets shots equal to half the difference.
- c) If a teams DF area (not including SW) is higher than the opposing FW area they get shots equal to one quarter the difference.
- d) Finally each team is given one free shot.

In the case of b) or c) shots are not rounded up or down so it is perfectly possible to gain half or a quarter of a shot.

In the case of a) or b) the number of shots would be different if one or both teams were using the offside trap.

Once the total number of shots has been calculated they are first played against the SW.

$(\text{No of shots}) - (\text{No of shots} \times \text{SW level}) / (\text{SW level} + 5) = \text{shots against the GK}$

To see if a goal is scored the remaining shots are then played against the GK

$(\text{Shots}) - (\text{Shots} \times \text{GK level}) / (\text{GK level} + 3) = \text{goals}$

Shots and goals are calculated to 2 decimal places. Here is an example of a match calculation. Team A has elected to use the offside trap.

| | Team A | Team B |
|----|--------|--------|
| GK | 15 | 5 |
| SW | - | 10 |
| DF | 23 | 25 |
| MF | 26 | 28 |
| FW | 69 | 57 |

Team A would gain 34 shots from the FW area $(69 - (10+25)) +$ one free shot making 35. Team B would gain 2 from MF $((25 - 23)/2) \times 2$ and 17 from the FW $(57-23)/2$. Note that A's use of the offside trap halves the shots from FW but doubles the MF shots. When B's free shot is added the total comes to 20.

Team B's SW would save 23.33 shots leaving 11.67 for the GK to face.

Team A doesn't have a SW so his GK would face all 20 shots.

Team B's GK would save 7.29 shots leaving 4.38 goals.

Team A's GK would save 16.67 shots leaving 3.33 goals.

If neither team used performance points these goals would be rounded down so team A would win by 4 goals to 3.

3. Area additions and Team balance

None of the four areas GK/SW combined, DF (not including SW), MF FW may have players whose total levels are more than three times the total levels of any other area. This restriction only applies after the addition of home advantage and hardness. The levels of the GK and SW are added together and then multiplied by 2 to determine the totals levels in the GK/SW area. In the example above both teams would have GK/SW levels of 30.

The team playing at home will be listed first and will have 8 additional levels to distribute amongst GK/SW/DF/MF/FW. Please note it takes 2 levels to raise the GK or SW by one level. You can't use one home advantage point to raise the level of a GK/SW by ½ a level. *Unless injuries/suspensions make it impossible no team can ever field more than three level zero players in any one match.*

Teams may choose to use hardness up to a maximum of 15 although in doing so there is a risk of injury, bookings and sending off. As with home advantage it takes 2 hardness points to raise the level of the GK or SW by one level. GK/SW can't be raised ½ a level.

Good performance points: Each team has 30 good performance points each season. Any points not used are lost and may not be carried forward to the next season. A maximum of 8 good performance points may be used in one match. Each good performance point used increases its team's goals by 0.1.

Great performances: Each team has 4 great performances per season. As with good performance points any not used in a season are lost. A great performance has the effect of rounding up any part of a goal greater than 0.499. So 1.52 goals becomes 2.0, 3.79 becomes 4.0, but 2.48 remains at 2.0. Ineffective great performances are lost. Good performance and great performance may be used in the same match.

4. Playing out of position

Players may play out of position subject to the following restrictions.

GK: No other player may play in goal and a GK cannot play in any other position.

SW: no other player may play as a SW but a SW may play as DF at full level.

DF: SW may play as DF without loss of level. MF and FW may play as DF with the loss of one level.

MF: DF and FW may play in MF with the loss of one level

FW: DF and MF may play in FW with the loss of one level.

LK: LK can only ever play in MF.

Should a player play six matches in the same position in one season he is deemed to have acclimatised to that position and suffers no further loss of level for the rest of his career. Such players become dual qualified and have two registered positions eg. MF/FW. Dual qualified players can play six games out of position (in one season) in the third area when they become utility players UT able to play in any of the three outfield areas at full level.

5. Team Tactics

Offside trap: A team playing without a SW may use the offside trap. This halves the number of shots gained by the opponent's FW area, but doubles the number of shots gained by the opponents MF.

Blanket Defence: A team may elect to use the blanket defence tactic in any game. This allows the team to (a) Play a FW line consisting of only one player and/or (b) Play a FW line of one quarter the strength of GK/SW, DF. MF. However if blanket defence is employed the MF area may not be higher than DF.

6. Discipline

A team using hardness runs the risk of players being booked or sent off and conceding penalties.

Each player in a team (excluding GK) has a 0.25% chance of being sent off per hardness point used. (15 hardness each player = 3.75% sent off). A player will be deemed to have been sent off at half-time and for the purposes of match calculation will play at half level.

Each player in a team (excluding GK) has a 3% chance of being booked per hardness point used.. (15 hardness each player = 45% booked)

Although a GK is normally immune from the effects of hardness this will not apply should any hardness points be used in his area.

Each team has a 10% chance of conceding a penalty per hardness point used. The chance will be evaluated for each hardness point employed thus a team could concede more than one penalty per match. (15 hardness 0-15 penalties conceded)

A GK's chance of saving a penalty during normal time will be 2.5% x GK level.

A player who is booked receives 4 DPs. A player sent off receives 10 DPs. Disciplinary points are cumulative – when a player reaches 10 DPs he receives a one match ban, a two match ban at 20 DPs and a three match ban at 30 DPs etc. At the end of a season each players DP points are set to zero. Suspensions will begin with the first match in the following session. If a player started a session with 16 points and was booked in one match and sent off in the other he would go from 16 to 30 DPs and incur a 5 match ban.

7. Injury and loss of fitness

If hardness is used players in both teams (apart from the GK) have a chance of being injured. The chance per player is $[H + (3 \times oH)] / 3 \%$ where H is your hardness and oH is your opponents hardness. For each injured player a random number from 1-100 is created with the following results.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Random number: | 1-25 | 26-45 | 46-62 | 63-76 | 77-86 | 87-91 | 92-95 | 96-97 | 98-99 | 100 |
| Injury level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Match loss | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |

Players who sustain injuries may continue to play but at a reduced level according to the following conditions:

- They are unaffected in the remaining games in the session (assuming they are not injured again) but their playing level is reduced in the games in which they are injured as shown by match loss, BUT up to a maximum of one half of the players level, rounded up.
- Starting with the first game of the following session the injury reduces by 2 for each game where the player is rested. If the player is rested for the whole session the injury level reduces by 6.
- Or, injured players may play at a reduced level and their injury will recover by one level. Their reduced level equals their normal level minus their injury level at the start of the game. No player may play at a minus level. ALL INJURIES HEAL IN THE CLOSE SEASON AFTER THE CLOSE SEASON MATCHES.

8. Team Development

Each player will have an age, the youngest being schoolboy or apprentice then anything from 1-6. As players age their effectiveness declines and apart from schoolboys and apprentices they age one year and lose levels equal to their new age. Thus a level 16 age 3 player will become a level 12 age 4. When a players level falls to 0, or he reaches the age of 7 he retires. All ageing takes place during the close season.

Apprentices: A manager may discover a maximum of 5 apprentices in a season. A team may not discover more than one each of GK, SW and LK apprentice. *From season nine a team may discover only one apprentice from GK/SW/LK.* An apprentice must play his first four games at level 0 but after he has played 4 games in one position he immediately rises to level 2 and can be coached like other players. *At the end of his first season a qualified apprentice who has been coached at least one level gains one additional level* (subject to max level) and becomes an age 1 player. An apprentice who fails to play his four qualifying games is released.

Schoolboys: A club may have only one discovered unqualified schoolboy on its books at any time though this limit may be exceeded if a club is able to sign additional schoolboys through the auction or from other clubs. A schoolboy needs to play six games in one position to qualify, and he may play no more than one game a session until he is qualified. The qualifying games may be spread over two seasons. He plays his first six games at level 0, but as soon as he has played his six qualifying games he becomes a level 2 apprentice who may be coached for the rest of that season at the rate of 1VP per level for GK,SW or LK and ½ VP for DF, MF or FW. As soon as a schoolboy has played his sixth qualifying game the club is free to sign a further schoolboy. At the end of the season in which a schoolboy has qualified he will gain a further two levels (subject to the maximum level for his position) and become an age 1 player with no further coaching concessions.

9. Coaching

At the start of each session (1-8) a club will be given 3 VPs (value points). In addition a club will gain 1VP for each match won in the previous session and ½ VP for each match drawn (League and Cup matches only). In the bowl only ½ VP is awarded for a win and nothing for a draw. All coaching must take place before any matches are played. One VP can be used to raise the level of a DF,MF or FW by one level. Two VPs are required to raise the level of a GK, SW or LK. Costs are halved for newly qualified schoolboys. Apprentices and schoolboys may be coached twice a session, age 1 and older only once. There is no limit (subject to available VPs) to the number of times an apprentice or schoolboy can be coached in a season. There is a limit to the number of times other players can be coached, age 1 players may be coached a maximum of 5 times, older players may be coached no more than 3 times. From time to time there may be special coaches or players who give further concessions on coaching. Despite these concessions it will still take a minimum of ½ VP to coach an outfield player and a minimum of 1 VP to coach a GK, SW or LK. A maximum of 2 VPs may be carried over from session to session but only ½ VP may be carried forward to a new season. No player can be coached above level 20 (15 for a linkman) unless either the player has a special characteristic that allows this, or the club has a coach who allows coaching above the normal maximum.

10. Finance

At the beginning of each session a first division club will be given 140k, a second division club 100k and a third division club 80k. There will be no cash awards for winning individual matches but there will be cash awards for success in competitions, as follows:-

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| League Champions | 500k |
| League runners-up | 250k |
| Division 2 champions | 250k |
| Division 3 champions | 150k |
| Cup winners | 400k |
| Losing finalist | 200k |
| Losing semi-finalists | 100k |
| Bowl winners | 150k |
| Losing finalist | 75k |
| Charity shield winners | 100k |
| Best DP record* | 400k |

* shared if more than one team equal best

Clubs who break the rules by trying to play suspended players, naming more or fewer than 11 players in a match, breaking the team balance rule, or failing to provide orders for a match will be fined 25k the first time, 50k the second and considerably more on subsequent breaches of these rules. The club with the worst DP record will be fined 200k at the end of the season. If two or more clubs have the same worst record the fine will be split between them.

Clubs may make deals with other clubs as they see fit. However, the GM reserves the right to veto any deal he feels is inequitable or against the spirit of the game. Players may not be loaned between clubs, a player sold to a club may not be transferred back to the original club until the following season, or 5 sessions, whichever is longer. VPs, good performance points and great performances may not form part of any deal between clubs. A deal between clubs will only take place if BOTH managers give identical details of the deal. DPs will be transferred along with the player but for the purposes of determining the club(s) with the best and worst DP record the DPs will remain with the transferring club. Players will be transferred at the end of a session and will not be available to play until the following session.

Clubs may sell players to the non-league. The non-league will pay 80k per level for an apprentice or schoolboy, 60k/level for age 1, 40k for age 2, 20k for age 3, 10k for age 4, 5k for age 5 and nothing for older players. Prices for GK, SW and LK will be doubled. Clubs may sell one player to the non-league in each of sessions 1-6. In the close season one player may be sold to the non-league (after ageing, of course)

In each of sessions 1-6 the GM will offer for auction a mixture of players, VPs and good performance points. The players will have a reserve price equal to their non-league value. Managers may make one bid for each item; bids may be made conditional on the result of previous auction items but not subsequent items. Players' names must be provided otherwise bids will be ignored. Conditional non-league sales may be made in the event of an anticipated purchase. Teams may go into debt up to 1000k, teams in debt will be charged 5% interest a session. Auction bids, or other deals that would result in a club going more than 1000k overdrawn will be ignored. Should a club contrive to go into debt by more than 1000k (by fines) then players will be sold off at the GMs discretion until the overdraft is below 1000k.

Managers may offer their own players for auction but the GM reserves the right not to include them if he feels they are unlikely to attract bids in excess of their non-league value. A club may put only one player into each auction with the reserve price being the non-league price. Players put into the auction by clubs may play in matches in the same session but they will be withdrawn from the auction should they be booked, sent off or injured. Managers cannot bid for their own players. Managers may not put VPs, good performance points or great performances into the auction.

In the close season there will be an auction of coaches. These will have special abilities when it comes to coaching, ageing, number of apprentices allowed, etc.

A transfer deadline will take place at the end of session 6. After this no more players will be auctioned, no players can be transferred to other clubs and there can be no more non-league sales.

11. Competitions

In league matches 2 points will be awarded for a win, 1 for a draw and 0 for losing.

The F.A. Cup will be the primary knockout competition. The preliminary round will involve the sixteen teams from the two lower divisions and will be played in week one. A random draw will be made for this round, the first named team will have home advantage. Should the match be drawn a replay will take place in the same session with the venue reversed. Should the replay result in a draw, a penalty shootout will take place with the five highest level players (not GK) from each side taking one penalty each. In penalty shootouts the criteria for scoring will be different i.e.

$$\text{GK save \%} = [(20 + \text{GK level} \times 2) - (\text{level of penalty taker})]$$

Should the tie still be level after 5 penalties each, there will be a sudden death penalty shootout with the next highest level players taking the kicks.

The first round proper of the F.A. Cup will take place in week two. The eight teams from division one will join the eight teams surviving from the preliminary round. Replays will be held the following session with home advantage reversed.

Sides eliminated in the first round of the F.A. Cup will enter the Bowl. Again the first named team will have home advantage. Ties will be replayed the following session and decided on penalties if necessary. Both the final and the semi-finals of the Cup and Bowl competition will be played at neutral grounds with replays in the semi-finals only. Should a final be drawn then it will be decided on penalties.

In session 9 there will be a close season and the league champions will play for the F.A. Charity shield against the F.A. Cup winners. The winner will gain 1 VP.

12. Rookie draft

Rookie drafts will be entirely at the discretion of the GM and he reserves the right to decide which, if any clubs should benefit from one and to what extent it should take.

13. Promotion/Relegation

The bottom two teams in divisions one and two will be relegated and the top two in divisions two and three promoted. The sixth placed team in division one will play off against the third placed team in division two and the sixth placed team in division two will play off against the third place team in division three, the winners of the play off matches going into the higher division. These matches will take place in the close season, before ageing and at neutral grounds. A VP will be awarded to the winners. There will be no replays; penalty shootouts will be used if necessary.

If it is necessary to split a tie between two teams the following criteria will apply

- a) The team with the best goal difference will be placed higher. Then
- b) The team scoring the most goals will be placed higher. Then
- c) The results of the two league matches between the teams will be taken into account first most points, then best goal difference, then most goals scored, then goal difference with away goals counting double. Then
- d) There will be a play-off in the close season.

14. Order of business

- 1) Use of VPs
- 2) Matches
- 3) Income
- 4) Auction
- 5) Deals between clubs
- 6) Sales to non-league

15. New Teams

A new team must be built from no more than 150 levels from age 1 upwards, with GK, SW and LK all counting double. Of these levels no more than 50 may be age 1, no more than 100 may be age 1 or 2 and no more than 120 may be age 1, 2 or 3. Levels must be allocated to a minimum of eight players, only one of these may be a goalkeeper.

Examples of legitimate new teams are as follows

GK 1 18, SW 4 10, DF 2 20, LK 2 15, MF 3 10, FW 4 10, FW 3 10, FW 1 14

GK 1 3, SW 1 14, DF 2 20, MF 1 16, FW 4 20, FW 2 20, FW 3 20, FW 4 20

GK 4 20, DF 3 10, DF 2 10, DF 2 10, MF 1 15, MF 1 10, MF 1 10, LK 2 15, FW 1 15

16. Anything else

While managers are welcome to explore the rules of the game they should always bear in mind the spirit of the game. The GM reserves the right to block anything, which he feels contravenes the spirit of the game, and to close any unforeseen loophole. Players planning a coup are advised to contact the GM in advance. The GM is happy to act as assistant manager provided he is given sufficient notice. Managers who consistently NMR will be ejected from the game. The GM's decision is final in all cases.