

“WORLD of SOCCER”

A COMPREHENSIVE
INTERNATIONAL SOCCER
MANAGEMENT SIMULATION



SPORTS
STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

When we introduced our first soccer management game, "League Division One" for the BBC Micro late in 1983, we were inundated with telephone calls asking "What do you mean by a soccer management game?" Unknown to us at that time, Addictive's "Football Manager" was beginning its very successful run for the Sinclair range of computers. From there on the question changed to "Is it anything like Football Manager? The answer was definitively "NO!" Now my problem is to explain the original question, and the first piece of advice is "Forget all about Football Manager and its derivatives, this game is not so much a computer GAME, but a SIMULATION of the role of the soccer manager".

There are four major conceptual differences, as well as a whole range of more detailed points that will become obvious when you read the further pages of this manual.

The four differences are in:

- 1) The definition of players.
- 2) The concept of team "blend".
- 3) The handling of player "skills".
- 4) The 90 minute soccer match.

PLAYER DEFINITION. In "World Soccer", players are not merely represented as attackers, midfield players or defenders. Two players who featured in the European Championship a few weeks before this was written were Arnold Muhren of Holland and Bryan Robson the England captain. These players, though both midfield players, can hardly be considered interchangeable in the real world and, therefore, they should not be considered as such in a soccer management simulation. Muhren is a natural ball player operating in the main from the left side of midfield. He has one of the most cultured left feet in the game, and will prise open opposition defences with his probing passes. But no-one expects much in the way of defensive tackling from Arnold.

Robson, by contrast, is not a natural player at all, but one of the most determined and aggressive players around. He will bring "steel" to the midfield with his never ending running and tackling. But he will seldom produce the sort of pass that will have the defence gasping.

In "World of Soccer", Muhren would be a left sided midfield ball player or play maker, while Robson would be a central midfield ball winner. Muhren would improve the link between midfield and attack, while Robson would improve the possession winning capability in midfield.

Similarly Lineker and Waddle would be represented as a central goal poacher and a goal marking winger respectively. The same goes for other positions throughout the team. There are 19 "types" in all.

TEAM BLEND. With 19 types of player and only 11 men on the field, then team selection will obviously be something of a compromise. It's the compromise that you choose that will determine the blend of your team.

INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

If you choose to play wingers, a problem for many managers in the real world, you will have to make compromises elsewhere; usually in midfield. Do you play a flat back four, in our case not just 4 defenders but a right back, left back and two centre backs, or do you use a sweeper? A sweeper will mean compromises elsewhere again. Do you use 1,2,3, or even 4 men up front? Midfield will inevitably suffer. There are so many combinations it can set your mind spinning when you come to consider the overall blend of your side, because whichever selection you choose you must retain a BALANCED side.

It's at this point that we suggest that you "Think Football", not about players on a computer screen. Think; goalkeeper, right back, left back etc and fill your team with players who fill these positions naturally according to the structure you have decided on.

PLAYER SKILLS. One of the most difficult judgements a manager has to make is about the skill of a player. Ask 10 football fans to rate a well known player on a score of 1 to 10 and you will have at least three or four ratings. First, because it's a subjective judgement, but more important in an international context is the question "What role is he expected to play, and what support will he get from the players around him?" A central defender will have a very different rating as a fullback or a midfield player, positions he may well be expected to play in an international team, than as a true central defender. If he has a strong ability in the air, but is a bit slow to turn, his value to the team will be much greater as a central defender if he is partnered by another who is quick on the ground (Jack Charlton and Bobby Moore in the 1966 World Cup winning team).

You will never be told what a player's "skill" is in "World of Soccer" but must come to your own decision as a result on the football matches themselves. There will be ample information provided along with the match for you to decide how well a player has performed in that particular match. Of course players do have off days.....

SOCCER MATCH. Can you imagine, in the real world, a soccer manager attempting to develop a team without ever seeing a match? It would be ludicrous wouldn't it? It's just as ludicrous in a soccer management simulation! Edited highlights are little better. All results in "World of Soccer" are determined by a 90 minute simulated soccer match (don't worry, they only last 4/5 minutes). Not only is the soccer match essential to inform the manager about the performance of his team, but he will often wish to make tactical changes during a match to achieve the immediate required result, and sometimes to protect key players from injury. If you're 3 up in the semi-final why risk injury to your key players which may keep them out of the final? "World of Soccer" will let you make such decisions.

Have you ever played a soccer management game that has these 4 features? Well, you're about to start right now.

THE COMPUTER GAME

“World of Soccer” has been designed so that the game player can manage any one of 33 European teams; alphabetically from Albania to Yugoslavia and geographically from Iceland to Israel. Initial squads of 16 players have been set up for the four United Kingdom “home” teams, England, N.Ireland, Scotland and Wales. There is a customisation program that will allow other squads to be created for the other 29 nations, and in fact this customisation program can be used by those “home countries” managers that don’t like our selection of players. The customisation program will also allow those who wish to try out teams from the past, though I wouldn’t suggest that the simulation is that accurate that it will allow you to check out the team of Stanley Matthews, Tom Finney et al against modern teams.

In addition to the 16 players that are introduced at the start of the program, either from those we have included, or from your own customised squad, you can add a further 20 players of your own. This shouldn’t be done at one go but players should be introduced as you find that players are not turning in the sort of performance you expect of them. The form of players will be set at the beginning of each computer game you play (see PLAYER SKILLS later), and will also vary during the four years that one game covers. Don’t get hung up on your favourite real world players, they may be hopelessly out of form.

The game is effectively in four parts, the qualifiers for the European Championship, the finals for the same, the qualifiers for the World Cup, and again the finals. If you don’t qualify for the finals of the European Championship you will jump through to the qualifiers of the World Cup. If you qualify for the finals but go out after phase 1, the groups of four, you will quickly see the results of the rest of the finals before continuing on to the World Cup qualifiers.

All of the results of all seven groups of the European Championships are shown (apart from the case mentioned above), and your own group table is updated after each group match. The group tables for other groups are available to you and you can look at them after any round of results if you wish to show them on the screen. At the end of one of the sections, the final group tables will be shown before passing on to the next phase of the game. In the World Cup qualifiers all the European results will again be shown and of course you will be informed of the qualification of the South American sides and other qualifiers before the World Cup draw takes place.

Before each section you can set up your own friendly matches which will allow you to experiment with your players, and in the case of the finals, play pre-final friendlies to check on the form of your likely squad. You will need to reduce your playing squad down to 20 players before continuing on to the finals stages, but this choice of squad will only be demanded after you have played those friendlies. Because of changing form you will more than likely play different squads should you reach both finals.

THE COMPUTER GAME (cont'd)

When you begin the game you can make two choices of effective difficulty. The first choice, literally defined as "Difficulty level", will alter the overall strengths of the opposing teams. Level 2 is the design level at which you meet teams on an equal basis, but not a level I recommend you to use to begin with. At this level I think it is fair to say that your chances of winning one of the Championships is roughly equal to that of a manager of a quality squad in the real world. The difficulty is not changed with the squad you choose to manage because of this. Obviously, in the real world, Cyprus does not stand the same chance of winning as, say, West Germany, but we have not duplicated that as we would not wish our Cypriot game players to play a game that is virtually impossible to win. There's little fun in that. Should you wish to play an extremely difficult game then level 1 is available to you and we realistically call this "Masochist".

The second choice will determine to what depth you wish to go in terms of player definition. The section dealing with player definition will go into this in much greater detail, but basically it will allow you to reduce the 19 player styles down to 10 and down to 4. You can also choose not to have teamwork/morale effects involved which result from settled team selection.

The whole idea of the game can be described quite simply and it is to put together a well balanced squad of in-form players. There are many styles of playing the game of soccer, and playing it successfully and "World of Soccer" will allow you to try out the styles that you feel are more effective than others. To a certain extent you will be limited by the balance of form throughout the 36 players allowed in the game overall, though by judiciously choosing those 20 players of your own you can always make a stab at any particular style. Injuries and form changes will make it difficult to always retain exactly the style you have chosen, and at times you may be forced to make drastic changes, but don't be hasty, players can have bad individual games.

Another way to play the game, and one I prefer myself, is to experiment in the early stages and then to choose a style which seems to suit the form distribution of the players that exists at the time. I'm not saying this is better than the above, the advantage of "World of Soccer" is that there is no one answer. For any form distribution there are probably several squads capable of winning the Championships.

A final point. Many of the players who have purchased our games in the past have thought that, having won the World Cup, there is nothing more to play for in the game. Like an Adventure game, they have solved all the puzzles and there is nothing more to learn. This is not the case. In order to make the game replayable, at the start of each game the form of the players is redistributed. You will always have the same overall quality of players but the distribution of form will vary each time you start a computer game. The squad that won the World Cup in the last game may be quite useless in the next.

INSIGHTS INTO THE GAME

In the introduction we said that as a manager you should be expected to deal with players, skills and the blending of these skills into a successful team. We also said that "World of Soccer" was a computer program that would allow you to do this and still maintain a game in which your selections would effect the course of the game in the way they should. We hope that the following pages will not only convince you that the program does indeed do this, but also help you understand what's required of your performance to succeed in this game.

During the course of the game you will meet many differing national sides and, not unreasonably, you will expect that the playing ability of these sides will reflect in some way their abilities in the real world. It would also be reasonable to expect the sides to show different playing styles. The computer must therefore have some way of representing, within the machine, the playing level and styles of the teams. We do this by representing the sides by 5 "skills" of the game which can be used in a simulated football match against your own selections. Your own selections will build up values in these 5 skills by accumulating the skills of players and then creating strengths and weaknesses according to the balance of the side. Each player will contribute to your team according to his own skills, his playing position and the way in which he dovetails with his colleagues.

So what are these skills?

a) MIDFIELD POSSESSION.

Almost all team ball games are affected to some considerable extent by the ability of the sides to gain and maintain possession on the ball; in soccer, to win tackles and heading duels and to pass the ball accurately. The battle for possession in soccer is mainly in the area 30 metres either side of the half-way line. This is the 1st skill: to win and maintain possession of the ball in the area of the field which we will refer to as "midfield".

b) MOUNT ATTACKS.

Having won the ball in midfield it is necessary to move the ball into the defenders' third of the field whilst maintaining possession. That means to pass accurately and to fend off defenders as they try to dispossess the receiving player. This is the second skill: to transform midfield possession into controlled possession in an attacking position.

c) ATTEMPTS ON GOAL.

The most difficult of skills and the one valued most by all managers; to transform attacking possession into realistic attempts on goal; to make the opposition 'keeper justify his place. The third skill: creating chances and converting them into goals.

INSIGHTS INTO THE GAME (cont'd)

d) DISPOSSESSION OF THE ATTACKERS.

The opposite of b). If the opposition has won possession of the ball in midfield then the first line of defence is to dispossess the attacking players as they move into the last third of the pitch. In reality this means the interception of passes or dispossessing tackles. The fourth skill: to dispossess the opposition before they can mount an attack.

e) GOAL MINDING.

Perhaps not a good name for the ability to make sure that attempts on goal don't finish up in the back of the net. This refers to blocking tackles, clearances off the line, and of course the goalkeepers skill itself. The fifth skill: quite simply, to keep the ball out of the net.

All action in a real football match can be seen as the clash of one or more of these skills. Obviously a) of one side comes into conflict with a) of the other, b) of one with d) of the other, and c) of one with e) of the other. And vice-versa of course.

By giving each of the opposing teams a skill level in each of these five areas then we can not only represent the overall skill of the side but also the balance. Also, we can introduce "tactics" by having the teams change the balance. If we increase d) and e) at the expense of b) and c) then we will produce a more defensive side. Better defence but weaker attack.

What about your own side? Your own side is made up of the sum of each of the individual player levels as they apply to the five different skills, but with two important provisos; the position in which you choose to play the man, and the balance of players around him. You may have a very good central defender but, if you insist on playing him in midfield, his ability as a central defender will not be added to your own teams overall skills but something considerably less. Play him as a central defender and you will get the best from him, but play him out of position and you will get less, not only from his reduced ability to play out of position but because of the effect on balance. Sounds reasonable? So our system means that by picking the in-form players and playing them in their correct positions you will get the best from that particular selection of players.

You can see that we now have a very flexible form of representation of each team's abilities with the possibility of tactical changes, and a way of choosing your own team that is dependent on the players you pick, the combination of players (your first tactical decision) and the balance of players, and hence of the team. Now all we need is a way of making the sides compete so that the result of the match is a reflection of the different levels and balance of skills. Of course, as in all team games Lady Luck will also play a part which can upset the best made plans.

THE FOOTBALL MATCH

In the introduction we referred to a fourth feature of the game, and that was a simulated football match. In most other games, the match result is determined by a calculation based on the “mental arithmetic” decisions taken by the manager in choosing his team from a list of players and skill levels. Calculation and Arithmetic are comfortable bedfellows with computer processes, but they don’t necessarily sit well with a management simulation. In the real game, a match is determined by the competitions of skill that take place on the pitch, the result of one competition (let’s say a tackle) leading to the next competition (usually a pass which will succeed if possession is retained but fail if possession is lost). The whole match is a sequence of these “competitions”; tackles, passes, interceptions, shots, saves etc. As we are attempting to simulate the result of the match in our game, isn’t the best way to simulate the match itself? So that’s exactly what we do.

The skills just described, the five skills which define the two teams, are used, not in one calculation of the result but in the determination of just one of these “competitions”. If you think of each “competition” that takes place on a football pitch then it can reasonably be represented as a competition of these skills. So if the two teams are fighting for possession in midfield, then the result is represented by a competition between skill a) of the two teams. The outcome of tackles will be represented by the relative strengths of the two teams in this skill. That doesn’t of course mean that the “strongest” team always wins, but through the course of the match the number of “competitions” won will reflect the relative strengths. This is true in all five skills; ON AVERAGE the stronger side will win out. Of course, because of the different balance of the two teams the average will vary from skill to skill. So if you field a strong defensive side then you can expect to dispossess the opposition attack more often, but as you will probably have sacrificed some attacking strength then you can expect to fail more often in moving the ball into attacking positions.

In the graphics display of the match we attempt to show you the result of each of these competitions, and the statistical display will produce the “averages” which are a measure of the two sides’ abilities. The symbols shown are always those who have just won the previous “competition”. At any one time the display shows who is in possession, in which part of the field play is taking place, and will give some indication of what may happen next. If a successful pass is made then the symbols will remain the same and move from one area of the pitch to the next logical area. If the symbols change shape and colour then this indicates a change of possession. It will not take long before you can read a game very well from the on-going football match.

It is not difficult from this display to see that something equivalent to a football match is taking place, and it is here where your decisions are reflected in the performance of your side. You must make the most of the information contained in the match to assess the strengths and weaknesses in order to judge what is necessary to improve your team.

TACTICS

Because of the much more detailed definition of players in “World of Soccer”, the possibility of sophisticated tactical play is considerable. Many soccer fans have their own ideas as to what type of team is best suited to overcome the widely varying sides that are inevitably met in international competition. The crucial question immediately arises as to whether you should play to your own strengths or exploit your opponent’s weaknesses. Is it best to pick your “best” team and put them up against all opposition, or is it better to take note of the opposition’s strengths and weaknesses and choose your side accordingly? In many ways it depends very much on the confidence you have in your squad.

Immediately prior to each match you will be informed about the opposition. This will tell you of the formation the team will play and about the ability of the team in defence, midfield and attack. Your first tactical decision is made here. Do you ignore this information, or do you sift through the possibilities you have available to you with the particular combination on in-form players and choose your team, noting that you’re facing, say, a strong defence, a mediocre midfield, but a strong attack? Team selection, with the wide variety of player types available will determine how you intend to defeat the opposition.

In each game you are allowed 5 substitutes, of whom two can be used during the match. Substitutes can play three roles. First, they handle the problem you face if injuries strike during the game. Secondly, they can be used to correct a weakness that may show up during the game. Thirdly, they can be used tactically, to change the shape of your team to suit the position in the match (you might wish to defend a one goal lead or extend it, or overcome a deficit etc). In the third case it will pay, before the match, to think in terms of how you may wish to change the team shape and choose substitutes to suit.

Perhaps we should say a little here about what the computer assumes about your team. There are no fixed positions. By that I mean that position 2, say, does not have to be the right back’s position. When the computer assesses your team it will look for a natural right back, a right sided defender, and regardless of the number on his back it will assume he is a right back. If you put two right backs into the team, then the first will be assumed to be the true right back and the second will take up a general position in defence, or fill an obvious defensive hole (if you have no natural left back then he will be placed there): If you wanted him to play in midfield then merely stop the game with the tactics key (just press T) and push him forward twice.

Although the computer will not be confused by an unusual numbering system, you must remember that if you make substitutions or tactical movements, then you may be confused. It does pay, therefore, to use a consistent and common set of numbers. If you played the goalkeeper at number 6 and then made a substitution of number 6 thinking him to be a midfielder player, you would make a terrible mess of your team.

TACTICS (cont'd)

The tactics of using wingers, or a sweeper, or of steamrolling from midfield, is carried out by the selection of the right combination for whichever you choose. But when things go wrong.....

Many player of our previous games have grossly underestimated the value of in-match tactics. Your original selection of players will presumably reflect the way you expect to win the match. But you may have misread the opposition, or luck has gone against you, or maybe some players just aren't playing up to scratch. Whatever the cause, you are one down and only 15 minutes left to play. From the way the match has been going the match display has shown that you're just not getting into shooting positions, though midfield seems to be holding it's own and the defence has made one mistake. You could take off a midfield player and add a goal scorer, or perhaps take off a ball winner and put on a midfield ball player to create chances. In other words use your substitutes to correct the apparent weakness in creating goals while taking a chance where you appear strong. The computer will recalculate your strengths (remember those five described in "Insights into the Game") and you may start to win more of those "competitions" that lead to goal scoring chances. On the other hand you will weaken some other side of your team and could finish up two goals down, but that's the chance you take when pushing for a goal.

You may, of course, be quite happy with the players on the pitch but wish to push your fullbacks forward to increase your attacking pressure. You hit the tactics key "T" which will stop the match and then instruct the appropriate players to push forward. There are many possibilities, midfield players forward to support attack, back to support defence etc. Each time you make a move the computer will recalculate the 5 skills and the match will be affected by the changes you have made. The effect of pushing a player forward is to move him by a half position; a fullback forward once will provide some support to midfield, but pushed forward twice will become a midfield player. Four times and he would be playing literally in an attacking position. You will also lose a defender, of course. Pushing an attacker forward however doesn't make him a spectator, the computer will ignore that.

By combining tactical changes with substitutions a considerable change in the shape of your team can be achieved. Be careful with the tactics feature, it can have very significant effect. Think of it this way. If you were to move both fullbacks forward twice in an effort to score a needed goal, you will not only add two players to your midfield, but will also remove two players from defence. A four man defence has become a two man defence, and could be fatal.

A very useful feature of this combination of tactics and substitutions is in replacing an injured player for whom there is no direct substitute. The loss of a midfield player can be compensated to a large degree by the addition of a defender who is then moved forward two places. I'm sure you can think of many other combinations.

PLAYER STYLE AND STRENGTH

One of the weakest part of other football management games, for me, is the very restricted definition of players as defenders, midfield players, and attackers. There are even games where goalkeepers are not even differentiated from defenders. England were woefully weak in the recent European Championships but Woods and Shilton would not strike me as a particularly successful centre back pairing.

In “World of Soccer” we expand the player definition, first across the pitch to produce left, right and centre backs, wingers (left and right) and central strikers, and perhaps not quite as revelant, right sided, left sided and central midfield players. Midfield players do in fact tend to have a right or left preference in many cases and those that don't we refer to as central. We then turn on the dominant skill of the players. In attack players tend to be goal makers or goal scorers, and seldom both. In midfield we have the ‘grafters’ and the ball players or play makers. In defence we refer to a player being dominant in the air or basically a tackler. Note that we refer to the DOMINANT feature, not to mutually exclusive features. There are players who may not fall conveniently into these categories, but in the main most players will fall into one or the other. The importance is how they affect your team skills. Goalkeepers are of course uniquely goalkeepers (play two and you will have a lost soul wandering around the pitch).

In assessing your team, the computer will first of all accumulate the skills of the players in their natural positions and then carry out a balance assessment across the field and create weaknesses where it sees them. It will then analyse the balance of dominant skills. In defence the computer will look for weaknesses (no aerial power and your ability to handle high balls into the bos could create problems). Midfield is very important. Ball winners obviously have a major say in the ability to win midfield possession and support defence, whereas ball players/playmakers will determine your ability to move from midfield into attack and create goals. Goal scorers and goal makers shouldn't provide you with any problems on how they affect your team.

So overall you're looking for balance along the field (formation), across the field to provide width, and a balance of skills to maintain balance among the five skills we referred to before. Maintaining balance in all three dimensions while simultaneously assessing and maintaining an in-form team can be quite mind bending. A couple of injured players can literally send you back to the drawing board.

We've rather lazily referred to player “skills” in previous sections, as if players could simply be thought of as being represented by as simple number. FORM is really what you have to cope with in this game. The computer will distribute form in a controlled random (sic) fashion from the start of the game, and will modify the form of players as you proceed through the four years of football. Keep an eye out for drifts of form, but don't be fooled by the match to match variations that professional footballers are subject to. Don't jump to conclusions!

CUSTOMISATION PROGRAM

Maybe it's the saturation TV advertising for Europe 1992, or maybe just the recognition that the computers this game has been designed for the Atari ST, Amstrad PCW, Commodore Amiga and the IBM PC and clones, are used throughout Europe, but this is the first soccer game we have produced to be played by virtually any European soccer fan. It is possible in "World of Soccer" to manage any one of 33 European national squads. Starting squads of 16 players, of the 36 you can use in all, have been included for the four UK national sides. In order that realistic squads and player definitions can be used by our continental friends, and by our UK friends who disagree with our squads, we have included a customisation program which will allow you in about ten minutes to enter your own 16 players, and define their positions and skills yourself. Just run the program, answer the questions and a suitable player file will be produced for entry in the game proper.

On running the game proper, choose the (O)ther option when choosing your national squads and then the appropriate national team (this applies to the UK customised squads as well) and away you go.

WINDING UP

There are many other things happening in the game which we will allow you to find out about. The various screens that you cycle through as you pass through the four stages of the game should be fairly self explanatory, in the long term if not immediately. There are just a couple more points worth mentioning.

The game allows you to use 36 players in the game as a whole, and it is worthwhile using most of those players. You will have to cut your squad down to 20 players for the finals, though you will be able to return back to the original 36 after the European Championships to continue forward to the World Cup. The friendly matches are there for you to experiment and to catch any form changes that would be embarrassing in the competitive part of the game.

Injuries are dealt with in two different ways. They can occur during any match forcing you to make substitutions, but in the friendlies and qualifiers these will seldom carry over into subsequent matches. This is because in reality these matches are spaced out by several weeks. Most injuries that are reported to you during this part of the game are the result of injuries that have occurred in the domestic competitions. During the finals, injuries that occur during a match can carry over to subsequent matches as they are in reality only 3 days or so apart.

The rule on discipline is simple: two yellow cards or a booking lead to an automatic ban from the next match. Yellow cards carry over from match to match and section to section until cancelled by the ban.

We won't waste any more of your precious time, you ought to be playing the game not reading this junk Good Luck!

WORLD OF SOCCER



FEATURES

- 19 TYPES OF PLAYER
- 33 EUROPEAN SQUADS
- INPUT PLAYERS OF YOUR OWN CHOICE
- CREATE YOUR OWN SQUADS
- EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS
- WORLD CUP