



## Solskjaer compares Man Utd to Jordan's Chicago Bulls

Goal - Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has compared Manchester United to the Michael Jordan-inspired Chicago Bulls side of the 1990s that is currently the focus of a documentary series on Netflix. With football in a state of indefinite lockdown, professional sportsmen and women are having to fill their time with activities away from a competitive arena.

Red Devils boss Solskjaer is among those to have binge-watched programmes on Netflix, with a certain offering involving an iconic NBA side having caught his eye.

'The Last Dance' has earned plenty of plaudits since first being aired, with a legendary Bulls side showing the dedication required to become a dominant force.

United, in the same era when working under Sir Alex Ferguson, enjoyed a similar period of supremacy when rising to the top of domestic and continental games.

Solskjaer formed part of that group, as a 1999 Treble winner, and claims to see similarities between a team led by Jordan and one that looked to the likes of Roy Keane and David Beckham for inspiration.

He told Football Focus of his experiences in a testing time for all concerned during the Covid-19 pandemic: "You don't put [anything] on hold.

"You always think football, it never stops, and if you're in the job or not in the job, if you've been bitten by the football bug you're always going to spend time on it.

"I don't think I've been different to anyone else. You watch TV, you watch series, you've got to switch off from football.

"You find Netflix, you find The Last Dance with Michael Jordan!

"It takes me back to when I was a player and the great team with Sir Alex.

"Michael Jordan, as a leader, you think Roy Keane straight away. So many similarities to my team seeing that team.

"It's been inspiring and a great watch."

United, like the Bulls, are in the process of trying to recapture former glories.

Solskjaer, having helped to claim major silverware in his playing days, is the man charged with the task of delivering on that remit.

He has found the going tough at times, leading to questions of his future and suitability to a demanding coaching post, but had seen his Red Devils team find a spark prior to football being shut down.

There is considered to be cause for optimism once more at Old Trafford, with productive transfer business and youthful exuberance helping a fallen giant back to its feet.



## Hazard returns from fractured ankle as Real Madrid resume training after coronavirus

Eden Hazard has returned from a spell on the sidelines with a fractured ankle, reporting for duty on Monday as Real Madrid resumed training ahead of the possible resumption of the 2019-20 campaign next month.

Hazard suffered the injury during a 1-0 defeat against Levante on February 22, and was forced to undergo surgery just before the season was postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. The 29-year-old has been following a strict rehabilitation programme while in quarantine, with Madrid players forced to comply with social distancing rules amid a nationwide lockdown in Spain. Belgium boss Roberto Martinez revealed that Hazard was almost ready to start running again when issuing an update on the winger's progress last month, after initial fears he could be out of action for at least four months.

He has made even greater strides forward since then, and was pictured taking part in a training session with the rest of his Madrid colleagues at the start of the week. An official statement on the club's official website reads: "The players have been working out since 10am under the direction of Zinedine Zidane and the strict health rules of the LFP protocol for the COVID-19

pandemic.

"Divided into two shifts and on various pitches, the Real Madrid players perform their first individual exercises with and without the ball."

Madrid welcomed all players and staff back to Santiago Bernabeu last Wednesday for medical evaluations, with La Liga officials planning to restart the season in June. Zinedine Zidane's men sat second in the Spanish top flight before play was stopped in March, two points behind reigning champions Barcelona with 11 fixtures remaining.

Hazard has only featured in 10 La Liga matches for Madrid this season, scoring once, with plenty of questions asked over his form and fitness since last summer's €100 million (£88m/\$108m) transfer from Chelsea. The Belgium international admitted that his first year at the Bernabeu has been a disappointment shortly after being cut down through injury, but vowed to come back in "good shape" after a frustrating period of "adaptation". "My first season at Madrid is bad, but not everything is bad," Hazard told RTBF.

"It is an adaptation season. I will be judged in the second. It is up to me to be in good shape next year.



## Atalanta midfielder Andrea Rinaldi dies aged 19 after suffering brain aneurysm

The teenager, who had been on loan at Legnano in Serie D, suffered an aneurysm while training at home during the coronavirus lockdown.

Atalanta midfielder Andrea Rinaldi has died three days after suffering a brain aneurysm at home, aged just 19. The teenager, who was on loan at Serie D club Legnano, had fallen ill on Friday and was taken to hospital in Varese, where he passed away.

Fourth-tier club Legnano confirmed the news on their club website, which described Rinaldi as "a golden boy, exemplary in life and play".

The statement said: "AC Legnano, the city and the entire football universe, at all levels, today live one of their most upsetting days. Andrea Rinaldi, our warrior, has left us. An aneurysm snatched him in the prime of life, with a life ahead of him and with a career that promised bright goals. A sudden and shocking tragedy, impossible even to imagine."

Legnano chairman Giovanni Munafo added: "When Andrea came to training, he came first to greet me. This is a memory I will carry in my heart.

"An extraordinary boy, an example for everyone. On behalf of the club, I express my deepest condolences

to the family. We are sure that Andrea, from up there, will be the usual warrior like always, who fought in the middle of the pitch to bring the Legnano fans joy."

Rinaldi, who would have turned 20 on June 23, had fallen ill while training at home due to the coronavirus lockdown.

He came through the academy system at Atalanta after joining the club when he was 13. He had previously helped the club's Under-17s win the Scudetto and Supercoppa Italiana at their age level.

A statement from the Serie A club said: "Just as on the pitch, you were always the last to surrender, this time too you fought with all your might not to fly away too soon - but that kind smile of yours will always remain alive in the hearts of those who had the good fortune to meet you."

After impressing in youth football, Rinaldi had taken his first steps into senior football last season with loan spells at Imolese in Serie C and Mezzolara in the Italian fourth tier.

He had been a key figure for Legnano this season, making 23 appearances in the league and scoring one goal.