

5. Edinson Cavani

The time had come. It was time to move on. 2012/2013 had been the best of his career, but the Uruguayan knew needed a change of scenery. Napoli had been brilliant to Edinson Cavani, but he knew it was time to make that next step up in his career. After all, the French Champions were calling, and they are becoming increasingly, notoriously hard to refuse...

Cavani's goal scoring proficiency has been evident for a while now. Ever since the 2010/11 season, in which Cavani scored a brilliant 26 goals for Napoli, top clubs all over Europe have been after him. It has in fact been particularly surprising that the Serie A side had been able to keep him for so long, in fact at the beginning of the 2012/13 season Napoli unveiled him as if he was a new signing after he decided to stay! It was a sign of the recent rise of French football, and PSG in particular, that Cavani chose his next destination as the French capital.

As far as calendar years go, it is difficult to top Edinson Cavani's 2013. In his time with Napoli and PSG, Cavani has scored a staggering 28 league goals over the course of the calendar year in two of Europe's top leagues, Serie A and Ligue 1. Of course, his calendar year began outside of Ligue 1, in Serie A, but such was his success that it is worth examining further. In the 19 Serie A games that he played a part in during 2013, Cavani managed 16 goals and three assists, meaning he was involved in, on average, a goal in every single game. The combination of Cavani's technical prowess and his irresistible heading and finishing ability was clearly too brilliant to contend with for even the renowned Italian defences, so perhaps what the shockwaves that he has sent through French football since his arrival should not surprise us...

Cavani's goal scoring form this season has been nothing short of prolific, and it has taken him no time at all to adapt to the French league. At the halfway stage of the season, he already has 12 league goals, second only to fellow team mate Zlatan Ibrahimovic. If we discount goals from penalties, Cavani and Ibrahimovic are tied with regards to goals scored. Cavani also lies second in Ligue 1 in terms of minutes per goal, where he, at the time of writing, stands at 103 minutes per goal. Once again, it is Ibrahimovic (102) who tops the charts. To be losing out by such narrow margins to a world-class player who has already had ample time to settle at the club is a clear sign that Cavani has adapted to his surroundings exceptionally quickly.

This season, Cavani has also been a marvellous performer for PSG in the other competitions that the club takes part in. In the Champions League, Cavani already has a stirring 4 goals from 5 games. He also scored both goals, including a thrilling last minute winner, against Saint-Etienne in the Coupe de la Ligue. Wherever you look, in whichever competition, Cavani has delivered, chiefly in goal scoring terms.

Why is Edinson Cavani so proficient in front of goal? Well, the vast majority of strikers generally have one or two parts of their game that clearly outdo the rest of their attributes. They will play on these strengths to score the majority of their goals. However, with these types of players, defenders can strategise prior to their matchup on how exactly to inhibit them making an impact on the game. For example, if a striker is renowned for being strong in the air, the tallest of the centre backs can man mark him, thereby nullifying the threat. What makes Cavani spectacular is that he has a multitude of strengths in his game. If an opposing manager attempts to implicate a man-marking strategy by putting a tall defender on Cavani to stop his aerial threat, he has the pace and tactical trickery to slip in behind and score with his feet. Not to mention his 6 ft 4 attacking partner who will no doubt be chomping at the bit too. Cavani's aerial prowess is one of his more prominent features, but since his arrival in France, it has become apparent that Cavani

is in fact multitalented. He is quick enough to make runs in behind the defence, has a good enough shot to score spectacular goals from distance and has the strength to compete with even the strongest of central defenders. If you used a defender to man mark each of Cavani's goal scoring threats, you would need at least the whole back four.

Club: Paris Saint Germain
Date of Birth: 14th February 1987
Position: Striker



Especially recently, we have seen his relationship with Zlatan Ibrahimovic blossom, and although these two characters prefer to play on as a lone striker and have yet to be forced to share the limelight until this moment, when perfected, those two as a joint strike force will strike fear into any defence in the whole of Europe. Cavani has consistently scored a stunning amount of goals in each of the last four seasons, so there can be little doubt that 2014 will be another prolific year for the powerful Uruguayan.