

18. André Ayew

Club: Olympique de Marseille

Date of Birth: 17th December 1989

Position: Midfielder

André Ayew is forming a somewhat distinguished career in French football, and his performances during the calendar year have certainly aided the Ghanaian international in adding to that. He is closing in on 150 Ligue 1 appearances, and is still just 24 years old, which is hard to believe considering his wide-ranging consistency and apparent Ligue 1 longevity. In 2013, he came close to reaching the heights he hit in the 2010/11 season, which was undoubtedly the best of his career to date, as he helped Marseille to finish a very respectable 2nd in Ligue 1, behind Champions PSG, in the 2012/13 season. In the current season, Marseille have not done as well, which can partially be attributed to the fact that Ayew was injured for Marseille's last 8 games of the calendar year.

André Ayew is a player that will trouble even the best of Ligue 1's full backs. As a left-footed left winger, rather than cutting inside and shooting, he prefers to take on his opposing full back down the line and provide crosses for his teammates, which is the main source of his assists. However, when he is looking to score goals, hugging the left touchline does little to help. As a result, Ayew often drifts into a slightly more central role, and will make runs in between the right centre back and the right back to have a better chance of being put through on goal. He has scored goals from those types of runs in the last calendar year, most notably against Rennes last season.

However, somewhat surprisingly, this is not from where Ayew marks the back of the net the most. Although, at 5ft 9 inches, he is by no means tall and imposing, he scores an outrageous amount of headers. In the 2012/13 Ligue 1 season, 5 of his 9 goals came from headers. He manages to score these headed goals because very often he is lurking at the far post from crosses from the right hand side, and he manages to lose his marker, who perhaps is generally not aware of Ayew's heading prowess. When the ball arrives, Ayew has a decent leap, as you would expect from an agile winger, and places his headers to perfection past the goalkeeper. The fact that Ayew can hurt you both with his head and his left foot makes him all the more difficult to deal with for defenders, as it adds a layer of unpredictability to his game.

So, how has Ayew's calendar year been? Well, he scored a very impressive 9 goals in the 2012/13 season, to add to his 4 assists, helping his team Marseille to a 2nd place finish in Ligue 1.



His tally of 9 goals was only topped by Andre-Pierre Gignac within Marseille, and was the third highest total in Ligue 1 by midfielders. Andre Ayew was an integral part of the Marseille team that finished runners up, playing 35 of the 38 Ligue 1 games – only Mathieu Valbuena (37) and Nicolas Nkoulou (38) played more from outfield positions. André, alongside his younger brother Jordan, gave that Marseille team the pace to trouble the majority of opposition defences.

The beginning of the 2013/2014 campaign saw a little dip in form for Ayew. He managed just 2 goals and 1 assist in the first 10 matches of the season, before an injury cut his 2013 short. However, during the games in which Ayew was either injured or suspended, it was evident as to how Marseille sorely missed their attacking engine. Even when Ayew is not directly affecting the score line through a goal or an assist, the never-ending impetus that he adds to OM's game not only spurs his teammates forward but also ensures that Marseille produce a greater quantity of clear-cut chances. In the 10 Ligue 1 games in which Ayew played in the second half of 2013, Marseille had a win percentage of 50%. Without him, that figure dropped to 33%. It is clear that Marseille were missing the injured Ayew in the back end of the calendar year of 2013.

As we have now established, André Ayew is a key segment of Marseille's current setup. There are talks that certain clubs, including a few from the Premier League, are after his signature. If a move does go through, it will heap even more misery on a Marseille team that has seen enough agony in the last 6 months. Ayew is an extremely exciting prospect, who is developing into a very well-rounded winger, so for the sake of Ligue 1 we should hope he can stay.

Overall, Andre Ayew is one of the more exciting players to have made the GFFN 100. He is never afraid to take players on and, as we have seen, is a big goal threat, whether that is from the ground or in the air. He is still young, at just 24 years of age, and will undoubtedly continue to develop in Ligue 1 with Marseille. If Ayew can keep improving, he can become a regally special player.

'He's not my idol.'

André Ayew

On David Beckham · 19th February 2013

DID YOU KNOW? André Ayew is a Liverpool fan.