

53. Filip Djordjevic

Club: FC Nantes

Date of Birth: 28th September 1987

Position: Attacker

Next to make the GFFN 100 this time around is Nantes' frontman Filip Djordjevic. The 26-year-old Serbian international has had a prolific 2013, playing a crucial part in the Nantes team that went from Ligue 2 last season to being high-flying Ligue 1 outfit as we reach the midpoint of the 2013/2014 campaign.

Although the Serbian is a gifted footballer in many areas of the game, arguably Djordjevic's main weapon is his quality in the air. The majority of his goals and shots result in part due to some sort of aerial build up or finish, and this is perhaps because he possesses a brilliant leap, which allows him to get above most opposition defenders. His height, 6ft 1, also aids him in this respect it allows him to reach crosses other striker would not. However, for a striker to become as accomplished as Djordjevic in the space of one year, aerial prowess cannot be and indeed is not his only quality. Another of his great strengths is his sense of positioning. When watching Djordjevic, you can see that he scores a lot of goals into empty nets, and this is because whenever his teammates are through on goal he has the omnipresent nature about him, always providing an option. In the process, the goalkeeper is often taken out of play, allowing Djordjevic to score a seemingly 'easy' goal.

It is easy to argue that, without Djordjevic, Nantes would be nowhere near where they are at present. In the years previous to 2013, Nantes were predominantly a Ligue 2 side and, although they got promoted to Ligue 1 in 2008, they were relegated the season afterwards. However, that was all to change from 2012/13. Suddenly, Djordjevic burst onto the scene. During the 2012/2013 Ligue 2 campaign, he scored 20 league goals, making him the top scorer in the process but more importantly helping Nantes to promotion to Ligue 1 for the season we now find ourselves embroiled in. Although it was an extremely impressive record, many still doubted Djordjevic and Nantes, believing that Ligue 1 would prove to be a great a step up from the second tier of French football, and that Nantes would go straight back down from where they came.

Judging by the start they have made to this campaign, one could not have been more wrong about either Djordjevic or Nantes. By mid-November, the Serbian striker had already netted an impressive 7 goals from open play, which at the time was more than any other player in the league, including multi-million euro signings Falcao, Cavani and Ibrahimovic.



Nantes were equally impressive. Many had tipped them for relegation back to Ligue 2, but they started the season on fire. By mid-December, Nantes had reached an astounding 4th place in Ligue 1, behind only Lille, PSG and Monaco, and ahead of teams such as Marseille and Lyon. They have without a doubt been the surprise package of the season and one hopes that they do not drop off as we enter 2014.

Djordjevic's consistent goal scoring record over the last year has led to him being called up for the Serbian international team, for which he has made 8 appearances and scored 3 goals, the most recent of which was in a 1-1 draw with Russia in mid-November. If his prolific scoring continues into the New Year, he is bound to feature more prominently in the national line-up.

There are a couple of factors contributing to the success of Djordjevic has enjoyed at both Ligue 2 and Ligue 1 level. Firstly, Djordjevic is a player who thrives on playing week-in, week-out. In his early years at Nantes, during which he would only appear once every few games, he scored much less regularly. However, once he got his first real run in the team last season, he has never looked back. In addition, his playing style is such that he made the adaptation to Ligue 1 without a problem. The art of heading is still very effective whether it be against a Ligue 1 defence or a Ligue 2 defence, while even the best Ligue 1 teams struggle to deal with his great sense of positioning, which always allows him to be in the right place at the right time. Because of this adaptability, I think Djordjevic will be a success not only for the remainder of this Ligue 1 season, but also wherever he decides to move to take the next step in his footballing career.

Over the course of 2013, Filip Djordjevic, alongside his team Nantes, has proved countless critics wrong. If his form last year is anything to go by, he is set to accomplish even more in 2014. If his prolific form does continue, Nantes may find it difficult to hold off the advances of richer teams with money to entice the Serb away, but for the sake of football let's hope that Djordjevic and Nantes can both continue their unexpected rise in the leagues of French football.

'In Serbia we don't speak about Cristiano Ronaldo, but we speak of Djordjevic.'

Nemanja Pejčinović

Filip Djordjevic's compatriot speaks about the adoration the forward receives in his home country

DID YOU KNOW? Filip Djordjevic is among the top three highest paid players at Nantes at the time of writing, earning €60,000 a month.