

69. Jérémy Ménez

Club: Paris Saint Germain

Date of Birth: 7th May 1987

Position: Attacker



A new manager arrived in the form of Laurent Blanc at the beginning of the 2013/2014 campaign and, as often happens, some of the squad members were more fortunate than others as the new regime took shape. Jérémy Ménez was a player who was less fortunate than others in the mini summer squad shake up that ensued, and the extent of his playing time was dealt a serious blow, so much so that his future became uncertain. Although 2013 has been a mixed year in terms of game time for the Frenchman, when he has been given minutes on the pitch he has more often than not delivered an end product, especially early in the calendar year, and that is why he has made the GFFN 100.

Currently 26 years old and with many years ahead of him, Ménez is an extremely experienced player in terms of French football, having made his first Ligue 1 appearances in the 2004/5 season at the age of just 17. He has since developed into a very accomplished forward man, playing in a variety of attacking positions, most commonly centre forward or on the left wing. This versatility has proved very useful to his managers at PSG in 2013, be it Carlo Ancelotti or Laurent Blanc. In between spells with Monaco and his current team PSG, Ménez also played in Serie A with AS Roma, scoring 7 goals and assisting 15 times in Italy's top league over 3 seasons. In Ligue 1 overall, Ménez has 35 goals and 37 assists in 184 games as 2013 comes to a close. Clearly therefore, Ménez is already an experienced goal scorer at Ligue 1 level.

Ménez's main assets are his blistering pace and his superior dribbling and technique on the ball compared with most other Ligue 1 wingers. These two skills combined are one of the reasons why he is more suited to providing more consistent assists than he does in terms of goals; when he is on the wing he can use trickery to outfox the opposing full back, sprint down the wing and deliver a pin point cross to the striker to finish the move. However, Ménez is also a very handy goal scorer, and this is attributed to two principal features: his runs and his finishing. When he plays in either of his primary attacking roles, Ménez is normally on the back foot of the defensive line, always looking to make a run in behind. When he does and is through on goal, more often than not he has the composure and finishing ability to score, and this is what sets him apart from other players. The frequency of which he attempts these runs depends on the player's motivation at that particular period and that is something he has generally lacked in 2013.

During the 2012/2013 campaign under Carlo Ancelotti, it can be argued that Ménez had a successful time at PSG. He made 30 Ligue 1 appearances, scoring 5 times and assisting 7 goals, and managed to score the goal that finally secured the title for PSG, the winner in a 1-0 away win at Lyon. He had even more success in the Champions League, where in the 5 group stage matches that he played, he managed 2 goals and 3 assists to help send PSG through as group winners. It was in this competition in particular where he managed to build a strong relationship with talismanic frontman Zlatan Ibrahimovic. The statistics therefore suggest that Ménez was just as successful as any PSG attacking midfielder in 2013.

This season, though, has been less of a success for the Frenchman. As Ancelotti left for Real Madrid and Blanc came in, clearly Ménez was not as big a part of the Frenchman's plans as Ménez might have hoped. Of the 19 games in Ligue 1 that PSG have played, Ménez has started just 5 matches, scoring just twice and assisting once. In fact, in the whole of 2013 Ménez has only played the full 90 minutes twice, which is a very telling statistic. Whether this is down to the depth of the PSG squad or just Ménez's fitness in not being able to last the full 90 minutes is still not fully clear, but clearly the Frenchman would have hoped for more playing time, especially after last season. This has inevitably led to speculation about Ménez's future, with many suggesting that he is going to move on in the January transfer window in search of more playing time with the 2014 World Cup in Brazil looming in the horizon. At this moment in time, it would be understandable given his lack of playing time to think that Ménez may move on.

Overall, in 2013 Ménez was the latest player to fall victim to PSG's evolution into a more international attacking force. There have been some off-field issues, especially under Blanc this season, which have contributed also but he has occasionally delivered on the pitch when he has been given the chance. It was only last season that he made 30 league appearances and scored the goal that confirmed PSG's title win, so, if he can repair his relationship with Blanc, there is no reason to suggest why Ménez cannot have a moderately successful 2014 just where he is: at PSG.

'I have never said that I want to leave.'

Jérémy Ménez

3rd November 2013

DID YOU KNOW? In October 2013, Jérémy Ménez stormed off the substitutes bench and down the tunnel when he was told he was not going to be substituted on in a Champions League match vs Benfica.