

## 47. Jérémie Aliadière

Club: FC Lorient

Date of Birth: 30th March 1983

Position: Attacker



While for many English football fans the enduring image of Jérémie Aliadière will be of an undoubtedly gifted young attacker who showed great promise before failing to live up to his enormous potential, the 30 year old is now plying his trade at Lorient and is a different proposition all together.

A graduate of the elite Clairefontaine academy, the young Aliadière arrived at Highbury at the age of just 16. He started out well before losing his way over seasons that followed amid an unfortunate run of injuries and with the likes of Thierry Henry and Dennis Bergkamp ahead of him in the pecking order.

While his clinical finishing ability has continued to develop and his pace is still there, much has changed since his time in England. Furthermore, in finding a tactical setup that both suits and motivates him and a regular starting spot at Lorient, Aliadière made 2013 in particular a year to remember.

That's not to say that he has ironed out all of his flaws, however, as his often-poor offside awareness and questionable defensive work-rate still represent a slight cause for worry for any potential suitors in the transfer windows, which follow. On occasion his wretched luck with injuries still haunts him too, but with 18 goals in 37 appearances in league and cup last season, it is clear how much he has progressed both in terms of attacking output and the amount of minutes played.

In 2013, he finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the Ligue 1 scoring charts with 15 strikes and 9<sup>th</sup> in the assist charts with 7 in what was truly a great all-round season. In doing this, Aliadière's goal return eclipsed his team-mates' contributions by a long way (the next highest returns came from Alain Traoré and Kevin Monnet-Paquet on 6 each) and his prolific form was a key part of Lorient's excellent 8<sup>th</sup> place finish.

Demonstrating his ability to score with both feet and posing a threat in the air, Aliadière was at his very best. Meanwhile, his ability to pick out key passes served as a further indicator of how far the talented French attacker has come.

This season has seen injuries curtail his progress and Aliadière will be eager to recapture his form and his place in the side. This worrying return to the early days of his career has limited him to just 8 appearances and 2 goals so far this term.

During his absence Vincent Aboubakar has taken up the goal-scoring mantle and 11 goals in 19 matches have marked a breakthrough season for the player who arrived from Valenciennes in July. However, rather than worrying that his opportunities will be limited by the emergence of the 21 year old, Aliadière's presence up front alongside Aboubakar in the team's favoured 4-4-2 system will allow Lorient to boast a deadly strike duo. Comprising both youth and experience, the attacking partnership can set the league alight in 2014, form and fitness permitting. The only drawbacks that exist with this new formation is that Aliadière will have to share the striking spotlight, something that may affect both is effort and performance levels as the season progresses. One thing is for certain, Aliadière will not be totting up as many goals as he did during the 2012/2013 campaign.

While Aliadière freely admits to not being a leader on or off the pitch, his positive attitude towards the game is a big part of the team spirit in the Lorient camp. When speaking about his move to Lorient in interview with Ligue 1, he demonstrated his natural hunger for the game: "All I wanted was to enjoy playing football again. I knew Lorient could offer me that and give me pleasure when I come training every day."

Furthermore, speaking after his side's win over Ajaccio on 14 December, the fifth win in a row for the in-form outfit, Aliadière made it clear to BeIN Sport that he plans to keep this positive run going for as long as possible: "At the moment we have a great team spirit and we're really clinical in front of goal. We need to keep this form up."

Currently sitting in 9<sup>th</sup> place in the table, Lorient will hope that the return of last season's talisman will galvanise the squad in the New Year. Unbeaten in their last seven games, winning five and drawing the other two, Lorient are in great form and Aliadière's fitness will be crucial to extending this streak.

With his determination and natural hunger for the game, Aliadière has become the type of player that those who followed him earlier in his career always knew he could be and Lorient will be keen to keep reaping the benefits for as long as possible.

*'I am not able to say that I will stay.'*

*Jérémie Aliadière*

3rd August 2013

**DID YOU KNOW?** In July 2013, Jérémie Aliadière refused to train with Lorient in an attempt to force a move away from the club but it failed. He was sanctioned severely by President Loïc Féry.