

## 13. Ludovic Obraniak

Club: Girondins de Bordeaux

Date of Birth: 22nd July 1991

Position: Midfielder



Looking for one of the most underrated Ligue 1 constants in 2013? Search no further than Bordeaux's accomplished Polish international and attacking midfielder Ludovic Obraniak.

The exigent Pole goes a long way to explaining the attacking impetus that Bordeaux possessed in 2013. When Cheick Diabaté was struggling, when Henri Saivet was lacking composure or when Nicolas Maurice Belay's deliveries from the right hand side were wayward, there was one man that the Girondins faithful knew that they could rely on. The very man that sat behind the main striker; be that Rolan, Diabaté or another. They knew that they could count on Obraniak.

At 29 years of age, Obraniak has, if he follows the general trend of attacking midfielders, just another 3 seasons where he can be assured that he will perform to the best of his ability. The Metz youth product may be of Polish nationality, but his experiences at the time of writing are limited solely to French football. Five seasons with Les Grenats were followed with a pronounced stint with Les Dogues, where he became an integral part of the starting XI that included the likes of Michel Bastos. His highlight with Lille was undoubtedly being involved in the side that duelled with Manchester United in the Champions League of the course of two legs.

By joining Bordeaux in 2012, Obraniak was giving his prime years to the Girondins' cause. His technical ability far surmounts easily any other player that Bordeaux have at their disposal, and, as a result, Obraniak is relied upon to bring the club success in almost every area of their creative and attacking play. Although the player's favoured position is as an out-and-out attacking midfielder, just in behind the main striker, Obraniak's versatility has served him well throughout his career. He can play down either wing or in a more neutral-minded midfield flank role. The player's mesmeric dribbling ability is one of the main reasons for him being able to do so. No matter where exactly he is positioned on the pitch, the confidence and skill that Obraniak has to beat opponents guarantees that he represents a threat from across the field of play.

His technical mastery extends further from just having a delicate touch of the football; his delivery is also excellent. This is why he has been the principle free kick and corner taker for Les Girondins over the course of this calendar year. This paralleled with his tendency to pepper the opposition goal with several lethal shots from off of his left foot have resulted in him not only scoring some particularly stunning goals in 2013, but also creating them for teammates.

The utterly authoritarian nature about his offensive play is what ultimately makes Ludovic Obraniak so special. Rarely does one discover a player who can cover all the necessary facets of the attacking game, and with such grace. His goal in November 2013 against OGC Nice, a typical left-footed pile driver resulted after excellent close control by the Pole after an seemingly high and wayward pass before jinking left and right until he found a metre's length of room to hit one from outside the area, was illustrative of all of Obraniak's finest qualities.

Admittedly, six league goals over the last twelve months is not a particularly impressive statistic, but when one considers the mundane, unadventurous style of football that Bordeaux manager Francis Gillot has been promoting in 2013, it is difficult to argue that Obraniak should have done better. The aforementioned point also further explains the mere three assists that Obraniak has mustered during the calendar year in the league.

Obraniak arguably shone brightest in 2013 over the course of Bordeaux's Coupe de France run, a competition in which they finished as the overall victors. In a competition in which 7,656 teams enter, Bordeaux ended a 36-year wait to beat Evian in the final 3-2. Ludovic Obraniak played down the left hand side in that final fixture and his role throughout the tournament was one of leadership in attack whilst also delivering personally under pressure.

What the future may hold for the Pole is however difficult to tell. Bordeaux are seemingly stuck in a sort of rut of mid-table mediocrity throughout 2013 and frankly Obraniak deserves better. Whether or not a club is willing to buy the 29 year old outright is another matter. He is a special player, and one who deserves far more credit than he is currently receiving.

*'In the league we have made a bad start, The aim is to fight our way back up.'*

Ludovic Obraniak

16th October 2013

**DID YOU KNOW?** Ludovic Obraniak speaks English and German but is not fluent in Polish, the country that he represents internationally.