

65. Marko Baša

Club: LOSC Lille

Date of Birth: 29th December 1982

Position: Defender

This commanding Montenegrin centre back is firmly part of new Lille boss René Girard's first team plans, having started 16 of 19 matches in Ligue 1 in the 2013/2014 campaign before the close of the year. Baša has been fully involved in the first team since his move from FC Lokomotiv Moscow in the summer of 2011, and although the club have been unable to capture a Ligue 1 title in his time at the club, there are signs that this season could be a profitable one providing they stay in touch with the recently established 'big two' in Le Championnat: the prolifically spending PSG and AS Monaco.

At the time of writing, LOSC Lille lie third in the Ligue 1 table, behind the aforementioned PSG and AS Monaco, but Les Dogues have crucially managed to keep in touch with the two big spenders. Lille are nine points clear of fourth placed Girondins de Bordeaux, two behind AS Monaco, and a further two behind title favourites PSG. Lille may not have scored as many as either of the sides ahead of them, but they have the meanest defence in the league, a statistic that Marko Baša has played a significant role in creating.

Lille have conceded just six times in Ligue 1 this season, and went on an incredible 11 match streak of clean sheets only ended by Bordeaux. Baša, the veteran of the Lille back four, has played his part in these miserly defensive performances. Traditionally a centre back, the 30 year old has displayed a mature versatility this campaign, operating at left back on occasion.

Baša is a commanding presence in defence. Standing at 6ft 3in, the Montenegrin international has a powerful aerial aura, and is particularly adept at defending set pieces; flinging himself at the ball with determination and desire. The same can be said for his presence in the opposing penalty area, as he is a potent attacking threat from corners.



Baša famously nodded a late, late equaliser against Bordeaux last season, with a bullet header into the net from a deep corner. This time around, the defender has found the net just once so far in Ligue 1, but it was a memorable goal indeed. Trailing Stade de Reims 2-0 with less than five minutes remaining, Baša picked up the ball on the left flank just inside his own half. He then drove purposefully at the heart of the Reims backline, exchanging two quick one-tos to set himself through on goal. Then, with all the elegance of an assured finisher, he dinked the ball cheekily beyond Reims' 'keeper Agassa into the far corner. The result stayed at 2-1, and Lille suffered defeat, but Baša's goal was a shining moment in what had been a far from convincing display by René Girard's men.

Baša has managed two assists this season at the end of the calendar year and has proven himself more than adept at performing out on the left flank, comfortable at getting forward as well as being reliant and committed at the back. Despite being naturally right footed, Baša can frequently be seen overlapping on the outside during matches (when deployed at left back) and is capable of providing telling crosses with either foot when in advanced positions. With Baša as part of Lille's back four, the club can afford to be confident heading into the new year. Given the exceptional depth and talent at PSG's disposal, a tilt at the title may just be beyond Baša and company this season, but with a big lead over their nearest challenger for third place established already, Baša may well be appearing in the Champions League with his side next season. Lille's number 25 has two years on his contract remaining and, providing he stays fit, looks to be a firm fixture in the side for the next few seasons.

After a troubled relationship with the Montenegrin national team dating back to 2007, Baša has established himself as a regular at the heart of Branko Brnović's defence. Baša has two international goals to his name, and will be bitterly disappointed to miss out on qualification for World Cup 2014, as Montenegro finished third in their group behind England and Ukraine. Montenegro will be hoping for a solid start to their Euro 2016 qualification, which for Baša could represent his last shot at a major international tournament.

'I prefer to let my performances do the talking...'

Marko Baša

13th March 2013

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