

35. Romain Hamouma

Club: AS Saint Étienne

Date of Birth: 29th March 1987

Position: Attacker

Unlike many of his St Étienne team mates, Romain Hamouma went into the summer of 2013 with a slightly sceptical feeling about the coming season. His team had just completed a record-breaking campaign, having won the Coupe de La Ligue for the first time in their history, but Hamouma had not had the best of beginnings to the calendar year. He picked up an injury in January 2013 which ruled him out for 6 games, and upon his return, he did not play a single Ligue 1 game for the full 90 minutes until the end of the season. In that time, he scored just one goal. As a result, his blistering form in the 2013/14 season surprised everyone, including Hamouma himself, the player has admitted.

Hamouma has progressed phenomenally as a footballer over the last 12 months. Despite his relatively weak start to the calendar year, he started the 2013/14 season with a bang. Having played 14 of St Étienne's first 15 Ligue 1 games, Hamouma managed to score 6 goals and make 4 assists, ensuring that his team had the 3rd best attacking record in the League. In those opening 15 games, he was involved in 10 goals (6 goals, 4 assists), which was the second highest total in all of Ligue 1, behind only Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who managed 15 (11 goals, 4 assists). Hamouma appeared unstoppable in the latter half of 2013, so what is it in his game that allows him to be so effective?

One of the main reasons behind Hamouma's success this year is that his goals come from all sorts of situations. Sometimes, he is on hand to capitalise on defender's mistakes and punish them, as shown by his goal against PSG in October after some calamitous defending by the PSG back four. The fact that he always seems to be in the right position to punish his opponents can be put down to his brilliant sense of positioning. However, especially in the latter half of 2013, he has scored some absolutely brilliant goals. Against Lyon in November, in the 65th minute he produced a simply stunning bicycle kick to beat Lyon goalkeeper Anthony Lopes, while he scored a 25 yard belter against Valenciennes in September. Some of Hamouma's goals really do leave you speechless, and his natural talent is undeniable.



Hamouma has a lot in his game that most wingers wish they could have. He is very quick, often leaving defenders for dead with his pace, he has very good close control and can produce a blistering shot when he strikes the ball as he can do. The combination of these three assets makes him very hard to deal with for opposition defenders, something St Étienne have used to their advantage many times this season. If there was one criticism to be made about Hamouma, it is that he perhaps needs to improve his consistency if he is to make the step up into the elite level of right wingers. When the stakes are high in big games, you can rely on Hamouma to put in a performance, but against the 'smaller' teams his concentration is often not at the same level as it is when he is facing the likes of PSG, Monaco or Marseille.

Hamouma is not, however, all about goalscoring. His 4 assists in the opening 15 games of the Ligue 1 season put him at joint 3rd in the Ligue 1 assists table, which is an extremely impressive record. As a right winger, it is very important to combine both goals and assists, and Hamouma does this perfectly. He has an accurate delivery from set pieces, and is always looking to find target men like Brandao in the box when he finds himself out wide with an opportunity to cross. He can use his close control to skip past defenders, and then has the vision to pick out his team mates if they are in good attacking positions.

Over the course of the last calendar year, Hamouma has adapted his game to be much more well-rounded. At the current stage of the Ligue 1 season, with the winter break approaching, he tops St Étienne in both goals scored and assists, which is a fantastic achievement. Romain Hamouma undoubtedly has a very bright future ahead of him, and he is undoubtedly a crucial member of the GFFN 100. We have no doubts that he will continue to improve in the coming calendar year.

'In order to live a happy life, you need to have a life that is hidden away. I live like that.'

Romain Hamouma

24th December 2013

DID YOU KNOW? Romain Hamouma is a huge fan of playing golf and believes that he is the best at the sport compared with everybody else at St Étienne.