

51. Serge Aurier

Club: Toulouse FC

Date of Birth: 24th December 1992

Position: Defender



Toulouse full-back Serge Aurier is a name probably more familiar than others to continental football fans. This is merely as the player's performances over the last few seasons have led to speculation about a possible move to some of Europe's most prestigious footballing outlets. Aurier is incidentally a self-confessed Arsenal fan and has admitted on multiple occasions over the course of the calendar year that this would be a dream move. Aurier has also confirmed in the past that he rejected a move to Manchester City before his move to Toulouse. Aurier also had talks with Marseille president and now manager Jose Anigo in the summer, but no formal offer was eventually made. Perhaps we forgot to mention that Aurier is still astoundingly only 21 years of age.

In terms of footballing attributes, Aurier has already proved himself to be an accomplished crosser of the ball and is almost addicted to overlapping down the flanks. Yet the most notable improvement in terms of attributes over the calendar year if one was pressed to name just one would be his increased aerial ability. Having played down the flanks for the majority of his youth career, the Ivorian international was never really forced to use his head neither offensively nor defensively. However, he is being to learn that not only is he blessed with pace but that he also possesses a suitable build to be able to fight just as aptly for the ball over the waist as he does in a fiery fashion below the waist. Many may go on to presume that at such a tender age, there must be parts of Aurier's game that are notably underdeveloped but due to receiving playing time at both centre-back and right midfield in 2013, he has been able to improve the offensive and defensive sides of his game equally, turning him into quite the footballing machine. On a personal level, Aurier has made some rather unprofessional posts on social networking site Twitter in the last year, including one of him in an Arsenal shirt and incessant 'retweeting' of Arsenal fans begging for him to sign for the London outfit. It is perhaps surprising that the management at Toulouse has failed to pick up on these actions.

Perhaps the 21 year olds stand out performance of 2013 came this season against Ajaccio in a 1-1 draw when the player stopped the Corsicans in their tracks, winning duel after duel, making interception after interception, when his teammates otherwise gave a gutless account of themselves.

It is fair to say that Aurier has been Toulouse's stand out performer this year amid a faltering backline. The player has put in consistently good performances and due to the team being ever so slightly dilapidated over the last year, with the departures of the likes of Etienne Capoue, Moussa Sissoko and Franck Tabanou, it remains to be seen how much longer the Ivorian international will stay at Toulouse considering the previous interest from elsewhere.

Despite being consistent throughout the season, it could be said that Aurier does tend to have his better games against weaker opponents and that he tends to go ever so slightly missing against the better teams. It could be said therefore that Aurier needs to progress even further before he can make a move to a better club and a higher quality of football, as he has been unable to cope with big strikers and the likes of Zlatan Ibrahimovic amongst others in the past.

Internationally, this has been a good year for the player. Previously, despite knocks on door from the Ivorian side, Aurier did not feel that he was ready for a call up, stating: *"I've been approached several times by the Ivory Coast coach Sabri Lamouchi. He has called me numerous times. We had a chat and I told him that I'm not yet ready to play international football."*

Now, however, Aurier has decided that the time has come and at the time of writing had played 7 convincing performances for his National side and helped them to finish of qualification for the World cup, a tournament which Aurier will want to feature in. The World Cup will be a test to see if Aurier can play against the best players in the world, and presuming he goes, his encounter with the likes of Falcao could be very interesting the group stage.

Overall, on consistency alone, Aurier makes the GFFN 100. The player is receiving as rich a football education as any under the wing of Toulouse manager Alain Casanova and, although it is clear that Aurier's potential is frankly enormous, a move to a bigger club at the end of the season may wreck the rapid progression he is currently achieving.

'He has huge potential. Frankly, I wish I could clone him.'

Alain Casanova

Serge Aurier's current manager at Toulouse sings the Ivorian's praises

Quotes of the Year: Serge Aurier: "I have a problem with the men in yellow."

Toulouse's right-back admits that one of the weakest parts of his game is the amount of fouls he concedes, referring to referees as a 'the men in yellow'.