

73. Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco

Club: AS Monaco

Date of Birth: 4th September 1993

Position: Attacker



'He has never played in Ligue 1,' they said. 'Surely a man who has only ever played 20-odd Ligue 2 games cannot be a starter for a title-challenging side?' 'He's only 19 years old, and not strong enough for the top league.' These were the voices of Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco's doubters when the 2013/14 season loomed ahead. The young Belgian only became a professional footballer in 2012, but has taken no time at all to deliver.

2013 has been the breakthrough year in Ferreira-Carrasco's career. After joining Monaco, he became the heart of their team as they began their mission to qualify for Ligue 1. He began the season as a very inexperienced 18 year old and finished the season as a very accomplished player at Ligue 1 standard, having led his team to promotion. Then, one year on, Ferreira-Carrasco could have been forgiven for being intimidated by all of the big name signings that Monaco brought in, most of whom were attack-minded players, but the young Belgian managed to keep his first team place and, apart from a 5 game spell in which he was injured, he has played in all of Monaco's Ligue 1 games in 2013.

Ferreira-Carrasco has a very refreshing style of play. Predominantly a left-winger, he is extremely technically gifted, with a hat full of tricks to beat his opposing full back. He is never afraid to take players on, something that other wingers sometimes shy away from, as they often prefer to cut inside or pass the ball on and thus the responsibility onto a teammate.

He is also a rapid customer, and once he gets past his opposing full back, there is often no catching him. His speed also allows him to make runs behind the defence and straight through on goal, as he did against Saint-Etienne to score his first ever Ligue 1 goal earlier this season. Another thing that stands out about this young man is that he is very competent from set pieces. He took most of Monaco's penalties last season, which he duly dispatched, and also scored a couple of brilliant free-kicks.

The statistics also back up the fact that Ferreira-Carrasco has developed hugely over the past few years. During his 2012/2013 Ligue 1 campaign he managed 6 goals and 6 assists along with 2 goals and an assist in their Coupe de la Ligue run. Going into the Christmas break in Ligue 1, it is still true that Monaco have never lost a league game (both Ligue 1 and Ligue 2) when Ferreira-Carrasco has scored or assisted a goal. Ferreira-Carrasco was also a regular in the Belgium under-21 team over the course of 2013, playing in all 5 qualifying games, winning 4 and drawing the other. For a young 20 year old, he is already building up an impressive CV, and it seems that he is very comfortable in his current environment in Monaco and has a strong relationship with the manager Claudio Ranieri.

As with most young wingers, one part of his game the promising Belgian can work on is his strength. At the moment, he can get bullied off the ball by the opposition but, if he is able to bulk up then he will become a tremendously difficult player to defend against. As it is, some of Ligue 1's more robust defenders look to throw the player off his game with some heavy challenges in the opening exchanges of their duels with Ferreira-Carrasco and occasionally this can make the Belgian a little more cautious and therefore offensively invisible during some encounters. However, with an improved physical stature this tactic will be near impossible to implement against him, allowing him to play to his full potential.

Overall, 2013 has been an unbelievable year for Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco. After bursting onto the scene in Ligue 1 last season and helping Monaco to a promotion that was paramount for the Russian-led Monegasque boardroom, he has continued his impressive form into the top tier of French football, now creating havoc for defences at some of the country's most iconic grounds. As it stands, there is no reason why Ferreira-Carrasco cannot continue to improve at the same startling rate of 2013 so long as he receives continued backing from Ranieri in the form of game-time. Don't forget the name Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco- you could become very familiar with him in the years to come.

'Monaco is a place with many vices. Life is beautiful, the opportunities are as frequent as the women.'

Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco

15th November 2013

DID YOU KNOW? Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco has admitted that without his friends he could not go on in Monaco.