

Gamer beats soccer star to manager's job

25th November, 2012



The top football (soccer) club in Azerbaijan has named a 21-year-old video game player as its new manager (coach). They chose gamer Vugar Huseynzade instead of 1991 European Footballer of the Year Jean-Pierre Papin. The club is Baku FC,

which is currently top of the Azerbaijan league. It gave the position of manager of its "A" team (the reserves) to locally-born Huseynzade instead of the hugely experienced Frenchman Papin. The club's decision has shocked the football world. All eyes will now be on Huseynzade to see how well he can manage the team. The young manager told reporters his ambition is to get his team into the Europa League, which is the second-biggest tournament in European football.

Mr Huseynzade has a short but interesting footballing background. He was born in Baku in 1991 and grew up supporting Baku FC. He went to high school in Sweden and learnt about a different kind of soccer. He then studied at Boston University in the USA, where he graduated in Business Management. For the past ten years he has been addicted to the video game Football Manager. Baku FC hired him in February 2012 as an advisor. The club really liked his knowledge of the game in leading his Football Manager teams to victory. Huseynzade said that managing football teams in simulation games gave him valuable on-the-job skills and training. He added that he couldn't wait to select his first team and win his first game.

Sources: *ESPN Soccer.net* / *sports.myjoyonline.com*

Writing

The skills gamers learn from gaming can be very useful in a job. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

football club / soccer / video game player / manager / experienced / tournament / interesting background / supporter / graduated / business management / victory / wait

True / False

- A gamer beat a European Footballer of the Year to a manager's job. T / F
- The team is currently bottom of the league. T / F
- The new manager was born near the team he now manages. T / F
- The manager's ambition is to not get relegated this season. T / F
- The new manager learnt a bit more about football in Sweden. T / F
- The guy became the club's advisor and then did a university degree. T / F
- The club liked the guy's knowledge of soccer via Football Manager. T / F
- The article says the club won its first game under the new manager. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. top | a. following |
| 2. named | b. hooked on |
| 3. currently | c. competition |
| 4. ambition | d. announced |
| 5. tournament | e. past |
| 6. background | f. presently |
| 7. supporting | g. useful |
| 8. kind | h. leading |
| 9. addicted to | i. dream |
| 10. valuable | j. type |

Discussion – Student A

- Why is football (soccer) the world's most popular sport?
- What do you think of a 21-year-old gamer becoming coach?
- What could a gamer do better than a coach experienced on the pitch?
- Why did they choose the gamer instead of 1991 European Footballer of the Year Jean-Pierre Papin?
- How would you feel if your favourite team made a gamer its manager?
- Do you think Huseynzade's passion for his club will see him win?
- What questions would you like to ask coach Vugar Huseynzade?
- What do you think his answers might be?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. named a 21-year-old video game player | a. the football world. |
| 2. Baku FC, which is currently | b. Business Management |
| 3. The club's decision has shocked | c. in European football |
| 4. All eyes will now | d. footballing background |
| 5. the second biggest tournament | e. job skills and training |
| 6. a short but interesting | f. be on Huseynzade |
| 7. grew up | g. as its new manager |
| 8. he graduated in | h. teams to victory |
| 9. leading his Football Manager | i. top of the Azeri league |
| 10. valuable on-the- | j. supporting Baku FC |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of Huseynzade's background?
- What football management skills can you and can't you learn from a video game?
- What do you think the older Baku FC players will think of their new coach?
- Which word is best – 'soccer' or 'football'?
- What do you think the other teams in the league think about this?
- Is this a very creative or very stupid decision by Baku FC?
- What questions would you like to ask the Baku FC boss?
- What do you think his/her answers might be?

Spelling

- eistnda of...
- ycuenrtrl top of the Azerbaijan league
- the luhyeg experienced Frenchman Papin
- The club's nideicso
- his maboiitn is to get his team into Europe
- the second-biggest enttromaun in Europe
- interesting footballing rndaukcbgo
- grew up uirtspgpon Baku FC
- he gdteurada in Business Management
- he has been diatddec to the video game Football Manager
- really liked his dweokengl of the game
- vauallbe on-the-job skills and training

Answers – Synonym Match

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. h | 2. d | 3. f | 4. i | 5. c |
| 6. e | 7. a | 8. j | 9. b | 10. g |

Role Play

Huseynzade - You love your new role as Baku FC coach. Tell the others three reasons why you will do better than other managers. You love Papin but he was good with his feet, not at managing. You know you can win the Europa League in three years. You would like Papin as your assistant manager.

Papin - You are very angry. You know you are the best coach for the job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell the others three reasons why Huseynzade will fail. You feel really sorry for Baku FC's fans. You believe the team will finish in the bottom half this season. You can change that, but ONLY as manager.

Baku FC fan - You are happy with the new manager. It shows the club is looking at new ways to win. You don't think Papin is a good manager. He doesn't have a good record as a manager. Give Papin three reasons why Huseynzade is best. You want another local coach from Baku to be the assistant coach. You dislike Michel Platini.

Michel Platini - You are the boss of European football and a good friend of Papin's. You are SHOCKED a video gamer is coach of a European team. Give the others 3 reasons why. You think Huseynzade must go. Papin must be manager. He is a star. He knows football. The Baku fan knows nothing about football!!!

Speaking – Soccer Coach

Who would be the best football coach? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| • Barack Obama | • Any Brazilian |
| • Usain Bolt | • A soccer expert |
| • Lady Gaga | • The #1 passionate fan |
| • Mia Hamm | • You |

Answers – True False

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | T | b | F | c | T | d | F | e | T | f | F | g | T | h | F |
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.