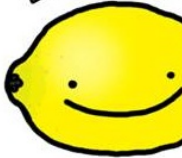


Squeeze My Lemon look forward to their blue ribband affair on Wednesday.

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Squeeze My Lemon Utd take on the Absolute Gents in the UCD AFC Superleague League Cup Final on Wednesday evening. The game is set for a 6.30pm kick off on R3 in Belfield. With the game only days away it is only natural that the mudslinging should start. Eoin D'Arcy of Squeeze My Lemon Utd took time out from his studies to offer his views on his team, his season and his opposition. Did we say "his", yes that is what we meant, for there is only one player worth talking about in this Lemon grove.

When asked who the players to watch out for were, D'Arcy was not shy in stepping forward. Blessed with the impressive physique to dominate any midfield, he combines this physical power with an eye for a pass and a reading of the game that is second to none. When it was put to him that he may in fact be the complete Superleague midfielder, he simply said, "Yes, that would be me!"

Before you dismiss this as mere self serving propaganda please suffer through the rest. Eoin also holds members of his team in high regard, well one member. Craig Burgess is a speed demon, a goal scoring speed demon and his goals have brought this team of Lemons to these heady heights. With D'Arcy supplying the passes and Burgess finishing with aplomb, what could possibly go wrong?

There are a number of things unfortunately. Step forward Richie Sayers, sometime goalkeeper but more often than not, M.I.A. This undoubtedly talented footballer leaves the Lemons wanting in their hour of need. When he has turned up he has left his team wanting, calling into question the previous sentence's appraisal, with one last big game to come, can Richie change his image? D'Arcy believes he can. If Burgess is the archetypal 20/20 striker, 20 goals and 20 assists per season, Cian Hackett is a 1/20 striker. As D'Arcy himself puts it, "one goal from 20 chances". That goal could be the Cup Final winning goal, so less of the sniggering down the back.

As individuals they may have their pluses and minuses but as a team they are on a par with the great Barcelona team of the late 2000's to a couple of games ago. Squeeze My Lemon hail from Greystones where this group of intrepid footballers learnt their trade. The Greystones Massive play without fear, without prejudice and most importantly without positions, long after the Dutch had brought us Total Football, Lemon brought us their own brand of positionless football, possibly after a few Dutch.

It has been an up and down season for Squeeze. As they go into the most important game of the season Eoin looks back on two pivotal moments that have driven them forward. The elation they felt when they conquered Xlami FC, 3-2 in a nail biting affair. It wasn't just 3 points in the Saturday Premier Division, it was more than that. Xlami had a former Lemon player in their

ranks, one who ran off crying when he didn't make the Squeeze team, he made his own team, and Squeeze beat that team...not really sure who the winner is in this situation.

The low point of the season came early on; FC Twente Benson beat Squeeze My Lemon 5-1. Squeeze My Lemon only had 9 players. FC Twente Benson proceeded to smoke them, smashing five goals past them. Lemon were not happy with the manner of the defeat, Benson were mean to them. If there is one thing Squeeze doesn't like, it is ungracious winners. "This spurred us on, we didn't want to feel like that again and I think that is why we are now in the Final!" Eoin blurted out. The possibility of teams losing points for being mean is one that will be put to the phantom Superleague Committee. They weren't answering their phones at time of going to press.

Superleague team names are always a tricky subject. Some are trying to be funny and need no further attention, some succeed in being funny and need no further attention and then there are the ones that are just plain bizarre. Am I glad I asked the question? Make your own mind up. The squad that make up Squeeze My Lemon had a childhood friend who made videos, several of the team appeared in these videos. The name of the production company behind these videos is "Squeeze My Lemon". Simple, no further questions, that's a perfectly reasonable motivation for naming a team. What went on in these videos? Do you know, I never asked!

It was with great relief when football returned as the topic of conversation. D'Arcy was quick to congratulate his opponents on reaching the final, singling them out for special praise for the drive and determination that had brought them so far, D'Arcy knows they will face a tough battle that could go either way...sorry I've got that all wrong. This is what he said, "They are a team of individuals, we play a team game. We should win comfortably. They certainly can't keep up with our play".

Confident words from a confident man, and why wouldn't he be confident, his team has not yet been beaten in the League Cup this season. As the man himself says, "You can go hard, or you can go home", possibly a reference to Squeeze My Lemon's previous incarnation but a motto they live by nonetheless, because of course, come Wednesday at 6.30pm, Superleague silverware is on the line.