

Captain Giggs leads United chorus of caution over Premier showdown



Giggs

Ryan Giggs has stressed Manchester United will have more interest in maintaining their own impressive form than ending Arsenal's Premier League title claims at the Emirates Stadium tomorrow.

A troublesome spell for Arsène Wenger's team has fuelled the notion that they will fall behind Liverpool, Chelsea and United long before the business end of the title race. Giggs and his team-mates have an opportunity to inflict further damage this weekend but the 34-year-old believes it would be premature to discount Arsenal's challenge just yet.

"I don't think it's a case of us going there and finishing off their title hopes, when you look at the quality players Arsenal have got," said Giggs. "They have got a few players out at the moment but all four top teams, if they are there or thereabouts, are capable of going on a run. That is always the case.

"The four of us are going to have losses of form and not get the results that we want. Hopefully we've had our poor spell and we can kick on now and finish the season strongly. Remember, we're also behind Chelsea and Liverpool, so we really can't afford any more mistakes ourselves. We will go there and try to win. I don't think we have won a game [away to the Arsenal] since they moved to the Emirates so it would be nice to do that."

Giggs captained United at Celtic Park on Wednesday night, a match in which he claimed a rare headed goal to secure a late draw. Owing to his advanced years, the former Wales midfielder is no longer a fixture on the European champions' left flank, but is content to adapt his game.

"I'm playing a different role now after all those years on the wing and I'm enjoying it," he said. "I played just off the front in the first half and towards the left in the second half. I'm not an out-and-out winger any more and I accept that.

"I just tuck in and try and use my experience,

really. I can still play out on the left and do a job but with the players we have got - Ji-Sung Park, Nani, Cristiano Ronaldo - they have got the pace and carry a counter-attacking threat. It is my job to feed those players."

Giggs' view of Arsenal was echoed by Darren Fletcher and Ronaldo, who have both warned that Wenger's players would enjoy nothing more than rediscovering their winning touch against the league champions following their draw with Tottenham Hotspur and loss at Stoke. Arsenal were also held at home by Fenerbahce on Wednesday.

"Arsenal are a top quality side," said Fletcher. "I am quite sure with Manchester United coming to town they will be right up for it. They have maybe had a couple of indifferent results of late but you don't often see Arsenal going on a poor run. They will present a big challenge for us." Ronaldo, who was below his best in Glasgow but still set up Giggs' goal with a swerving drive which the Celtic goalkeeper, Artur Boruc, could only parry, added: "I don't know if it is tough for them at the moment but they will still have 11 players, the same as us, and I know it will be difficult because it always is. Do not forget Arsenal have great talent. We respect them and it is going to be difficult to win there.

"Last season Arsenal started very well and dropped points at the end of the season. Maybe this season is going to be different. Maybe they will lose points at the start and then win them in the last bit of the season."

One player who will not feature for the visitors tomorrow is Ben Foster. The goalkeeper made his European debut against Celtic with Edwin van der Sar rested but will now step aside as the Dutchman returns. "The manager called myself and Tomasz [Kuszczak] in last week and he has reassured me it is in my best interests to stay," he said. "It was something that needed to be done and it was good to have that opportunity."

Vieira: I laugh at Man United

PATRICK VIEIRA says that the great rivalry between his former club Arsenal and Manchester United makes him laugh.

He also describes his infamous Old Trafford clash with Ruud van Nistelrooy as "quite funny" and his tunnel bust-up with Roy Keane at Highbury as "quite exciting and quite good".

The Internazionale midfielder spent nine seasons in the Premier League and has no doubt about which games the Gunners looked forward to most.

"When I was at Arsenal, Manchester was the best team in the country, because they were winning the League in the last four or five years," said Vieira.

"There was a big rivalry between the two clubs and

every single game that I played against Manchester has been tough, has been difficult.

"There was a lot of tension, a lot of arguments, battles. But it was fantastic. I loved it a lot.

"Of course, talking about tension, there was some on the pitch, some outside the pitch and that makes me laugh now."

Vieira's lowest point was receiving a red card at Old Trafford in September 2003 after a spat with United striker van Nistelrooy. The arguments and scuffles between players continued at the final whistle and later in the players' tunnel.

"We played at Manchester and I was sent off during the game because I made a tackle and Van Nistelrooy acted like he was making a movie," said

Vieira.

"I got really frustrated about it and wasn't happy at all.

"After the game, I saw him next to the coach and we exchanged a few words. That was quite funny."

Vieira also sparked a rumpus in the players' tunnel at Highbury in February 2005.

The World Cup winner reveals he said "a few words" to United right-back Gary Neville, who he felt was always targeting Robert Pires when the two clubs met.

That didn't go down too well with United captain Roy Keane.

"I played with Roy Keane so many times, but the story that comes to my mind straight away is the argument we had at Highbury before the game in the tunnel," said Vieira.

"I remember saying a few words to Gary Neville because he was after Robert Pires every time.

"So I had a few words before the game and, of course, Roy Keane came to defend his own players.

"There were a few words going through the tunnel and of course some intimidation.

"So that was quite exciting and quite good."



Vieira