

Chase for the Championship- by James Steptowe

Overview

This fictional story follows the North Harrogate under-eleven teams SLS United and Lingerfield FC, who like Liverpool and Man City, are fighting a close battle for the league title. The story is told from the perspectives of Yonis – SLS United’s goalkeeper who supports Liverpool, and Sarah – Lingerfield FC’s star striker who supports Man City. The story will follow their battle for their own league title. While they also both pray that the team they support will lift the Premier League crown.

The following prologue serves to introduce the characters and story and was written before the weekend of the 30/3/19 fixtures. I will then publish each new chapter weekly after the round of Premier League fixtures and will be developing the story of the

North Harrogate league title battle alongside the real-life events of the Premier League.

It promises to be the most exciting finish to a Premier League season for years, and so too does the race for the North Harrogate under-eleven league title.

Who will win the **Chase for the Championship?**

Enjoy!

James Steptowe

The current standings of North Harrogate under-eleven league weekend of 30/3/19

Position	Teams	Played	Wins	Draws	Losses	Goal Difference	Points
1.	SLS United	12	8	2	2	+24	26
2.	Lingerfield F.C.	11	8	1	2	+28	25
3.	Nidd Rangers	12	6	3	3	+15	21
4.	Ripley Albion	12	6	3	3	+13	21
5.	Brearton Town	12	7	0	5	+4	21
6.	Killinghall United	12	5	5	2	+1	20
7.	FC Scriven	12	5	4	3	-2	19
8.	AFC Farnham	11	6	1	4	-6	19
9.	South Stainley F.C.	12	4	5	3	-8	17
10.	Ripley United	12	2	6	4	-14	12

Fixture List: Sunday: 31/3/19

SLS United V Nidd Rangers
 South Stainley F.C. V Lingerfield F.C
 Ripley Albion V Ripley United
 Killinghall United V FC Scriven
 Brearton Town V AFC Farnham

Prologue

Yonis

Two massive games of football were happening on Sunday. Yonis, the ten-year-old goalkeeper for SLS united, had his own match against Nidd Rangers (the team currently third in his league). Liverpool, the team Yonis supported and adored, had Tottenham at home, and both were bound to be extremely tough matches.

SLS United had only lost twice this season, but one of those losses had come against Nidd Rangers. Yonis knew their players would be motivated by this; he knew they'd want to do the double and beat SLS United again. It would be Yonis' job come

Sunday to help ensure that didn't happen.

Liverpool, in contrast, *HAD* beaten Tottenham, or Spurs as they were known, earlier in the season. 2-1. In their own backyard; all the way back in September. But now the stakes were a lot higher. Liverpool led Man City by a single point. However, Man City had a game in hand, so Liverpool couldn't afford to drop any more points if they wanted to end their twenty-seven-year-long wait to win the title once again - they had to win.

For SLS United, the title seemed to be trying to avoid them too. They'd missed out narrowly the last two seasons, and had been pipped to the post last year by a mere two points by Lingerfield FC. This year, the two teams were in a close battle once more, and Yonis was determined that SLS United would emerge out on top. He didn't know what he felt more nervous about: his own match at ten-thirty Sunday morning, or the Liverpool match, which he'd be nervously watching, at four-thirty later that same afternoon.

He was also trying to not to think about the fact that Lingerfield FC, who like Man City had a game in hand, were playing South Stainley F.C. on Sunday. South Stainley F.C. were currently second-bottom of the league, and Yonis didn't hold out much hope for anything other than a Lingerfield win. South Stainley F.C. had been poor all season and looked destined for relegation. If Lingerfield won, and SLS United failed to win, then Lingerfield would go top.

Ironically, Man City were also playing the team second-bottom in the premier league, Fulham. A team that had only managed to win four times all season, and who now found themselves eleven points from safety. Yonis felt it was unlikely to see any other result than a Man City win. He feared that the weekend could end with both SLS United and Liverpool second in their respective leagues. It could be a weekend to remember, or one to quickly forget.

Sarah

Sarah was confident that both Lingerfield F.C. and Man City would be top of their leagues come Sunday evening. Eleven-year-old Sarah (striker for Lingerfield F.C.) was in blistering form and had scored four goals in her last three games. She was currently on course to win the golden boot for the second season running and was playing as if she could do no wrong (much like some of the Man City players). It seemed that Lingerfield F.C. were on course to defend their title. Their fate was now once again in their own hands, and they just needed to ensure they won their remaining games.

Starting on Sunday.

This week they were playing South Stainley F.C. - a team that had been struggling all year. Earlier in the season, Sarah had scored a brace against them, and she hoped that this Sunday, at ten-thirty, she might be able to go one better and bag a hat-trick. She was very confident they'd get a win, and what was better, was that their rivals for the titles, SLS United, had a tricky home fixture against their bogey team, Nidd Rangers. Somehow Nidd Rangers always managed to get under the skin of the SLS

United players and Sarah hoped Sunday would be no different.

Man City also had a team that had been struggling all year this weekend - Fulham - and even though Fulham still had a slim chance of avoiding the drop, Sarah believed that the star-studded Man City team would have no problem dispensing of them at twelve-thirty Saturday afternoon. This would result in Man City leapfrogging Liverpool at the top of the table. Sarah was quietly confident that come Sunday evening she would have a double reason to celebrate: Lingerfield and Man City back where they belong – at the top of the pile. She was sure this would be a weekend to remember.

Follow-up questions

1. What positions do Yonis and Sarah play in?
2. Who is younger out of Yonis and Sarah?
3. Who seems the more confident about their local team and Premier League team winning? Why?
4. The phrase 'leapfrogging Liverpool' is used. What does this mean?
5. Why does Sarah think her team belongs 'at the top of the pile'? What does this mean

Chapter One of *Chase for the Championship* will be published early next week...

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please email hello@jamesseptowe.com or tweet me [@jamesseptowe](https://twitter.com/jamesseptowe)

You can also visit my website: jamesseptowe.com for more updates on **Chase for the Championship**, and my **debut full-length children's book: Raid of the Ratskull Rodents coming May 2019.**

Thanks for reading.