Football Manager Handheld - Hints and Tips
By Marc Vaughan

The following hints and tips are intended to help ease new players into the game and give some pointers to help ensure your success.

They are NOT however a set of instructions for someone to blindly follow in the manner of some ‘game guides’ and are more aimed at being a ‘primer’ for how to approach playing the game and to open a newcomers eyes to some of the more subtle effects which are present in the FM series and FMH in particular.

This game is a strange beast – newcomers to Football Management games may find Football Manager Handheld (FMH) a little daunting, while old hands of our PC titles should (hopefully) find the game straight forward to pick up and play.

Football Manager Handheld is a completely new game from our previous titles, although many of the older gamers amongst you might recognise aspects which we have adopted into the game.

The match engine for instance is very reminiscent of that used in our third series of SMG games. This engine relies upon a detailed and varied text commentary to set the scene during a match and inform the user of what is happening.
# Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting a new game</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fog of War</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Match</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Tactics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Tactical Notes of Interest</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaring the opposition into surrender</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Creative Players space</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend from the Front</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximise Set Pieces</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding up the ball</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting crosses into the box</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation Of Player Characteristics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping your Job</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping your Players Happy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching For Decent Players</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing your approach</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player Contracts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Signings</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling Players</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training For Success</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlockables</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place on the board</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements:</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Daddy</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements:</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No transfer windows</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements:</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Management</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements:</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Word</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Starting a new game
Starting a new game in FMH is relatively straight forward and very similar to how it worked in the previous version of the game, however it is worth mentioning one of the new options available to users for the first time …

Fog of War
If you delve within the ‘preferences’ section of Football Manager Handheld you will see a toggle setting for the “Fog of War”.

This option is also sometimes called the ‘Attribute Masking’ and if enabled means that you cannot initially see the attributes for all players in the game. Players who have their attributes ‘masked’ will remain invisible until you scout them or come into contact with them via some other means (ie. Purchase the player or play against them in a match).

If this option is disabled then ALL players attributes will always be visible.

It is disabled by default.

The Match
The commentary in FMH allows people to easily ascertain the reasons behind the success (or otherwise) of their teams. As well as the various statistics available to you as manager (eg. rating, passing stats etc) the following key messages should be taken into consideration:

Defenders: Messages about successful tackles (or players beating them) will give you an indication of your defenders skill in comparison to the opposition player involved. Bear in mind that sometimes there may be a striker who is too much for your defense to handle on their own, in these cases consider placing a DMC in front of the defense to help shore things up and cover defenders when they get in trouble.

If opposition players are getting shots in but the commentary about the shots indicates that they had very little space then this indicates that your current tactic is successfully closing them down if not actually getting the ball from them.

Midfielders: Messages about passes which lead to shots (especially where the commentary mentions easy chances or tap ins) or about lots of passes going astray.

Attackers: Messages about shots where a goalkeeper was off his line tends to indicate a player with good anticipation and vision.

If all the shots that attackers are having indicate that they had little space to work in then the defence is closing them down, if this is the case then it may help to
find players with better off the ball movement or to give the players move runs to try and shake markers off them.

Other match tactical things to bear in mind when organising your team include:

- If an opposition player gets a yellow card then he will be less likely to make challenges on your players as he will be worried about being sent off. You can take advantage of this by setting his opposing number to run with the ball.
- If you have a team with forwards with good condition and decent pace and dribbling then you can quite often sucker teams in by playing 'Counter Attack' after going a goal up.
- Your team captain has a certain amount of influence over the style and work-rate of a team, bear this in mind when selecting him.
- If you play the ‘Offside Trap’ tactic and you have tired defenders then it will be less successful than if the defenders were fully fit.
- A fully fit and enthusiastic youngster will in some cases be better than a tired and jaded first team player.
- Players who have low stamina aren’t suited to a ‘pressing’ game as this will tire them out even quicker than normal.
- Keep an eye out for messages indicating that a player has taken a ‘knock’, this means that he may now be carrying a minor injury and might be a candidate for substitution.

**Favourite Tactics**
I tend to play using the default 442 diamond tactic but with short passing and pressing set. This works very well if you have skilful enough players who are also fairly hard working

*Kevin Turner:* With Tottenham I use a 4132 formation which does not concede many goals (e.g. 0-0 against Man U at Old Trafford). When I use this formation with Falkirk on the other hand, I lose most games and have to fall back on a 442 which seems to be a lot more suited to the Falkirk players.

**Other Tactical Notes of Interest**
This section details tactics which I have used during matches, they may or may not be of use/interest to you.

**Scaring the opposition into surrender:**
If an opposition player is controlling the game but has a low ‘Bravery’ rating then you might consider man-marking him with a big bruise (high Strength and Aggression). This may cause the player to back off from 50-50 balls allowing your team to impose themselves more on the match.

**Giving Creative Players space**
I don’t recommend that you give creative players ‘Pressing’ instructions as this
means that they are more likely to be near an opposition player when your side regains the ball.

**Pressing**
Don’t expect all of your team to be able to press for the entire match in FMH, pressing will tire players out quite quickly if they have low stamina. Unless I have a team with high stamina across the board I usually use pressing in 5 minute bursts to disrupt opposition pressure.

**Defend from the Front**
If you have hardworking attackers then sometimes it may be helpful to tell them to close down the defence, this will prevent defensive play makers from having time to look around for creative passes and can sometimes cause mistakes which can generate goals.

**Maximise Set Pieces**
I definitely recommend customising which players are Forward/Back for set pieces as this can be worth several goals over the space of a season.

In particular for Corners I would recommend pulling back any players with 15+ Jumping ability when defending and conversely pushing forward as many players with 15+ Jumping or high Anticipation / Off the Ball skills (the latter for getting on the end of any rebounds).

**Holding up the ball**
I recommend using holding up the ball if have a player with High Strength, Dribbling and Technique (especially if he has low pace) if he plays either as a lone SC or as a DMC (this will allow the rest of the players to get forward).

**Getting crosses into the box**
If you have tall (i.e. Good jumping and heading) strikers then try playing with very wide wingers and pushing them forward so that they are more likely to get crosses into the box.

**Explanation Of Player Characteristics**
Below is a description of the various visible player characteristics within the game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>How aggressive he is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agility</td>
<td>How agile he is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>How creative he is (able to see key passes etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing</td>
<td>How good he is at crossing the ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dribbling</td>
<td>How good he is at dribbling with the ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GK) Handling</td>
<td>How good he is at handling the ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GK) Heading</td>
<td>How good he is at heading the ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>How well he leads and inspires his team mates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>How good he is at moving into good attacking positions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pace  How fast he is (both top speed and acceleration)
Passing  How accurately he can pass the ball.
Positioning  How good he is at keeping a good defensive position.
(GK) Reflexes  How good he is at making reflex saves.
Shooting  How good he is at shooting (combination of Long Shots and finishing).
Stamina  How long he is able to play before tiring.
Strength  How physically strong he is.
Tackling  How good he is at making tackles.
Teamwork  How good he is at playing for the team.
Technique  How good his technique and ball control is.

A large number of hidden statistics also exist including:
Pressure, Professionalism, Loyalty, Sportsmanship, Temperament, Consistency, Corners, Decisions, Dirtiness, Finishing, Free Kicks, Long Shots, Important Matches, Injury Proneness, One-on-ones, Penalties, Throw Ins, Vision, Pressure and a few others.
Keeping your Job
You know that your job is on the line when your board is less than satisfied with your performance, your name has appeared on the potential job vacancies screen and either Supporter Protests or the Dreaded Vote of Confidence has occurred.

To keep your job as Manager you must learn to appease your chairman. The following things affect a chairman’s happiness in FMH.

- **League Position**
The chairman indicates to you the club’s desired league position at the beginning of a season (or when you take over the club if you come into the job part way through a season). If you are failing to achieve this after the first few games of the season have passed then he will start to have doubts about your ability.

- **Runs of Form**
If the club has a run of form (either good or bad) this will affect the chairman’s mood, if you have a bad league position then a good run of form may prevent you from being sacked. If you have a good league position then a bad run of form may raise doubts that you can sustain your good start.

- **Board Requests**
If the board warn you that you’re taking too much time on business aspects of the club and not enough on your management then take them seriously, as any further requests that you make will try their patience.

- **Financial Worries**
As if you haven’t enough things to worry about, the board would prefer you to at least keep the status-quo financially. If you drastically improve the situation then this might make up for short-fallings elsewhere at the club (although it depends on whether the chairman wants success or profit).

- **Bad Media Management**
If you are unable to handle the pressure of the media and they disrupt your team morale sufficiently then this may affect the boards view of you.

- **Time at club**
The longer a manager has been at a club the more a chairman will expect from him.
Keeping your Players Happy

In a similar manner to FM PC happy players will perform slightly better than those that are unhappy. The following factors affect player unhappiness:

- **Contract:** How happy the player is with his current contract.
- **Appearances:** How regularly he plays for the team.
- **Country:** How happy he is living in his current location (city, country).
- **Time at club:** Whether the player feels he has achieved all he can at his current club.
- **Favourite staff:** Whether he likes any of his team mates.
- **Disliked staff:** Whether he dislikes any of his team mates.
Transfers
Transfers are vital to building and maintaining a successful team in the game. Spotting good players is often not enough to ensure success – in order to maximise the effect of your transfer budget you need to time your purchases right to ensure that you get the most talent for your money.

Searching For Decent Players
As in previous versions of FM finding decent players for your team is of the utmost importance, with this in mind I have listed the search filters which I use for each position within the game:

Goalkeeper:
- Handling: Excellent
- Positioning: Excellent

Defender:
- Heading: Excellent (Central Defenders only)
- Tackling: Excellent
- Teamwork: Good
- Strength: Good
- Positioning: Very Good

Midfielder (defensive):
- Heading: Good (Central Midfielders only)
- Teamwork: Good
- Stamina: Good
- Strength: Good
- Tackling: Very Good
- Positioning: Very Good

Midfielder (attacking):
- Creativity: Good
- Off the Ball: Very Good
- Pace: Good
- Passing: Excellent
- Teamwork: Good

Striker:
- Heading: Good
- Movement: Good
- Pace: Good
- Shooting: Excellent

Captains:
- Age: 24+
- Leadership: Very Good
- Teamwork: Good

I haven’t given actual values for the abilities listed as this obviously changes depending upon the team that you are managing.... for example.
In general if 4 in 5 of the values set match the requirements then I will consider the player for purchase.

If you start as a small club then try and resist purchasing players who are well known in real-life once they’re aging veterans and available on a free unless you really really think they’ll still cut it at your club.
Not every current Premiership star will be a Teddy Sheringham and still playing to a high standard at the age of 38+

**Timing your approach**

It is worth noting that as in real-life the circumstances a player is in may affect his sale value drastically.

For instance a player who is happy at a club and whom has a long contract there is likely to be sold only for a premium price, however there are many circumstances in which a players sale value might be lowered – some of these are indicated below:

1. Contract running out. If a player is near the end of his contract then his club may choose to cash in upon him rather than risk him leaving on a bosman.
2. Unhappy player. If a player is unhappy then he’s less likely to perform at a club and thus more likely to be sold, it is however worth noting that if he’s a prima-donna at one club then he might also be one at yours.
3. Club financially insecure. If a club is financially insecure then its more likely they’ll try and raise funds (and reduce their wage bill) by letting players leave.

**Player Contracts**

Player contracts in FMH are somewhat simplified over the PC version and as such contract negotiations and renewals are fairly straight forward.

Remember to ensure you renew the contracts of any key players well before they have six month or less left of their contracts. After this point they are able to negotiate directly with other clubs and leave under the bosman ruling if they so desire.

It obviously necessary to keep an eye on clauses which players might request – especially so for a ‘Big Club Release’ clause. This clause will allow a player to leave your club should a large club make an approach for him. Such a clause
can often leave your team with a gaping hole where your star player once was, so only allow such a clause if you can find no other way to obtain/retain a player's services.

**New Signings**

Give new signings a chance to settle into a side, some players – especially ones from abroad might take a few weeks to get used to the team and the style of football that the club employ.

Just because a player might have a bad first match it doesn’t always mean he’s rubbish – he might just have had an off day or be acclimatising himself to his new surroundings.

The safest way to ascertain if this is the case is to leave the player on the bench for subsequent matches giving him the last 15 minutes of any matches which are either already lost or ‘safe’ in which to impress you.

If he consistency receives a decent rating (7 or above) over 3-4 substitute appearance then he’s probably settling in and looking good, if not then consider letting him go.

**Selling Players**

To sell players in FMH simply place them on the transfer list to advertise the fact that they are available for offer by offering him to other clubs. If you are after a fast sale then it may be necessary to drop the value of the player to entice clubs in.

If you transfer list a player unexpectedly (for example shortly after purchasing a player) then he may take umbrage at this and talk to the media.

Before discarding any unwanted players consider that relationships between players exist much more in FMH than in the original version, if you sell a player who is much loved by his team-mates you might find you have a dressing room revolt on your hands. Warning of this can be found by referring to the ‘Future’ section of each players profile and noting if they have a favourable comment about a player (eg. is honoured to be at the same club as Bobby Zamora).
Training For Success

A simple but flexible training system has been implemented into FMH. This has been implemented in such a way that the user can either ignore it in which case your assistant manager will keep your players training sensibly. However if you decide to take control of training yourself then you can subtly influence the way in which your team develops.

If a player indicates that he is unhappy with his training this normally indicates that he is being over-trained and if you drop the level of his training somewhat he will become happy again.
Unlockables
The FMH game contains a number of unlockables which become available to users after they have undertaken certain achievements. Each of them is listed below.

**A place on the board**
You are offered a place on the board at your club. If accepted then you are immune to sackings, if you decline then the game continues as normal. As with all unlockables you will find this option now available in preferences so you can turn it on (or off) at the start of a new game.

**Requirements:**
To unlock this you have to survive managing the same club for at least 10 seasons and also achieve a number of successes proportionate to the club's starting reputation. For instance, taking over a top club you'd be expected to have won at least one cup, European trophy, and league for instance ... however taking over a minor club winning one division and say 3 promotions might be enough to impress the board enough.

**Sugar Daddy**
If enabled at the start of a game then a sugar daddy is brought in as the chairman at your club. This is the equivalent of 'Abramovic' being the chairman of the club you first choose to manage in a game.
When this is triggered you receive a news item from the board indicating that a Russian businessman is considering investing in the club and asking your opinion as to whether the investment should be allowed or not. If you dissuade the board then nothing happens, if you encourage them to accept the investment then you receive a sugar daddy at your club.

**Requirements:**
Stay at a club over two seasons and also win a certain amount of cup competitions (the size of which is determined by the reputation of your club at the start of the game).

**No transfer windows**
Removes transfer windows from the game so you can make transfer bids at any time during a season.

**Requirements:**
Make a huge profit from transfers during the game (exact amount dependant upon the team you're managing - ie. Chelsea require a larger amount than Brighton for instance).
**International Management**

Allows a manager to select to manage an International team when they start a new game if they desire (in addition (or as an alternative) to managing a club side).

**Requirements:**

Win the an international competition while in charge of an international team.
Final Word
Using the tips I have presented here I have achieved consistent success managing both Brighton and Cambridge City ... bear in mind that the tactics I use may not be suited to all teams, as in real-life the tactics should be determined by the players available not the other way around.