



Jose Mourinho taking a backward step with his journey to Roma

► Portuguese boss has lost his superpowers, and the Italian club might have been his only option



Manager Jose Mourinho has taken a step backwards with AS Roma. Getty

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Jose Mourinho will manage AS Roma for the next three seasons, with the club preparing to present their new coach in some style. I believe it's a backward step in his career.

The thought of the Portuguese managing Roma would have been bizarre a few years ago, but after being sacked by Tottenham, it appears the club from the Italian capital was the best option for a quick return to work.

Despite his remarkable career, in the last five years Mourinho has won zero titles at Tottenham, seen a lacklustre departure from Manchester United, and a similar falling out with Chelsea in his second spell at Stamford Bridge.

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Intriguing, then, that [he took the Roma opportunity only 10 days after leaving Tottenham](#). The club had not even secured European football at that stage, with a place in the European Conference League, the newest and weakest of Uefa's club tournaments, coming right at the end of the season.

Was Mourinho afraid of not being hired by a better club? In my opinion, yes.

Some commentators say that the move is not a step back, but to the side. They compare Tottenham with Roma at a similar level. Not me. Roma are a few rungs below.

Apart from Spurs being in a far more competitive competition in the Premier League, according to the website transfermarkt.com the team has a value of \$810 million. Roma's is worth is \$450m.

Tottenham have Harry Kane, Son Heung-min, Giovanni Lo Celso, Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg in their talented line-up, while Roma have recently emerged Nicolo Zaniolo, established Lorenzo Pellegrini and the top defenders Gianluca Mancini and Marash Kumbulla.

The power of the two squads is not comparable.

Also, Roma were in the Champions League for the last time in 2019, being

eliminated in the round of 16 by Porto. In the same edition of the competition, Tottenham were runners-up to Liverpool.



Mourinho had a strained relationship with Paul Pogba at Manchester United. AFP

For Roma, hiring Mourinho is, as the club maintained, "*un grande passo in avanti*" (a big step forward). I understand the club's words. Mourinho has more titles than the club. He has amassed 25 trophies, while Roma, founded almost 94 years ago, have 15.



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Mourinho is perfect for that purpose. He will be able to play the underdog again, as he has in the past. Nobody gave Porto a chance in the 2004 Champions League, and they won. Similarly with European kings Inter in 2010.

Although Mourinho didn't expect this opportunity, history repeats itself and it will again be a great challenge. He certainly did not expect to return to this point at this stage of his career. But let's be clear: he had no option.

At his last clubs, Mourinho did not show that aura of the 'Special One' that used to characterize him. He was unable to establish a lasting emotional connection with players. Instead, he started personal battles with the likes of Paul Pogba, Luke Shaw, Gareth Bale or Dele Alli.

For Mourinho, this step back was inevitable. In Roma, he has a project like Porto in 2004.

There may not be a concrete reason to explain his decline, but sporting, generational and mental circumstances have seen him lose his superpowers.

Let's wait for what he's going to do in Rome.



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