

Gareth Bale showing glimpses of his dazzling best as he fights to become a Tottenham success story again

Jose Mourinho and the Real Madrid loan star both need a return to form



Tottenham's Gareth Bale in action against West Ham. PA



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There are four decisive months ahead for Gareth Bale after the Wales attacker changed the status of his return ticket to Madrid from confirmed, to back on hold.

Bale went back to Tottenham Hotspur last September on loan from Real to reconnect with his former club but so far things have not been going well and many have suggested they will not extend the stay.

Tottenham fans were certainly expecting more from the 31-year-old.

However, last week he returned to the team for the first leg of the Europa League last-32 clash against Wolfsberger and gave his best performance yet, assisting Son Heung-min for the first goal and scoring the second himself in the 4-1 win.

Then in Sunday's Premier League match against West Ham he played the second 45 minutes and showed his quality by assisting Lucas Moura for the Tottenham goal, making excellent passes and hitting the crossbar.

Bale wasn't a starter because Jose Mourinho believed he is not yet ready for two full matches in three days. But it does seem things are changing.

Bale, more than anyone, wants to lift the mediocrity of these first five months and return to the times when he was considered the best left winger in the world between 2011 and 2013.

Also from a financial standpoint, he has special responsibilities.



Gareth Bale and Liliane. Courtesy Liliane

Bale earns £600,000-a-week from his parent club and Spurs are paying £220,000-a-week of that figure. He stands out on the London club's scale, pocketing around £100,000 more a week than Harry Kane, the big star.

He is often criticised for his lack of commitment, but knowing him – I interviewed him at Real Madrid and we are still in contact – I don't think that is the case.

He is a player who takes longer than others to recover from injuries, having a lower tolerance to the available treatments.

He struggles permanently with injuries to his back, ankle and calf and I know he makes a big effort to get better, and with total commitment.

In my opinion, he has been unfairly criticised.

We all hope his injury problems are over – or at least easing – and that we can see a Bale from his best times in the remainder of the season.

The first person interested in seeing this renewed form is Mourinho. The manager knows that with Bale fit, he can create one of the most lethal attacks in the Premier League alongside Kane and Son.

Mourinho needs all three in great shape if they are to bridge the nine-point gap to fourth place, otherwise it will be a failure for him as well.

For Bale the rest of this season is crucial. He knows he has to triumph at Tottenham, otherwise, returning to Madrid, his life will be difficult with Zinedine Zidane not wanting him back.

With the UK leaving the European Union, the Welshman will have to compete for one of the three extra-community vacancies for teams in La Liga and Real will have Reinier, Takefusa Kubo, Vinícius Jnr, Rodrygo and Eder Militao in the same position.

When he arrived in London last September the club issued a statement, on behalf of the player, saying "I'm Back".

Let's hope that at the end of the season he will be able to make another, saying "I'm staying", rather than "I'm Leaving".

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