

CLIVE BATTY



THE  
**TOP TEN**  
*of everything*  
**Chelsea**

**The Best of the Blues**  
from Azpilicueta to Zola

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# CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	7
Top 10 Rivals . . . . .	9
Top 10 Managers . . . . .	12
Top 10 Thrashings . . . . .	15
Top 10 Exes to Bite Back . . . . .	18
Top 10 Blue Tweeters . . . . .	22
Top 10 Shirt Sponsors . . . . .	23
Top 10 European Blues . . . . .	27
Top 10 Classic Fan Chants . . . . .	31
Top 10 Wins v Manchester United . . . . .	34
Top 10 Emergency Goalkeepers . . . . .	37
Top 10 People Called 'Chelsea' . . . . .	40
Top 10 Second Division Games . . . . .	42
Top 10 Chelsea Hard Men . . . . .	46
Top 10 Chelsea FC Women . . . . .	49
Top 10 Sporting All-Rounders . . . . .	52
Top 10 Unlikely TV Appearances . . . . .	55
Top 10 Nightmare Debuts . . . . .	58
Top 10 European Goals . . . . .	62
Top 10 Jose Mourinho Quotes . . . . .	66
Top 10 Draws . . . . .	67
Top 10 Loan Signings . . . . .	72
Top 10 Premier League-Era Kits . . . . .	76
Top 10 Non-Chelsea Matches at Stamford Bridge . . . . .	79
Top 10 Golden Oldies . . . . .	82
Top 10 Humiliating Defeats . . . . .	85
Top 10 Surprise Chelsea Appearances . . . . .	89
Top 10 Penalty Shoot-outs . . . . .	91
Top 10 Managers' Quotes . . . . .	95
Top 10 Scottish Players . . . . .	97
Top 10 Goal-Filled Thrillers . . . . .	101
Top 10 Player Chants . . . . .	104
Top 10 Premier League Hat-Tricks . . . . .	107
Top 10 One-Goal Wonders . . . . .	111
Top 10 Blue Firsts . . . . .	114
Top 10 African Players . . . . .	117
Top 10 FA Cup Shocks . . . . .	120
Top 10 Player Quotes . . . . .	124

Top 10 Ton-up Goalscorers . . . . .	126
Top 10 Own Goals . . . . .	129
Top 10 Chelsea FC Women Victories . . . . .	132
Top 10 Famous Faces at the Bridge . . . . .	135
Top 10 Matches against National Teams . . . . .	137
Top 10 Blue Bloopers . . . . .	140
Top 10 Foreign Players Signed from English Clubs . . . . .	144
Top 10 Opening-Day Wins . . . . .	148
Top 10 Irish Blues . . . . .	151
Top 10 Opposition Quotes . . . . .	155
Top 10 Captains. . . . .	157
Top 10 Expensive Flops . . . . .	160
Top 10 Seasons to Remember . . . . .	164
Top 10 London Derbies . . . . .	167
Top 10 Chelsea Racehorses . . . . .	171
Top 10 Blue Pundits. . . . .	173
Top 10 Chelsea FC Women Goals . . . . .	176
Top 10 Worst Managers. . . . .	178
Top 10 Songs with 'Chelsea' in the Title . . . . .	182
Top 10 Penalties . . . . .	185
Top 10 Welsh Blues . . . . .	188
Top 10 Amusing Fan Chants . . . . .	192
Top 10 Finals . . . . .	196
Top 10 Tattooed Blues . . . . .	200
Top 10 Two-Time Blues. . . . .	202
Top 10 Comebacks . . . . .	206
Top 10 International Bosses. . . . .	209
Top 10 Seasons to Forget . . . . .	213
Top 10 Nicknames . . . . .	216
Top 10 North and South American Blues. . . . .	218
Top 10 Scandals. . . . .	222
Top 10 Non-League Blues. . . . .	225
Top 10 Chelsea FC Women Quotes. . . . .	228
Top 10 Gut-Wrenching Finals. . . . .	230
Top 10 Penalty Saves . . . . .	233
Top 10 English Blues . . . . .	237
Top 10 Premier League Goals . . . . .	241
Top 10 Worst Premier League-Era Kits . . . . .	244
Top 10 Bizarre Moments . . . . .	247
Top 10 Celebrity Fan Quotes . . . . .	251

# INTRODUCTION

A BIT like the man said in that old Ronseal advert, this is a book which ‘does exactly what it says on the tin’ – or, rather, the cover. Packed full of trivia, facts and stats, *The Top 10 of Everything Chelsea* revisits every aspect of the club’s long and colourful history in dozens of ranked lists which, hopefully, will spark debate and discussion among Blues fans everywhere.

The book features a stellar cast of past and present Chelsea stars, including the best of the British, African, European and South American players who have proudly worn the blue shirt, the great managers who have led the club to domestic and continental silverware, the inspirational skippers from Ron ‘Chopper’ Harris to John Terry, the most prolific strikers from down the decades and the biggest names in the Chelsea Women’s team. It also looks back at the club’s most memorable moments, including the Blues’ greatest finals, the most celebrated London derby victories, the finest Premier League goals scored by the likes of Didier Drogba, Frank Lampard and Gianfranco Zola, and the most gratefully received own goals gifted by the opposition. Additionally, a host of miscellaneous categories rank the club’s best (and worst!) kits, the most popular terrace chants, the most striking Chelsea player tattoos and the bizarre moments on and off the pitch that left supporters scratching their heads.

Blues fans, it must be said, have been rather spoiled in recent years as the club has piled up trophy after trophy.

However, as long-standing supporters like myself will know only too well, Chelsea's history is as much one of pain and disappointment as joy and elation. So, inside these pages, you will also read about the club's most humiliating defeats, the Blues' worst relegation seasons, the players who endured the darkest of nightmare debuts, the scandals that catapulted the club from the back to the front pages and the expensive transfer flops who almost had fans at Stamford Bridge joining in with the away end's taunts of 'What a waste of money!'

At times reading this book, no doubt, you will find yourself nodding along and thinking, 'Yes, I am with the author here; Glenn Hoddle's appearance on *The Masked Singer* was even more of a surprise than Dennis Wise's on *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!* Equally predictably, at other times you may find yourself exploding, 'What idiot wrote this? How on earth can he include Vinnie Jones in a list of "Top 10 Welsh Players"? That clogger couldn't even kick the ball straight ... and he was born in Watford!' All I can say in response is that the selections I have made are my own personal choice, based on 50 years supporting Chelsea, since I first went along to the Bridge with my father one Saturday in January 1971 to see John Hollins, Alan Hudson and co. wallop West Brom 4-1.

Inevitably, as I suggest, you will agree with some of my picks and disagree with many others. I very much hope, though, that you will find *The Top 10 of Everything Chelsea* a fun, informative and thought-provoking read throughout.

**Clive Batty, June 2021**

## TOP 10 RIVALS

As well as having no shortage of London adversaries, Chelsea have a number of other arch-rivals dotted around the country – and even one in Europe!

### 1) Tottenham

Chelsea's intense rivalry with Tottenham goes back at least as far as the 1967 'Cockney Cup Final', which Spurs won 2-1 at Wembley. The Blues, though, have had much the better of things in recent times, leading the north Londoners by 31 wins to seven in the whole of the Premier League era and, incredibly, suffering no defeats at all in any competition between 1990 and 2002. No wonder, then, that Chelsea fans delight in singing 'Can we play you every week?' whenever Tottenham visit the Bridge.

### 2) Manchester United

There was a time in the late 1990s when belting chants of 'Stand up if you hate Man U!' would reverberate around the Bridge at every Chelsea home game. The Mancs are still hated in SW6, but perhaps not quite as much as they were back then. And, who knows, with their fabled 'Red Empire' now looking rather moth-eaten, it may not be long before some more sensitive Blues fans start to feel just a tiny bit sorry for the once all-conquering Red Devils.

### 3) Arsenal

For much of the Premier League era, Chelsea's meetings with Arsenal have been the most significant London derby clashes of the season. But there is nothing new in this. In the 1930s, for instance, the encounters between the Blues and the Gunners were the highlights of both clubs' campaigns (Tottenham were languishing in the Second Division at the time), with a then-Football League record crowd of 82,905

attending Chelsea's 1-1 draw with Arsenal at the Bridge in 1935. Whatever Spurs fans and the media may think, Chelsea v Arsenal is the quintessential London football match.

#### **4) Liverpool**

The Blues' rivalry with the Reds reached a new level in the Noughties, thanks mainly to four high-profile encounters between the clubs in the latter stages of the Champions League – Liverpool emerging triumphant in 2005 and 2007, with Chelsea taking the honours in 2008 and 2009. Fernando Torres' British record £50m transfer from Anfield to Stamford Bridge in 2011 added an extra element to the mix, while wildly differing fan attitudes to Rafa Benitez – who has coached both teams, of course – have made the clubs' meetings even spicier.

#### **5) Leeds United**

Chelsea's rivalry with Leeds goes all the way back to the 1960s, when the swashbuckling Londoners clashed with Don Revie's pragmatic Yorkshiremen in a number of X-rated encounters, the teams' mutual animosity reaching a peak in the epic 1970 FA Cup Final replay at Old Trafford, which the Blues won 2-1. Leeds' decline in the Noughties – partly overseen by former Chelsea chairman Ken Bates, amusingly enough – saw clashes between the two old enemies reduced to a bare minimum, but the Elland Road side's return to the Premier League in 2020 added a new chapter to a classic north-south duel.

#### **6) West Ham**

How Chelsea fans loved it when West Ham hate-figure Frank Lampard scored his 200th goal for the club against the despised East Enders in 2013. Still, the Hammers do have their uses, proving to be quite a useful 'feeder club' for the Blues, with the likes of Lamps, Joe Cole and Glen Johnson

all making the journey from east to west in the Noughties. Nothing new there, either, as it was West Ham who provided Chelsea with their first superstar striker, George ‘Gatling Gun’ Hilsdon, way back in 1906!

### **7) QPR**

In 2001, Rangers beat Chelsea 3-1 at Loftus Road in a match described by one QPR fans’ website as ‘one of QPR’s proudest moments in recent years’. What was this momentous occasion? A League Cup Final? An FA Cup semi-final? Or, maybe, a vital Premier League clash that saved the laughably nicknamed ‘Superhoops’ from the drop? Er, no, it was actually a pre-season friendly. Still, that didn’t stop Rangers fans celebrating afterwards as though they’d won the Champions League. Proof, if any were needed, that the QPR-Chelsea rivalry is felt more keenly in Shepherd’s Bush than on Fulham Broadway.

### **8) Barcelona**

Blues fans can be justly proud that one of their greatest modern rivalries is with European giants Barcelona – for one thing, it shows just how far the club has come in the past two decades. A staggering 14 Champions League matches between the clubs have created a simmering mutual dislike, as these have been encounters full of managerial point-scoring, dodgy refereeing decisions and last-gasp drama best illustrated by Fernando Torres’ breakaway goal in the Nou Camp that took Chelsea to the 2012 Champions League Final.

### **9) Fulham**

Fulham take pride in being London’s oldest football club, being founded way back in 43AD at the time of the Roman invasion of Britain. OK, actually the Cottagers started out in 1879, but as they have won precisely nothing since then

there's no real reason to take them that seriously. And that, pretty much, sums up Chelsea attitudes to Fulham. Yes, they may be the Blues' nearest neighbours but in terms of being a major rival for silverware they simply don't register, with the result that the meeting of the two west London clubs tends to be one of English football's less passionate 'derbies'.

## 10) Millwall

Guess who were the visitors the last time there was fighting amongst fans on the pitch at Stamford Bridge? Yes, it was those charming folk from Millwall, in a fourth-round FA Cup replay in 1995. 'No one likes us!' they love to sing, and they're spot on there. Are any Chelsea fans that bothered that the Blues haven't faced the Lions once since that infamous occasion – not even in a pre-season 'friendly'? No, thought not.

## TOP 10 MANAGERS

Appointed in January 2021, Thomas Tuchel is the 38th man to have sat in the Chelsea dug out since the club was founded in 1905. Here's the pick of the bunch:

### 1) Jose Mourinho

Fresh from winning the Champions League with unfancied Porto in 2004, Jose Mourinho described himself as 'a special one' in his first Chelsea press conference. He lived up to the billing, guiding the Blues to two Premier League titles, two League Cups and the FA Cup before a falling-out with Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich led to his departure from the Bridge three years later. After managing Inter Milan and Real Madrid, Mourinho made a sensational return to west London in the summer of 2013, winning the League Cup and Premier League again two years later before a disastrous

start to the 2015/16 campaign saw him sacked for a second time. It's probably best to gloss over his subsequent spells with Manchester United and Tottenham.

## **2) Carlo Ancelotti**

After leaving AC Milan, with whom he had won the Champions League as both a player and manager, Carlo Ancelotti enjoyed a tremendous start to his Chelsea career, guiding the Blues to the league and cup Double in exhilarating style in his first season, 2009/10. The following campaign, though, was soured by a three-month-long dip in form – or 'bad moment' as the Italian described it in numerous post-match press conferences – and after failing to add more silverware Ancelotti was sacked on the final day of the season.

## **3) Antonio Conte**

A fiery and tactically astute manager who had previously been in charge of Juventus and the Italian national team, Antonio Conte became Chelsea boss in the summer of 2016. With the help of important signings like N'Golo Kante and Marcos Alonso, he transformed a team that had badly underperformed in the previous campaign, leading the Blues to the Premier League title. However, disagreements between club and manager over subsequent recruitment policy cast a shadow over the following season and although the Italian guided the Blues to an FA Cup triumph in May 2018, he was sacked soon afterwards.

## **4) Roberto Di Matteo**

A former Blues midfielder who had scored vital goals in both the 1997 and 2000 FA Cup finals, Roberto Di Matteo returned to the Bridge in the summer of 2011 as new manager Andre Villas-Boas' assistant. When the rookie Portuguese boss was sacked in March 2012, Di Matteo was made caretaker

manager and led the Blues to memorable triumphs in the FA Cup and Champions League. However, it wasn't long before the Italian was shown the door too, following a poor Champions League campaign the following season.

### **5) Dave Sexton**

A thoughtful and studious coach, Sexton guided the Blues to their first-ever FA Cup triumph in 1970 and the European Cup Winners' Cup the following year. However, a talented but occasionally wayward squad tested his sub-par man-management skills to the limit, and he was eventually fired after a disastrous start to the 1974/75 season, which ended with the Blues plummeting into the Second Division.

### **6) Thomas Tuchel**

The former PSG manager replaced club legend Frank Lampard as Blues boss in January 2021 and made an immediate impact, tightening a previously leaky defence, introducing a more tactically astute style of play and improving the form of misfiring strikers Timo Werner and Kai Havertz. Although he suffered the disappointment of seeing his side lose the FA Cup Final to Leicester City, the German was celebrating two weeks later when the Blues defeated Manchester City 1-0 in the Champions League Final in Porto.

### **7) Ted Drake**

The former Arsenal striker famously changed Chelsea's nickname from 'The Pensioners' to 'The Blues' and then led the Londoners to their first-ever league title in 1955 – a totally unexpected success given that much of his reign previously had been spent battling relegation. Over the next few seasons, he introduced a number of promising young players to the team – the so-called 'Drake's Ducklings' included the legendary Jimmy Greaves – before a run of bad results saw him lose his job in 1961.

### **8) Gianluca Vialli**

Appointed player-manager in February 1998 following the surprise dismissal of Ruud Gullit, Gianluca Vialli got off to a great start as Chelsea boss, leading the Blues to triumphs in the League Cup and European Cup Winners' Cup in his first three months in charge. The Italian added the FA Cup in May 2000 but a poor start to the following season amid reports of player discontent resulted in his dismissal just a few months later.

### **9) Tommy Docherty**

The Blues may only have won the League Cup during Tommy Docherty's six-year Chelsea reign, but the Scot's bubbly personality, excellent man-management skills and attack-minded tactical approach ensured that he is remembered with great affection in west London. 'The Doc' also took the Blues to their first Wembley Cup Final in 1967, but a disappointing start to the following campaign combined with an FA ban for misconduct saw him heading for the Bridge exit.

### **10) Ruud Gullit**

The popular choice of the Blues fans to succeed Glenn Hoddle as Chelsea boss, Ruud Gullit took over the reins at Stamford Bridge in May 1996 after an outstanding campaign orchestrating the team on the pitch. His free-flowing side, including exotic continental signings like Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Di Matteo and Frank Leboeuf, claimed the FA Cup in fine style the following year but in February 1998 the Dutchman was sensationally sacked by chairman Ken Bates after failing to agree terms in contract negotiations.

## **TOP 10 THRASHINGS**

The best of the games that the Blues won by seven goals or more:

**1) Chelsea 13 Jeunesse Hautcharage 0, European Cup Winners' Cup first round second leg, 29 September 1971**

In the biggest win in the club's history, Chelsea annihilated Luxembourg minnows Jeunesse Hautcharage and set a new record score for a European tie with a 21-0 aggregate victory over the two legs. Peter Osgood (5) and Tommy Baldwin (3) both notched hat-tricks, while Ron Harris, Alan Hudson, John Hollins, Peter Houseman and David Webb all chipped in with a goal apiece against a ragtag outfit that included a one-armed midfielder and a bespectacled defender.

**2) Chelsea 8 Aston Villa 0, Premier League, 23 December 2012**

The Blues set a new Premier League record when seven different players – Fernando Torres, David Luiz, Branislav Ivanovic, Frank Lampard, Ramires (2), Oscar and Eden Hazard – all found the net against Paul Lambert's hapless Aston Villa side. It would have been 9-0, too – and a new domestic football record win for Chelsea – if young substitute Lucas Piazon hadn't missed a late penalty.

**3) Chelsea 8 Wigan 0, Premier League, 9 May 2010**

The Blues clinched their third Premier League title in some style with an eight-goal rout of ten-man Wigan on the final day of the season. After Nicolas Anelka (2), Frank Lampard and Salomon Kalou had kicked off the party, Didier Drogba helped himself to a 17-minute hat-trick in the second half before Ashley Cole rounded off a memorable victory in the last minute.

**4) Chelsea 9 Worksop Town 1, FA Cup first round, 11 January 1908**

Prolific striker George 'Gatling Gun' Hillsdon hit six goals

– a feat never since matched by a Chelsea player – as the Londoners racked up their biggest-ever victory in the FA Cup against Midland League side Worksop Town.

**5) Chelsea 7 Portsmouth 0, Second Division,  
21 May 1963**

A young Blues side with an average age of just 21 clinched promotion back to the top flight in dramatic style, crushing Portsmouth on a sunny early summer's evening at the Bridge. New acquisition Derek Kevan opened the scoring after just two minutes, and after that it was plain sailing for the Blues with further strikes from Bobby Tambling (4), Frank Blunstone and Terry Venables delighting fans in the near-55,000 crowd.

**6) Chelsea 9 Glossop North End 2, Second  
Division, 1 September 1906**

Nineteen-year-old George Hilsdon enjoyed a tremendous debut after signing from West Ham, rattling in five goals against Glossop North End on the opening day of the 1906/07 season – a campaign that would end with Chelsea winning a first-ever promotion to the top flight.

**7) Chelsea 7 Stoke City 0, Premier League,  
25 April 2010**

Carlo Ancelotti's Double-chasing Blues were heading for a comfortable victory against the Potters thanks to three close-range finishes by Salomon Kalou and a Frank Lampard penalty when they showed their ruthless side, adding three more goals in the final ten minutes. Lampard made it 5-0 with a clever flicked volley, Daniel Sturridge came off the bench to score his first Premier League goal for the Blues and Florent Malouda tapped in number seven with just a minute left to play.