



4. CAPTION:                   After all, I had to win Liverpool a league title.

## **TWO** (5 panels)

Page layout notes: 3 equally spaced panels across the top, which we'll use for a time-lapse. Pages 4 and 5 can evenly take up the rest of the page.

### **Panel 1**

The start of a 3-panel time-lapse across the top of the page. This panel shows me sitting from a side view, staring intently at my laptop screen. I'm completely unobscured in this shot.

Green blurs in the window now as the train barrels through the countryside.

Caption should be at the panel's top.

1. CAPTION:                    Bradford to London is a long trip.

### **Panel 2**

Same shot as before, but one or two people obscure the foreground now.

More green blur in the window.

### **Panel 3**

Same shot again, but now you can barely see me for people.

This caption should be on the panel's bottom.

2. CAPTION:                    Deep down, I knew my luck wouldn't hold.

### **Panel 4**

A wide shot from the front. I'm sinking into my seat a little, and now a guy is sitting beside me (this is Adam, from the character descriptions). He's side-eyeing my laptop.

Blurry green window. Keep this up for any shot the window's in view until I say otherwise!

3. CAPTION:                    I'm highly introverted and socially awkward. With a packed train, I was self-conscious playing my game. I was on the verge of packing up when...

### **Panel 5**

Same shot, but now the guy next to me is looking at me, mouth open, while pointing at my screen.

4. CAPTION:                   ...my worst fears were realised.
5. ADAM:                      Oh hey, sorry, is that the new Football Manager?
6. CAPTION:                   A stranger started talking to me.

## **THREE** (7 panels)

### **Panel 1**

Adam and I are talking, we're making hand motions to signal this.

These shots might be quite samey, so feel free to play with camera perspective here.

1. CAPTION:                   Despite my social anxiety, we introduced ourselves (he was Adam, a Sheffield United fan travelling to see his girlfriend) and chatted about Football Manager's new features.
2. ANDY:                        It's got a 3D match engine now.
3. ADAM:                        Oh, I'm old school. I preferred the text commentary!

### **Panel 2**

We get a sepia flashback shot now, with Adam and 2 other buddies at a kitchen table, clinking beers. There are laptops in front of all three of them and an open crate of beers on the table.

4. CAPTION:                    He explained how he and his college buddies would play multiplayer seasons for entire weekends. It's a story I've heard from countless Football Manager fans.

### **Panel 3**

Back to a shot of us from the front. I'm playing the game again, but now Adam's fully absorbed in watching my screen, arms folded.

5. CAPTION:                    I eventually returned to my game, but Adam had become fully absorbed in my progress.

### **Panel 4**

Now he's pointing at my screen and talking, and I'm stroking my beard, Obi-Wan style, listening intently.

6. CAPTION:                    Then he started to offer advice.

### **Panel 5**

A look at the player profile on the laptop's screen. See Ref image 3. Don't stress about mimicking these screens exactly, loose imitation and less detail is fine.

7. CAPTION:                    He suggested regions to scout and stars that would

suit my tactics.

8. ADAM: Let's see who's available from Chile!

**Panel 6**

A look at the tactics page on the laptop screen now. See Ref image 4.

9. CAPTION: During matches, he'd help spot weak points in my formations and talk impact substitutions.

10. ADAM: I reckon the back four needs more protection...

11. ANDY: You're absolutely right!

**Panel 7**

We're cheering at the laptop now, arms in the air and everything!

12. CAPTION: He'd even started cheering the goals. I usually hate backseat gamers, but suddenly I realised...

## **FOUR** (2 panels)

### **Panel 1**

Big fantasy panel. Adam and I are no longer sat on a train. We're stood in the technical area of a football stadium, dugout behind us. I'm in a suit, red tie, pointing and yelling towards the pitch. Adam's stood next to me in a tracksuit, holding a clipboard.

A few players are mid-run in the foreground. One team in red, one in blue.

1. CAPTION: Adam had become my assistant manager.

### **Panel 2**

Back to a wide panel of the train as we're playing. A mass of people in blue shirts behind us is entering the train through the door behind us. See Ref image 6 for how the shirts would look.

Still image in the window. A red-brick station visible through it.

2. CAPTION: Just as I wondered whether it'd be weird to say this out loud, the journey got even stranger.

**FIVE** (4 panels)**Panel 1**

The train is moving again, the carriage is crowded with blue shirts. One of them is stood behind our seat and is nudging his mate and pointing at my screen.

Blurred window again as the train's moving.

1. CAPTION:                   At a stop just before Leicester, a group of Leicester City fans boarded the train. They were travelling south for an away game.

2. LEICESTER CITY       HEY! THIS LAD'S PLAYING FOOTBALL MANAGER!  
FANS:

**Panel 2**

Back to a front-facing shot of us in front of the laptop. I've sunken down into my seat, red-faced.

3. CAPTION:                   If I felt out of my social depth before, I was in my own personal hell now.

**Panel 3**

Similar shot again, but 2 Leicester City fans stand over the back of our seats, another to the side. Mine and Adam's heads are turned to speak to them.

4. CAPTION:                   They bombarded me with more questions than Adam had.

5. LEICESTER CITY       Who are you playing as?!  
FANS:

6. LEICESTER CITY       Is that who you support?!  
FANS:

7. LEICESTER CITY       Have you kept that diving bastard?!\*  
FANS:

8. EDITOR'S NOTE:       \*They were referring to Fernando Torres, who a week  
(IN THE GUTTER UNDER or so before was accused of 'simulation' to win a  
THE PANEL)               penalty for Liverpool.

**Panel 4**

Similar shot to when Adam and I were celebrating goals, but now with 3 Leicester City fans celebrating too.

9. CAPTION:                      Soon enough, the Leicester fans interested in my game were cheering my team's goals too.

## **SIX** (3 panels)

This page starts with a caption ABOVE the panels.

1. CAPTION:                    So, let's break this down. I'd started the journey hoping to mind my own business and play my game in peace.

### **Panel 1**

Back to the fantasy panel. Adam and I are pitch-side again, back in the dugout, this time with our backs to the camera. We're in the same clothes as the last fantasy shot, and we're looking at a clipboard that mimics the FM tactics screen (green pitch, red dots), while a football match plays out in front of us.

See Ref image 7 for the viewpoint from the stadium sideline.

2. CAPTION:                    Instead, I'd somehow acquired a real-life assistant manager...

### **Panel 2**

We now have the Leicester City fans in the stadium's crowd, they've got scarves in the air and are cheering. They're still wearing their blue shirts, but they're in a sea of Liverpool red.

3. CAPTION:                    ...and a rowdy, vocal fanbase.

### **Panel 3**

A shot of the laptop, where a match is on the screen, with silhouettes of heads and hands in the foreground.

See Ref image 8 for an example of the match engine.

4. CAPTION:                    Honestly, I was perplexed. Introverts are not cut out for this, but it was hard not to enjoy it in the moment.

## **SEVEN** (4 panels)

### **Panel 1**

Surreal shot now. A top-down view of a football stadium, a train speeds across the pitch, each end of the stadium has a train tunnel.

1. CAPTION: But, moments are short by definition. Just like the peace I'd had at the journey's start, this surreal situation wasn't to last.
2. SFX: Train horn sounds

### **Panel 2**

Leicester City fans are departing the now-still train through the door behind our seat. Adam and I are both looking and waving.

Grey train station through the window.

3. CAPTION: As the train approached London, the Leicester fans departed first.
4. ANDY: Good luck with the match!
5. EDITOR'S NOTE: \*Liverpool and Leicester City fans have a very different relationship in today's political climate. It's a shame.  
(IN THE GUTTER UNDER THE PANEL)

### **Panel 3**

Adam now walking off the train, waving. I'm looking up and behind to wave back.

A different train station is seen through the window.

6. CAPTION: Adam also departed on London's outskirts, having helped keep my virtual Liverpool side in the title race.
7. ADAM: Hope you win the league!

### **Panel 4**

The train's emptyish again, and I'm packing up my laptop.

8. CAPTION: I pondered the strange football microcosm that had just happened in this carriage.

## **EIGHT** (3 panels)

### **Panel 1**

PoV from outside the train. In the foreground, a few kids happily play football in a playground as the train whizzes past in the background.

1. CAPTION:                    They say a wonderful thing about football is that if you gathered people from different walks of life and gave them a ball, they'd find a way to communicate.

### **Panel 2**

Me, head on one hand, looking out the window.

2. CAPTION:                    For a brief, bizarre time, Football Manager - a data-driven football simulation - brought a handful of people together on this train in the same way.

### **Panel 3**

A bird's eye view of the train heading into London proper now. See Ref images 9 & 10. 9 has a football stadium in view, which seems fitting. 10 is the actual route the train would have been on (I think the stadium shot fits the theme better).

3. CAPTION:                    The beautiful game, indeed.
4. CAPTION:                    End.