

## **Tuchel or not to Tuchel - that is the question.**

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Thomas Tuchel's appointment as the next England manager is an interesting topic; he is probably the most divisive manager England has had in a long time.

Tuchel was signed in as the new manager on October 8th, 2024, a contract which would see him commence on the 1st of January 2025. This is unusual as under normal circumstances, Tuchel would have taken control of the England team upon signing the contract, rather than a delayed start. Perhaps people are offended by this, because exemptions are being made that other managers would not receive.

Having researched opinions on Tuchel, the majority of people believe that despite the fact he is German, he is genuinely the best man for the job - the grand task of winning England's men's team its first trophy since 1966, which is now almost 60 years ago.

One article by The Week stated it is ridiculous to ask questions such as "Will Tuchel sing the national anthem?" This was deemed absurd, as the article points out that our current monarch is more German than English. The speculations stem from the implicit rivalry between England and Germany, a trigger rooted in history. Yet, this should not impact the decision of our new manager.

This argument is further corroborated by YouGov, who noted that 64 percent of England fans thought that Tuchel's appointment was a good decision, based upon a poll they had recently completed. This viewpoint is valid, as why should the nationality of a manager matter? For example, England has already had a Swedish and an Italian manager (Sven Eriksson and Fabio Capello respectively). Sven Eriksson took England from 17th place in the FIFA World Rankings to 5th in the span of 5 years. Who is to say that Tuchel cannot take England to win the world cup?

However, others hold the opinion that having an international manager is a bad idea and believe that an English manager should be from England. An article by the Daily Mail believed that Tuchel's signing was a "dark day for English Football". There is an implication that 'English' football is coming to an end, the irony being that most Premier League teams are managed by internationals - such as Pep Guardiola for Manchester City and Mikel Arteta for Arsenal.

Further research by YouGov showed that only 8 percent of the population are against Tuchel, with 17 percent unsure if the appointment was a good or bad decision. This shows

that according to the polls, more people are in favour of Tuchel. Those who call for a “homegrown choice” (The Week) are thus in the minority. When you consider that Tuchel has won more silverware than the ‘homegrown choices’ - having won a Champions League with Chelsea and a domestic quadruple with PSG, it weakens the argument.

His predecessor Southgate’s managerial time was characterised by some as a partial success. Southgate helped England reach the World Cup semi final, and two Euros finals. Much like previous managers, Southgate came close but there was no cigar in these competitions. He has been accused by some as playing a rigid and inflexible style of football in the 2024 Euros final, ultimately resulting in a 2 -1 loss to Spain. If we compare this to Tuchel’s proven track-record, we see that while both men were able to lead their teams to the final stages of competitions, Tuchel has the capability to secure victory.

If we analyse the previous performances of England in the Euros, a pattern emerges of snatched moments to score, rather than co-ordinated team efforts. Bellingham’s overhead kick scored in the final moments of the England-Slovakia game, secured us an extra 30 minutes to then seize the win. It could be argued that relying on star players to carry us through each stage undermines the potential of the team as a whole.

To win in future competitions, we should consider a more offensive style of football, one which sees us scoring more goals in one match rather than holding back and parking the bus. Tuchel’s managerial style might help England win because he is not afraid to play an attacking style of football. He has experience with some of the England players before, knowing their strengths and weaknesses on the pitch.

Will England’s team be better under Tuchel? Is it really right to question an international manager based on his nationality? The answer, in my opinion, is that nationality is not a factor to consider but rather the experience and talent a manager could provide. England’s team will have Tuchel’s new perspective to approach the World Cup, and the trophy potentially closer than ever.