

# FOOTBALL MANAGER FOR THE SINCLAIR QL

## HISTORY

When I bought the QL, thinking about what kind of program I could create, my first idea was a QL version of the great Football Manager game by Kevin Toms.

It remained an idea until I bought a copy of the Giga Basic superbasic extension. Finally I had the instrument to realize the simulation of the game, like the original game.

Things weren't that simple and I soon realized the limitations of that extension:

- Not compilable
- Not easy
- Not Minerva compatible (when I upgraded to it)

Another problem was the memory of the machine, not sufficient to handle the program, the extension and my unrefined programmer skills.

So the project stayed in the drawer for a long time, until I could buy a 256 kbyte ram extension.

Despite the problems created by the infamous microdrives, I managed to develop the bulk of the program. It worked! But there were dozens and dozens of things to review, improve and correct. Due to other ideas and projects, even not related to the QL, I lost interest in developing the game and so the project returned to the drawer, unfinished. In all the following years I never lost interest in QL and continued to use it, almost every day, as I still do (I'm sixty years old), but always for small things.

Work and family did not help to find more time for QL.

But in the last few years the passion for the black beast has come back with a lot of power and so I decided to dust off the old project and complete the game, and so I did.

## THE GAME

I am Italian and therefore the game, unlike Kevin's version, is based on the Italian league. It starts from the fourth series, choosing your favorite team and trying to take it to the highest goals. There is everything that was in the original game plus some new features:

- The winner of the third series tournament participates in the Anglo-Italian tournament. Raise your hand whoever remembers this among English friends (I told you, I'm old).
- The winner of the second series tournament participates in the Mitropa Cup (when I developed the game it still existed).
- By participating in the first series tournament you access the current cups, Europe League and Champions Cup.
- At each round it is possible to consult the ranking and all the matches of the day.

For simplicity, each league is structured in 18 teams, this is not realistic but after all it is a game; the first three are promoted to the next series, the last three are relegated to the previous series. There are only the first leg matches.

The economic income is that of the original game plus income from the sponsor, merchandise and prize at the end of the season and television income starting from the third series. The player market is like the original game.

The list of players and teams is updated for 2020. I am committed to providing updated versions every year, if you like the game.

## WHY Q-EMULATOR ?

Although I find Daniele's emulator really great, and for some things I plan to do I will need the features of Marcel's equally excellent QPC2, I like more to work with QL and related hardware or Q68 (thanks Peter). However it happened that some time ago I updated my SGC equipped QL with Marcel's fabulous QL-SD card. Unfortunately it only works with Minerva rom, therefore incompatible with GIGA-BASIC. I then finished the development with the Q-emulator. While doing this I asked myself: - "Why not take advantage of the QLSS implemented by Daniele?" -. So now the game has a theme song, competition anthems, and stadium effects.

## CONTROLS

The program does not take advantage of the PE environment, and then the game is controlled via the keyboard. The style of the controls is that of the original game. For example (see figure):



The only noteworthy difference is illustrated in the picture below:

Role	P = ready to play Name	Number	Skill	Energy	i = injured Value	Pos.
G	Fontana	3	3	16	600.000	P 0
G	Safarikas	0	3	17	600.000	P 1
D	Ferrante	8	5	4	1.000.000	P 2
D	Severi	9	3	18	600.000	P 3
D	Grillo	10	1	6	200.000	P 4
C	Ciko	23	2	18	400.000	P 5
C	Gagliardi	24	3	10	600.000	P 6
C	Roselli	25	5	17	1.000.000	P 7
C	Picasso	26	1	7	200.000	P 8
A	Montante	46	3	14	600.000	P 9
A	Stronati	47	4	8	800.000	P 10
A	Lazzaro	48	5	19	1.000.000	P 11
A	Cappai	49	2	16	400.000	P 12

Player put up for sale ? (99 to continue) Num. 26 Pos. 8

When choosing a player to sell, you need to specify two parameters:

Number

Position

After the initial theme song it is possible to disable the stadium effects, if they are annoying, load an old game or start a new one. If you choose a new game some data are required, such as the color of the team (red or cyan), the name of the coach. Then you have to choose the team to lead and after that you get to the actual game menu (see figure below).

Obtain a loan	-----> (1)
Change team or players names	-----> (2)
Save game	-----> (3)
Print score etc.	-----> (4)
Sell or list your players	-----> (5)
Change your skill level	-----> (6)
Pay off loan	-----> (7)
Press <SPACE> to play	

It should be noted that thanks to menu item number 2 it is possible to recreate a non-Italian championship, even if there would remain the problem of the national cup, which cannot be

replaced, if not by changing the executable. In this regard, see the **SOURCE PROGRAMS** section. As for the choice of skill level, it is initially recommended not to exceed the good level, which however already grants a certain difficulty and balance of play.

## **GAMEPLAY**

The playability is, in my opinion, good. The championships are quite difficult, but not impossible to win, except when you are unable to build a valid team, which is not very easy.

A tip: the number of actions made available to each team during the simulation is proportional to the sum of the energy value plus the midfield value. The higher the attack factor and the more accurately the opponent's goal is framed, the higher the defense factor and the more sprites will be present on the screen to counter your opponent. So try to maximize these factors. Of course, as in reality, the case plays its part, so don't take anything for granted.

## **SOURCE PROGRAMS**

The program is divided into two parts. This was done for the initial memory problems. One part, **PARTE\_TASK**, manages the whole game and is compiled, the other part manages only the animation of the game and is written in superbasic, **PARTE\_BASIC**. The two parts communicate with each other through the **SET** and **ALTER** instruction set of the DIY toolkit **VOL U** (see the program **SETTA**).

**PARTE\_TASK** is compiled with **TURBO** and generates the **TASK\_turbo** executable.

The animation part is a bit slow in **Q-emulator**, better with **QL** and **SGC**. Everything the program needs to work is contained within the provided file, with the exception of Toolkit II, which must be present. The stadium effects are generated by the **SoundServer** program running in the background. It is an executable obtained from the basic program **SOTTOFONDO**.

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However I fear that working changes to the **PARTE\_BASIC** program will be difficult to make due to the tightness of the code. I myself have had serious difficulties understanding the code after many years. I have to admit that this is not well written code.

The **PARTE\_TASK** program is more understandable.

## **KNOWN BUGS**

1) Sometimes during the animation the ball hits a sprite and instead of being kicked by it the ball jumps to another sprite. Despite all my efforts I have not been able to eliminate it. Perhaps the routine that tests for collisions between sprites (**COLLISION**) doesn't work just fine.

2) Sometimes when a defender who kicks the ball hits his goalkeeper in front of him, a **SPRITE DOESN'T EXISTS** error occurs and the program stops with a message like **8850 NOT COMPLETE**. this can be remedied by typing a **GOTO 8860**, ie **GOTO** the next line.

3) Other minor errors that do not stop the program but that are annoying. Fortunately, they are infrequent.