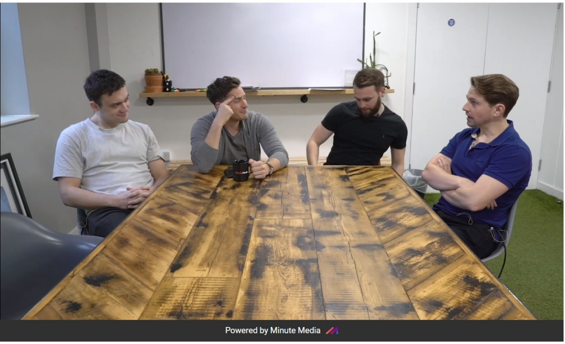

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Toulon Tournament: 8 Starlets Set for Breakout 2019/20 Seasons

By Daniel Gendein
04 JUN 2019

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The 2019 Toulon Tournament is an international competition held every year in the Provence region of France, traditionally consisting of Under-22 national team squads.

In this edition of the competition, Under-22 teams will be competing, although France, Portugal, England and Republic of Ireland will be fielding Under-18, Under-19, Under-20 and Under-21 sides, respectively. With all of the young talent on display in France, there are bound to be a few youngsters who break out and make a name for themselves in the tournament. Former stars of the competition include Thierry Henry (1997), James Rodriguez (2011) and Ruben Loftus-Cheek (2016).

Let's take a look at eight youngsters you need to keep an eye on.

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Paulinho

Country: Brazil
Club: Bayer Leverkusen

At only 18 years old, Paulinho is already taking some serious strides in his career, making 21 appearances for Leverkusen in 2018/19 and even chipping in a goal in the Europa League.

The Brazilian winger is full of tricks and loves running at opposing defences to make the back-four extremely uncomfortable. Paulinho made the move from his home country to Germany back in 2018 after the Bundesliga side shelled out approximately £16m for his services.

Reece James

Country: England
Club: Wigan Athletic

After winning Wigan Athletic's Player of the Year award it may be tough to call Reece James a potential breakout star. Still just 19 years old, James looks poised to replace Cesar Azpilicueta at Chelsea's right-back spot when the Spaniard decides it's time for him to hang up his boots.

James didn't appear in England's 2-1 defeat to Japan in the first match of the competition but when he gets on the pitch he will cause problems for opposing teams with accurate crossing and solid defending.

Eduardo Aguirre

Country: Mexico
Club: Santos Laguna

While Mexico elected to send last season's tournament MVP Diego Lainez to play in the Under-20 World Cup in Poland, 2018's top goalscorer Eduardo Aguirre will be making his second appearance in as many years.

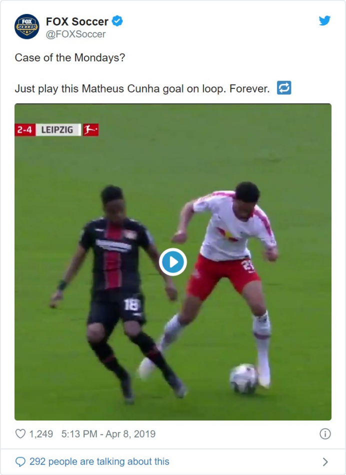
Aguirre scored an eye-catching seven goals in last year's competition, scoring four goals more than everyone else to win the golden boot. In the semi-finals against Turkey last year, the 20-year-old Mexican international scored a hattrick to propel his side into the final against England.

Matheus Cunha

Country: Brazil
Club: RB Leipzig

20-year-old Brazilian forward Matheus Cunha is already making waves in the Bundesliga with RB Leipzig. Bought for approximately £13m back in 2018, Cunha made 39 appearances in all competitions for the German side, bagging nine goals and an assist.

Cunha possesses a ridiculous amount of pace and can easily skip by most of the defenders he comes up against. The 20-year-old showed off his skills by scoring one of the goals of the season against Leverkusen.



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Tatsuya Ito

Country: Japan
Club: Hamburger SV

Tatsuya Ito is a tricky left-winger for Hamburger SV in the Bundesliga 2 and has already managed to break into the first team. The 21-year-old started his country's first game of the tournament, in which they beat England 2-1.

While Ito still has a way to go to become a star in Europe, he currently represents one of Japan's many young talents coming through the ranks.

Arthur Zagre

Country: France
Club: Paris Saint-Germain

Host nation France elected to go with just Under-18 eligible players for this season's competition, giving some of their young prospects a chance to impress. Arthur Zagre has been coming through the ranks at PSG since 2013, and at the age of just 17 made the bench for three senior Ligue 1 games late in the season.

Zagre was an unused substitute for the French in their first match against Qatar but given time at his preferred left-back spot, the 17-year-old is sure to shine amongst his peers.

Joe Willock

Country: England
Club: Arsenal

19-year-old midfielder Joe Willock is one of the most exciting young talents coming through the Arsenal system. Willock played in three Europa League matches for the Gunners this season, including the final against Premier League rivals Chelsea.

If Willock can make a solid impression throughout this tournament, he could become a more regular feature in the Arsenal lineup next season.

Wendel

Country: Brazil
Club: Sporting CP

Wendel left his home country of Brazil to test himself in Portugal in 2018, leaving Fluminense to join Sporting CP for around £6.5m. In Brazil's first match of the competition, the 21-year-old came on for the final 25 minutes of the match, scoring his side's third goal in the 85th minute.

After an impressive three-assist display against Qarabag in the Europa League back in November, Wendel was brought into the first-team squad for the remainder of the campaign, appearing in all but one of Sporting's final 20 matches.

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