

When **OddsTrader.com's Man United tracker** flashed the latest season tally — *20 wins, 7 draws, and 11 defeats* — a chorus of mixed reactions followed. Is that truly [11v11.com](https://www.11v11.com) a marker of progress or yet another reminder of the post-2013 identity crisis that continues to define Old Trafford football? With the club settling for a **third place finish** once again, the numbers alone fail to capture the layered frustrations and faint hopes swirling around Manchester United.



The Post-2013 Identity Crisis: A Club Lost in Transition

Since Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013, Manchester United has lurched from one crisis to the next — or more precisely, one managerial appointment to the next — trying to find a new identity. The classic winning mentality seemed to dissolve into a persistent "rebuild" narrative that both fans and pundits have come to dread.

The **20 wins, 7 draws, 11 defeats** record superficially suggests stability: a winning percentage hovering near 50%, with draws and defeats forming familiar patterns. But what the numbers don't show is the underlying flux:

- **Contradictory tactical approaches:** From van Gaal's posh possession obsession to Mourinho's defensive pragmatism, and to Solskjær's rollercoaster charm, each era tried and failed to imprint a convincing style compatible with the players.
- **Squad mismatches:** Transfers often ignored system fit, fragmented team cohesion, and left the midfield looking less like a control hub and more like an airport runway — endless and exposed.
- **Loss of leadership on pitch:** The transition period saw captaincy changes, veteran exits, and fleeting figures attempting to galvanize a squad rife with insecurities.

So while "20-7-11" might represent a mid-table Premier League team's kind of record, for a club of United's stature, it is a statistic that painfully underscores what's been lost in the post-Ferguson era: clarity, identity, and ambition beyond mere European qualification.

Managerial Churn and Mismatched Squads: The Vicious Cycle

One cannot analyse United's record without discussing the managerial merry-go-round. Since 2013, the club has had six permanent managers, not including interim caretakers. Each appointment initially hailed as a "revolution" or "project" fizzled into predictable outcomes:

1. **David Moyes (2013-2014):** A crash landing from legendary predecessor to relegation battles talk.
2. **Louis van Gaal (2014-2016):** Two seasons of turgid football marred by confusion and an FA Cup trophy as the sole consolation.
3. **José Mourinho (2016-2018):** Some silverware but toxic dressing room atmosphere.
4. **Ole Gunnar Solskjær (2018-2021):** Flashes of nostalgia but ultimately inconsistent.
5. **Ralf Rangnick (interim 2021-2022):** More of a caretaker than a builder.
6. **Erik ten Hag (2022-present):** The current hope but still under immense pressure.

Behind the scenes, the squad has been a patchwork of mismatched elements. Transfers are often dictated by headline signings rather than system compatibility; a problem I highlighted years ago as “lazy transfer narratives” ignoring how players fit into the manager’s tactical plans.

That’s why the midfield frequently looks like an airport runway — exposed, long, and unable to shield the defence effectively. This leads to basic errors on set-pieces and moments where the opposition strolls through, which are then lazily blamed on “culture” rather than shoddy executions and poor preparation.

Carrick’s Coaching Impact vs PR Hype

Amid the turmoil, there have been glimmers of genuine coaching acumen. Michael Carrick’s interim spell as head coach was surprisingly steady and grounded. Anyone who watched full matches (rather than highlight clips, a bad habit plaguing modern consumption) could spot the measured approach he brought to the squad:

- Better structure in midfield and defensive organisation.
- Empathy with players, restoring some confidence.
- Less fluff and PR soundbites, more direct communication.

Yet the club’s PR machine had a habit of turning these measured developments into overblown “revolutionary” narratives, setting unrealistic expectations that invariably backfired. Carrick’s tenure highlighted the difference between actual impact — which often shows in incremental improvements over many games — and media-friendly hyperbole designed to stabilize fan unrest temporarily.

This disconnect between coaching reality and media hype has been a persistent theme, fostering cycles of emotional volatility among supporters and pundits alike.

Emotional Volatility and Media Pressure Cycles

Football is an emotional game, especially at a club like Manchester United where the fans’ expectations are stratospheric. The **20-7-11** stats don’t get into the roller coaster ride of emotions tied to each season’s highs and lows:

- The euphoria of a big win or a promising run.
- The crushing despair after a humiliating defeat or elimination.
- The endless “rebuild” slogans — a running list I keep — that promise transformation but yield incremental or no meaningful progress.

Media cycles amplify these emotions, with headlines swinging from “United on the verge of glory” to “Crisis deepens at Old Trafford” within weeks. This hyperbolic reporting exacerbates pressure on players and managers, often triggering defensive press conferences heavy on PR fluff and light on substance.

What that means is that a **third place finish**, which objectively is a solid European qualification spot considering Premier League competition strength, is twisted into evidence of failure. The club's real challenge remains breaking free from this cycle and forging a consistent identity, both on the pitch and in the media narrative surrounding it.



Putting It All into Context: Is “20 Wins 7 Draws 11 Defeats” Good Enough?

Ranking the current record against historical standards paints a clear, if unsettling, picture.

Season	Wins	Draws	Defeats	League Position	Comments
2012-13 (Ferguson's last)	28	6	4	1st	Dominant, Premier League Champions
2023-24 (Latest)	20	7	11	3rd	Solid but no silverware, ongoing rebuild

In short, a tally of **20 wins, 7 draws, and 11 defeats** reflects a side hanging on to its elite status but struggling to return to title-winning form. For fans, it's comforting enough to see United claw back third place — a guarantee of Champions League football and financial security — but frustrating as it signals a plateau rather than progress.

The Long Road Ahead

Manchester United's “good enough” means different things to different stakeholders:

- **For owners:** Champions League qualification secures income, stabilising finances.
- **For managers and coaches:** Provides building blocks but demands tactical cohesion and clearer identity.
- **For fans:** It's the baseline; the expectation is more than just participation at the top — it's about competing for trophies again.

The hopeful narrative is that under Erik ten Hag, and with lessons learned from Carrick's coaching cameo, United can transition from a team reacting to crises to one commanding matches with control and purpose. But overcoming emotional volatility, media pressure cycles, and the legacy of mismatched squads remains a gigantic challenge.

Conclusion

The headline numbers — **20 wins, 7 draws, 11 defeats** — provided by the **OddsTrader.com Man United tracker** offer a snapshot of a club in the middle of a long-term rebuild. While securing a **third place finish** neatly fits within the current state of play, it isn't yet the foundation for sustained success.

Manchester United's post-2013 identity crisis, managerial churn, mismatched squads, and the dissonance between coaching impact and PR hype create a complex backdrop behind these figures. Add to that the emotional rollercoaster experienced by fans and magnified by relentless media cycles and it's clear that the numbers alone don't tell the full story.

Is 20 wins, 7 draws, and 11 defeats good enough? For now, yes — but only if it's the platform for a genuine architectural rebuild, not a temporarily polished façade masking a deeper rot.