

# McClaren loses numbers game

With the nation digesting the news that Steve McClaren has been sacked as England head coach, now is the time to look at his dismal reign in closer depth. A settled team is often key to a manager's success and whether through choice or injury, McClaren tinkered with the line-up to a tremendous degree

When McClaren became manager his preferred XI was fairly obvious, particularly after discarding former captain David Beckham and pushing Steven Gerrard out to the right wing. But as the table below shows, only two of these 11 players, Paul Robinson and Gerrard, featured in more than ten of the European Championship qualifiers

Player	Euro qualifier starts
<b>Paul Robinson</b>	<b>11</b>
Gary Neville	2
<b>Ashley Cole</b>	<b>8</b>
John Terry	9
<b>Rio Ferdinand</b>	<b>8</b>
Owen Hargreaves	4
<b>Steven Gerrard</b>	<b>11</b>
Frank Lampard	7
<b>Joe Cole</b>	<b>6</b>
Wayne Rooney	6
<b>Michael Owen</b>	<b>5</b>

All in all, McClaren used an astonishing 37 players in the 12 qualifying matches, with the likes of Stewart Downing and Jermain Defoe clocking up 15 appearances between them

Strike partnerships were a further problem for McClaren as he was regularly denied men such as Michael Owen because of injury. In total the head coach used seven different striker combinations in the 12 qualifying games, so a lack of consistency was perhaps unsurprising

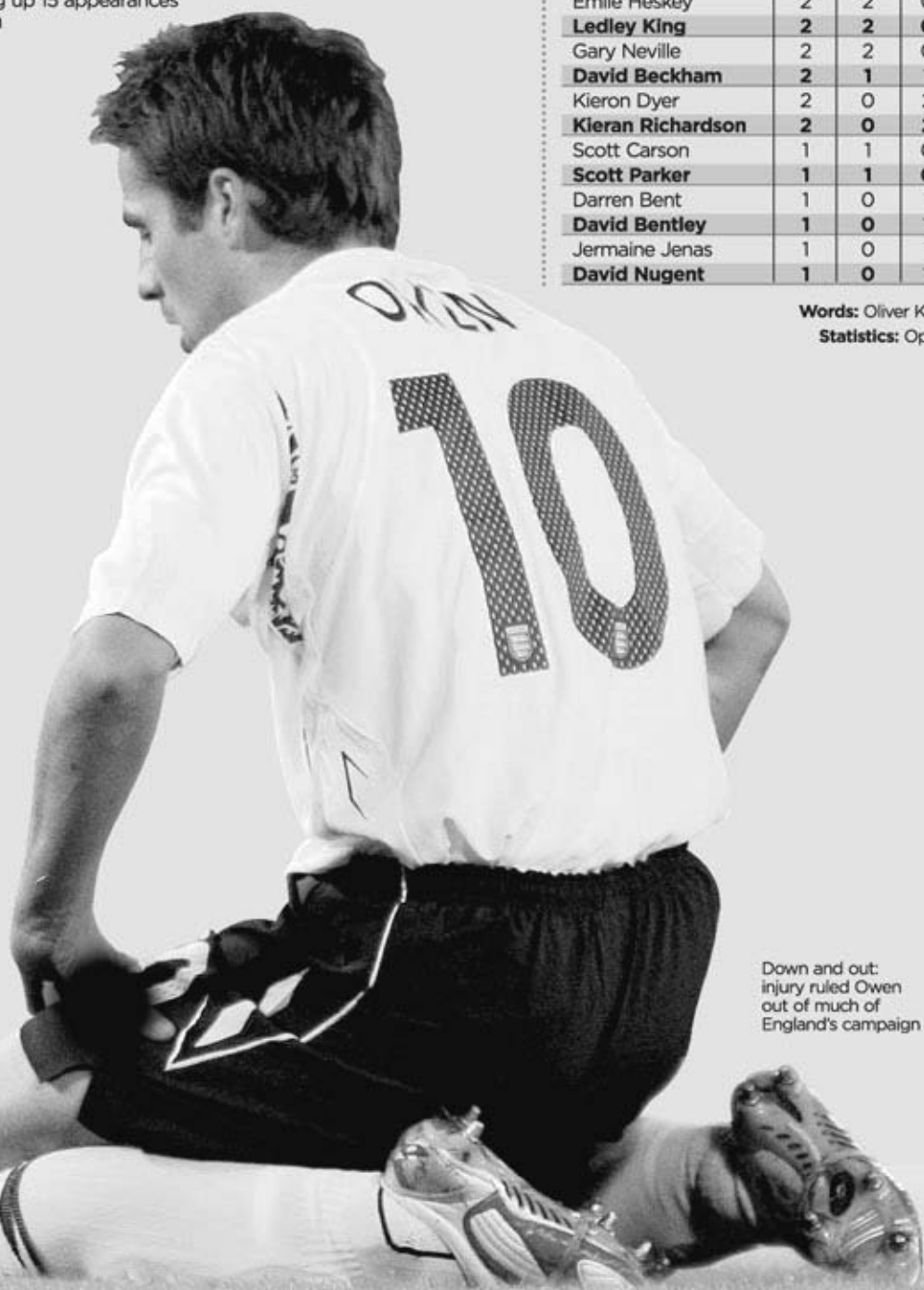
## Strikers in qualifying games

<b>Owen &amp; Rooney</b>	<b>2</b>
Owen & Heskey	2
<b>Defoe &amp; Crouch</b>	<b>2</b>
Crouch & Rooney	2
<b>Rooney &amp; Johnson</b>	<b>2</b>
Owen & Crouch	1
<b>Crouch</b>	<b>1</b>

Arguably England's best displays came when Owen and Emile Heskey were partnered up front, so perhaps the team were doomed from the very moment Heskey fractured his foot playing for Wigan Athletic against Fulham in September. The nation undone by a metatarsal injury once more - some things never change

	Appearances		Substitute
	Starts		
<b>Steven Gerrard</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>
Paul Robinson	11	11	0
<b>John Terry</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
Frank Lampard	9	7	2
<b>Ashley Cole</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
Rio Ferdinand	8	8	0
<b>Peter Crouch</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
Stewart Downing	8	4	4
<b>Micah Richards</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
Shaun Wright-Phillips	7	5	2
<b>Jermain Defoe</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
Joe Cole	6	6	0
<b>Wayne Rooney</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Philip Neville	6	3	3
<b>Gareth Barry</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Michael Owen	5	5	0
<b>Andrew Johnson</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Owen Hargreaves	4	4	0
<b>Aaron Lennon</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Sol Campbell	3	3	0
<b>Michael Carrick</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Joleon Lescott	3	2	1
<b>Wayne Bridge</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Wes Brown	2	2	0
<b>Jamie Carragher</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Emile Heskey	2	2	0
<b>Ledley King</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Gary Neville	2	2	0
<b>David Beckham</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Kieron Dyer	2	0	2
<b>Kieran Richardson</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
Scott Carson	1	1	0
<b>Scott Parker</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Darren Bent	1	0	1
<b>David Bentley</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Jermaine Jenas	1	0	1
<b>David Nugent</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Words: Oliver Kay  
Statistics: Opta



Down and out: injury ruled Owen out of much of England's campaign