

# Tired legs or tired excuse: Is Russian running on empty?

Roman Pavlyuchenko, right, is said to have started slowly at Tottenham Hotspur partly because he spent his summer playing in the Russian league and at Euro 2008, but it is misleading to claim that the

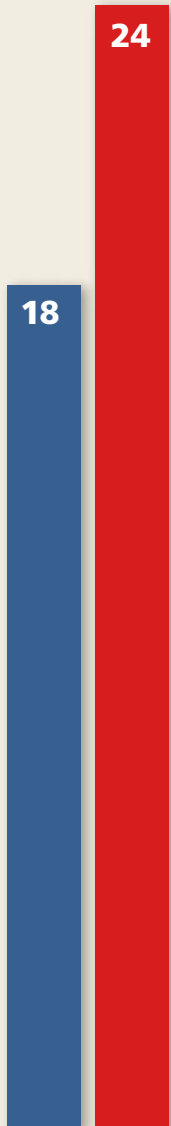
former Spartak Moscow forward has endured an unduly heavy workload. Fernando Torres, inset, the Liverpool and Spain striker, has played more for club and country since the Russian season opened in March than

Pavlyuchenko. Furthermore, the Russia forward enjoyed a four-month break before that period so, while he should be tired later this season, his six months of unbroken football at present is routine

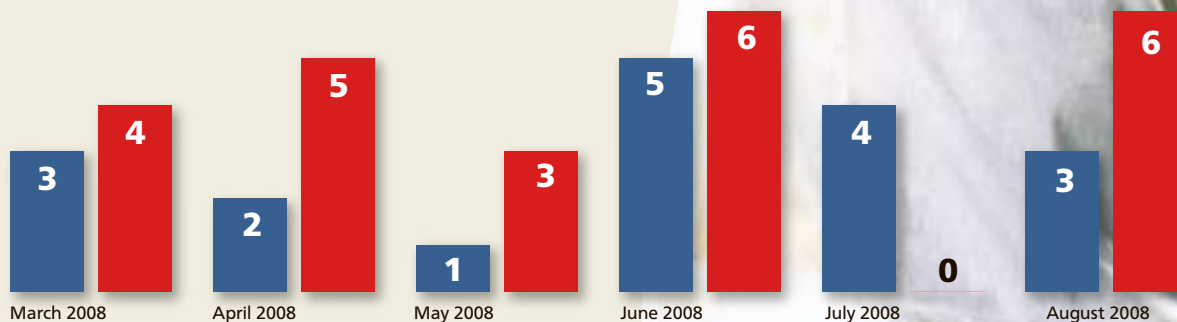
Words  
Bill Edgar

Tottenham Hotspur have scored four league goals this season, the fewest in the Barclays Premier League, having offloaded players responsible for 68 per cent of their goals in all competitions last season. Dimitar Berbatov, Robbie Keane, Jermain Defoe and Steed Malbranque were the principal contributors

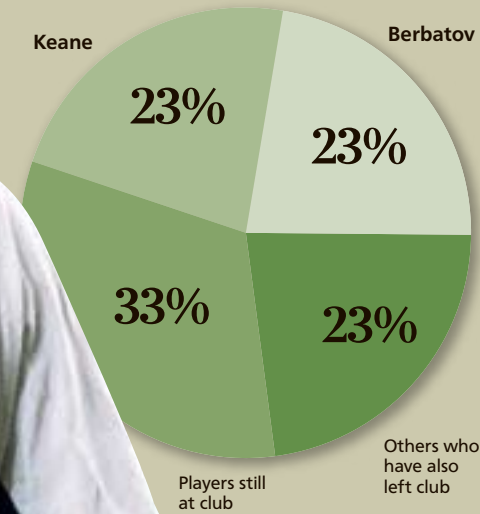
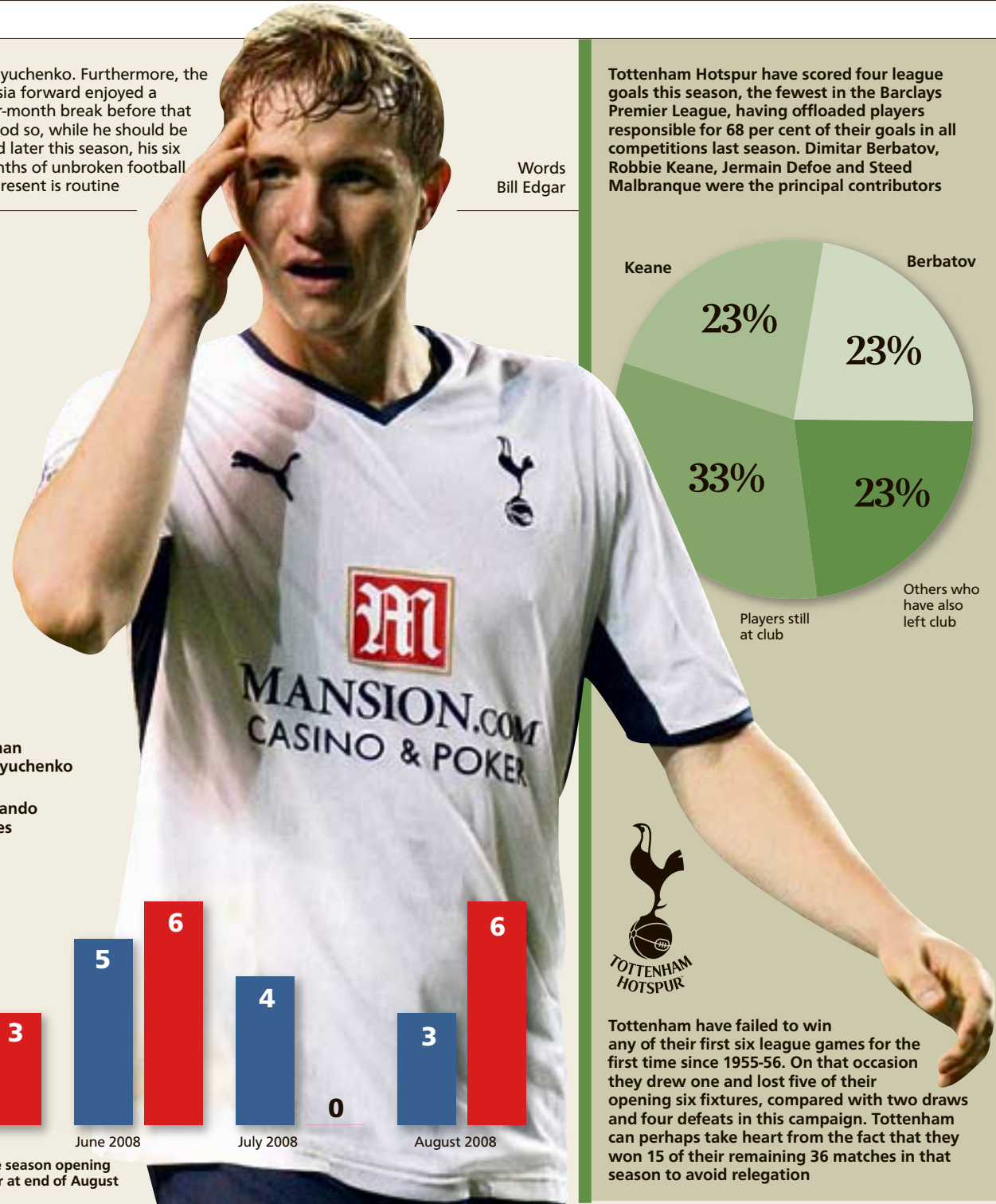
## Starting orders: Pavlyuchenko v Torres



■ Roman Pavlyuchenko  
■ Fernando Torres



Matches started for club and country between Russian league season opening on March 14 and Pavlyuchenko's arrival at Tottenham Hotspur at end of August



Tottenham have failed to win any of their first six league games for the first time since 1955-56. On that occasion they drew one and lost five of their opening six fixtures, compared with two draws and four defeats in this campaign. Tottenham can perhaps take heart from the fact that they won 15 of their remaining 36 matches in that season to avoid relegation