

# Star struck

Celebrating achievements is nothing new but the similar ways clubs from around the world symbolise their different trophies can leave you feeling quite confused

By ALEX ANDERSON

**D**uring the TV coverage of the Premier League's finale last season, I was puzzled that Manchester City had three stars on their jerseys when they were going for their third title. It turns out that the stars are purely decorative, not above the City crest but part of it. I am no longer confident about what's symbolised by any stars sewn onto any jersey.

At Euro 2012 England wore one for their solitary World Cup, Denmark dropped the one they formerly wore for their 1992 European Championship triumph and Germany's trio could stand for either of the two major trophies they've won three times. Uruguay's Olympic team bore no stars this summer yet their full international side wears four, two of which denote their 1924 and 1928 Olympic football golds. Saint-Étienne, the only club to win ten French championships, wear one star over their crest but they have a star on their back too. For what?

During Sky's *Champions League Goals* shows I couldn't figure out how one UEFA Cup entitled Galatasaray to three stars. There was no explanation from Jamie or Jeff so I was forced to consult Wikipedia and the football yearbooks. Apart from discovering Fenerbahçe wear two stars within their crest as well as three above, it became obvious Turkish clubs adhere to a quota of five championships per star.

When Ipswich and Huddersfield drew 2-2 this season, the *Football League Show* unknowingly highlighted a confounding 3-3 in terms of stars: the Terriers commemorate their three straight English Championships while the hosts mark their 1962 League title, 1978 FA Cup and 1981 UEFA Cup. The stars were identically proportioned and positioned on both strips. There's neither enough difference nor similarity in

what each represents to deduce a conclusive formula – Huddersfield have ignored their 1922 FA Cup. Will Ipswich only add a fourth star for their first League Cup or Champions League?

I always assumed that this self-aggrandisement was invented by Juventus, the only Italian club with two stars. In a country where the most recognisable symbol of a league champion isn't a trophy but a little shield – the *scudetto* – worn on the players' jerseys, it's appropriate that every tenth

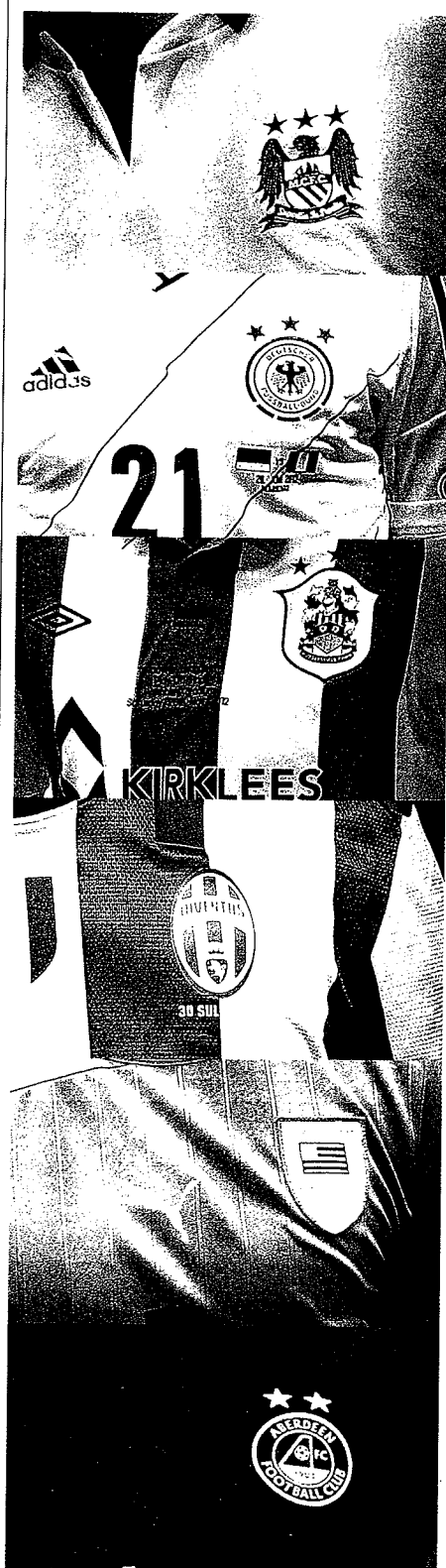
Serie A title earns you a *stella*. Exactly when the rest of the world joined in, I can't recall. Perhaps it was the influence of Channel 4's Serie A coverage. Rangers put five stars above the crest upon securing a 50th League title in 2002-03 but I don't remember them ever wearing four. At the time Celtic were on 39 titles and duly produced a strip with just one star, symbolising the only major trophy they'd won which Rangers hadn't – the European Cup.

Bayern Munich wear four for their European Cup and Champions League wins of 1974-76 and 2001. Do German fans think Rangers have been European Champions five times? Do Italians think Celtic boast fewer than 20 Scottish championships? Then there's Aberdeen's pair. Rather than dividing their four League titles by two, it's one for the 1983 Cup-Winners Cup and another for their subsequent Super Cup. The Dons are isolated in granting the Charity Shield of continental football a star but there are no rules so, if they think it's worth it, why not? Perhaps stars are the one jersey decoration with which football teams speak exclusively to their fans, saying only "this meant something to us". After all, Uruguay's Olympic titles came before the World Cup existed – when the Olympics were *de facto* football world championships.

UEFA, always eager to quash deregulation, have taken some steps towards addressing star congestion with their "former multiple winner" sleeve patch, worn in the Champions League by the likes of Real Madrid, Ajax and AC Milan. It shows a single European Cup trophy with a number between the upper curves of the handles; just change the number whenever you regain the trophy.

In September Chelsea, wearing the "reigning champions" patch but no star, met a club with tiny gold writing below their crest – *30 sul campo* (30 on the pitch). Stripped of their 28th and 29th championships after the Calciopoli corruption scandal, Juventus now refuse to wear two stars because they feel last season's legitimate *scudetto* entitles them to a third. Clear as ever, then.

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Right (top to bottom) Manchester City, Germany, Huddersfield Town, Juventus,