

CLAUDIO RANIERI WINNING THE 2015/2016 ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP TITLE

When Claudio Ranieri came to take charge of Stamford Bridge in 2000, replacing the sacked player manager, Gianluca Vialli, I was the first to want him out of the Bridge. I couldn't see him replacing my heroes, Glenn Hoddle, Ruud Gullit and Gianluca Vialli. What made it worse for me at the time was his inability to speak English. Even Ray Wilkins and Graham Rix, who were our assistant managers didn't have time for him. Wilkins made it clear, that he was not at the club to interpret for Ranieri, and further stated that if he had wanted such a job, he would have applied for one at the British Embassy.

The first thing Ranieri did on his appointment was get rid of Denise Wise, our great captain. He sold him to Leicester, which is so ironic.

He didn't win anything for us at the time, but improved our position in the league, and also got us in a great position in the Champions League. He was slightly erratic in his selection of the team, which earned him the nickname, 'Tinker Man' by the British press. He was eventually humiliated and then sacked by new Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, and went back to Spain to manage Valencia. Jose Mourinho used the players bought by Ranieri to win the league in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. The poor man didn't get any of the credit.

Although, I bleed Chelsea blood, I admire this great man, because despite the odds, he came back to England to win the Premiership. A title that has eluded many English born and bred managers.

Congratulations Claudio from a true Chelsea fan.