

Shithousery: An Art Form.

When you think of the greatest players to grace a football pitch, the mind jumps to Pele, Maradona, Messi and in some parts of East Anglia, Darren Huckerby. These are the players that shine on the world stage with deft touches, outrageous passes, and magnificent finishes. Football itself will continue to evolve and modern football is now a stretch from what the game was like 20 years ago. Long gone are meaty 50/50s without referee interference. Jostling for the ball has become a competition of who can pull the wool over the referee's eyes quickest but high-quality football remains. Pure football to some.

Picture football as a pantomime. You have the hero which is your superior tactics and quick attacking play; you have the supporting actor of grinding out results and winning ugly and you have the comical best friend played by an unsuspecting steward/fan receiving a direct hit from a wayward clearance into the crowd. The villain of the piece is savagery whose incapacity to adhere to the blueprint of regulation could draw a chorus of distaste regardless on the venue. But there is one more. The anti-hero we hate to love. The necessary evil we need to maintain balance, shithousery.

Shithousery by definition is underhanded conduct or gamesmanship in a sport, intending to gain an advantage. A circus act comprising of the shithousery tightrope and the fear of falling uncontrollably into the net of savagery. When on the rope you're a marvel, onlookers can't avert their gaze as they long to see what lengths and boundaries can be pushed. But those who push too far run the risk of becoming entwined in the net below. Those who fall from grace find themselves lost in world that quickly engulfs them assumes control.

To get a well-rounded sense of savagery look no further than the 1995 Disney classic Pocahontas. The term savage used by both the English settlers and the Powhatan tribe regarding one another as 'barely even human'. Brutes, beasts and barbarians. The drums of war in this case are played by an enthusiastic middle-aged man whose wife has repeatedly told to him not practice whilst the kids are asleep regardless of how essential he believes his drumming to be.

The savages of modern football have no regard for rule or regulation. They're unseeing of authority, they're advocates of dissent, they're sheltered under their canopy of a refusal to conform. Step forward, Luis Suarez, Sergio Ramos, Diego Costa. Personifying villain, there is no craft in what they do. Two footed challenges aren't sexy. A keeper conceding a penalty and racing the opposition to the back of the net to grab the ball first, now that's sexy.

In a shithousers mind, every little helps. Whether it's some primetime keep ball by your opponents corner flag or walking down the line during a thrown-in to gain a few extra yards, they're doing the dirty jobs some would shy away from. If Ashley Young could convert the seconds he has wasted during thrown-ins into nectar points, he'd have enough for a full tank of petrol and £20 off his weekly shop. The man is an artist because he's given the same blank canvas every week and paints a masterpiece of shithousery every time.

The act of scoring against a former suitor and your behavior there after is the topic of much debate but is it shithousery? An act that casts a storm of fog onto the battlefield of opinion and judgement leaving blurred lines and fence-sitters in its wake. Except for one, Storm Emmanuel.

When Emmanuel Adebayor scored for Man City against Arsenal in 2009 he could of respectfully bowed his head, held his hands aloft and allowed himself to be swarmed by his new teammates. He didn't do any of that. Instead, Storm Emmanuel turned with the speed of a cyclone and experts following his trajectory could see he was heading for hostile territory. This Category E(mannuel) storm was leaving everything in its wake. Yaya Toure couldn't keep up, Shaun Wright-Phillips saw deep into the eye of the storm didn't want to. The huge drop in pressure off Storm Emmanuel's shoulders gave this natural disaster the power it needed to execute the perfect knee-slide onto the shores of the enemy.

A glance into the masses showed panic. People scrambling over seats, bottles and cans flying through the air, the pages of an abandoned programme flapping hopelessly around Emmanuel. A disaster to the victims, amazement to the witnesses and a yellow card for Emmanuel.

These Mavericks risk their reputation to gain the slightest advantage on the pitch. The noble act of entering the spotlight with suspect intentions, hoping it may benefit your team is a sacrifice we should appreciate. Subtle acts of roguish behavior that slip under the discipline radar are to be admired and commended. Shithousers, stand up and receive the praise you so rightly deserve.