

“See my record” – Ten Hag insists he is right man to lead Manchester United

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Saturday's lifeless 1-0 loss at Newcastle was their 10th loss in 21 matches in all competitions, leading criticism and pressure to mount on Ten Hag.

Erik ten Hag told doubters to look at his record as the under-fire boss spoke with conviction about being the right man to help stumbling Manchester United fulfil their ambitions.

Having won the Carabao Cup, reached the FA Cup final and finished third in the Premier League during a promising first season in charge, things have gone awry during his second campaign.

Saturday evening's lifeless 1-0 loss at Newcastle was their 10th defeat in just 21 matches in all competitions, leading criticism, scrutiny and pressure to mount on manager Ten Hag.

Reports emerged that the Dutchman had lost the confidence of some players, with concerns over style and tactics mentioned in stories that led to four media outlets being banned from Tuesday's press conference.

United were furious not to have been given a right to reply to the reports that Ten Hag dismissed as he came out fighting and preaching about togetherness before hosting Chelsea.

“There will be always tough times in every journey,” the United manager said. “We are in the right direction.

“I know we will get there where we want to be. Because – see my record.

“Everywhere where I was, every season, I got my targets, so if we stick together, stick to the plan and the strategy, we will get where we want to be.”

Ten Hag managed Go Ahead Eagles, Bayern Munich II and Utrecht before flourishing at Ajax and earning his move to Manchester.

The 53-year-old won three league titles during his time in charge of the Dutch giants, who he led to the Champions League semi-finals in 2019.

Tottenham ended that unforgettable run and Ten Hag comes up against Mauricio Pochettino for the first time since then, and beating him to the United job, when Chelsea visit.

Asked ahead of Wednesday’s Old Trafford clash what the realistic timeframe is for getting United where they want to go, Ten Hag said: “First of all, I can’t say in this club we are waiting for two, three years.

“This club the aim is, the demand is and the standards should be that you win every game, so we go in every game with the aim.

“I demand of my team, my players to win every game. Doesn’t matter who the opponent is, and I will stick to that. That brought us last year very far.

“We were third in the league, in the FA Cup final – we could even have won this – and we won the Carabao Cup.

“That mentality I don’t want to change this because that will be a drop-off in culture.

“That means, yeah, there is a high standard on me, and me together with the team, so it’s also high standards on the players, and I don’t make compromises on that.”

United’s mentality has been in question as much as the group’s unity this term, yet Ten Hag believes he has the players’ full

backing heading into a frantic festive period.

“Oh yeah, I never had the idea they don’t (back me) because I know they would have dropped me against Fulham or Burnley if it was the other situation,” the Red Devils boss said.

“If the situation was not right, if the environment was not right, and that’s not the case.”

It was an eye-catching comment from Ten Hag as he referred to crunch 1-0 wins at Burnley and Fulham that both came after a different chastening spells for the side.

United now need to avoid an 11th loss as the Blues visit on Wednesday as the manager looks to raise levels and “build on the foundations”.

“Of course negativity is never good,” Ten Hag added. “You have to take care it never kills the energy.

“But I don’t care because I know, and all the players know, we are the biggest club in the world, or one of the biggest clubs, then you know you get a lot of attention.

“You know then in the moment results are not going in your way and you’re not performing how you should, there’s coming criticism and you have to deal with that.

“We are together in that. There’s no way that you are alone there. You are together in that boat. We know that, so we will deal with it in togetherness.”