



LISTENING: La Liga 2014/ 2015

In order to do this task, you should follow these steps:

1. Listen to the podcast.
2. Do the exercises below.
3. Have a look at the vocabulary support and read the podcast transcript to help you understand the text.
4. The answers to the exercises will be available on the website next week.

✓ **QUESTIONS**

- 1) **Atlético de Madrid new signings are...**
 - a) Griezmann and Mario Mandžukić
 - b) Diego Costa, Courtois and Filipe
 - c) Koke, Godin, Juanfran, Gabi and Miranda
- 2) **Which player from Barcelona won't play any match in the first two months of the season?**
 - a) Vermaelen
 - b) Mathieu
 - c) Luis Suárez
- 3) **Last season, Real Madrid won...**
 - a) The Champions League and the Copa del Rey
 - b) La Liga, The Champions League and the Copa del Rey
 - c) The Champions League
- 4) **The main opponent for Athletic Club de Bilbao in the Champions League is likely to be...**
 - a) Real Sociedad
 - b) Sevilla
 - c) Villarreal
- 5) **The teams that have moved up to the top tier are...**
 - a) Osasuna, Valladolid and Betis
 - b) Elche, Levante, Málaga and Rayo Vallecano
 - c) Deportivo de La Coruña, Córdoba and Eibar

✓ VOCABULARY SUPPORT

- **The spine:** the main group of players of the team
- **He is overseeing a change:** he is in charge of changing the team
- **Close season:** the off season; when teams do not play but prepare for the season
- **The stand out signing:** The main or most important signing
- **A whisker away:** very close to doing something
- **Formidable:** very strong
- **Went down to the wire:** right to the end; nothing was decided until the last day of the season
- **The top tier:** the top division; the first division
- **Basque:** an autonomous region in the north of Spain (Basque country)
- **To repeat their exploits:** to win the title again
- **To bed in:** to feel comfortable

✓ PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

La Liga 2014/ 2015

The Favourites

Atlético de Madrid surprised many last season by winning their 10th La Liga title and, despite the fact that they have lost striker Diego Costa, goalkeeper Courtois and defender Filipe (they have all gone to Chelsea), they have strengthened their side with some interesting signings. In has come French winger Griezmann, from Real Sociedad; and Croatian forward Mario Mandžukić, from Bayern Munich, and they will join **the spine** of last season's title-winning team that is Koke, Godin, Juanfran, Gabi, Miranda, and of course their inspirational coach Diego Simeone.

Barcelona has a new manager: former player Luis Enrique and **he is overseeing a change** at the Nou Camp. Barca may be banned from making any signings in the next two transfer windows, so there has been quite a lot of movement in this **close season** as they attempt to win back their title. Defenders Mathieu, from Valencia, and Vermaelen, from Arsenal, should help to replace the retired Carles Pujol, but perhaps **the stand out signing** for the Catalan side is Luis Suárez, from Liverpool. He will be forced to miss the first couple of months of the season due to suspension but when he returns, he will form part of a **formidable** attacking force that includes Neymar and Messi.

We tend to forget that Real Madrid were **a whisker away** from winning an amazing treble last season. Champions League winners for the 10th time, they also won the Copa del Rey and finished third in La Liga, but this only after a poor end to the campaign. This season they have added World Cup winner Tony Kroos to their midfield, James Rodríguez to their forward line and Costa Rican goalkeeper Keylor Navas as back up to Iker Casillas in goal. They still have the much-feared 'BBC' front line of Bale, Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo, and will be yet again one of the favourites to win La Liga.

Champions League

Athletic Club de Bilbao, who returns to the Champions League this season for the first time in 16 years, has lost midfielder Ander Herrera to Manchester United but the rest of the squad that did so well last year remains and with the new San Mamés stadium now complete, they will be among the favourites to finish in fourth place. Perhaps, their biggest rivals will be Europa League winners Sevilla though they have lost key players, including Ivan Rakitić to Barcelona. Dark horses that could make the top four include Real Sociedad and Villarreal, but they will probably have to be satisfied with a top 6 finish instead.

Relegation

Last year's relegation battle **went down to the wire** with Osasuna, Valladolid and Betis, all going down to the second division. In their place have come former title winners Deportivo de La Coruña, Córdoba, who will be making their first appearance in **the top tier** for over 40 years and, for the first time ever, **Basque** side Eibar. Eibar and Córdoba will struggle as they do not really have the finances to compete at this level while Elche, Levante and my favourite team, Málaga, as well as Madrid side Rayo Vallecano, who may have made too many changes to their team, will also face a relegation battle this season.

Predictions

It will be hard for Atlético **to repeat their exploits** from last season, while I think Barcelona may have too many new players **to bed in** this year, so I am going for Real Madrid for the title. As for relegation, I think Eibar, Córdoba and probably Rayo will find themselves in the bottom three come the end of the season.

What are your predictions for the 2014-15 La Liga season?