HOW TO PLAY RON MANAGER

For anyone who played the early-90s management games and is new to this one. Words in capitals are the buttons and labels as the game shows them. The same guide is in the game: **GUIDE** on the right edge, or How to play at the top of the home screen.

1. GETTING STARTED

Ron Manager is the early-90s management game made again: the 1993-94 season, all 92 league clubs, the FA Cup, the Coca-Cola Cup, the play-offs and Europe. It looks like the old game. Underneath there is a lot more going on, but you can play it the old way and do fine: the depth is there for the extra few per cent.

- The home screen is nine big doors in three rows. **GAME**: the big green Continue button, **SAVE GAME** and **OPTIONS**. **INTERNAL**: **SQUAD SCREEN**, **CLUB** and **SEARCH**. **EXTERNAL**: **MANAGER OFFICE**, **COMPETITIONS** and **HALL OF FAME**.
- The **FIND** box above the doors: type part of a name and pick a player, club, manager, screen or competition.
- Every screen has **BACK** and **HOME** at the top left. **HOME** always gets you back to the doors.
- The Snapshot (top right of the home screen, and where you land after Continue) is your desk: the next match with the Ass Man's line on the opponents, your cash, **TRANSFER KITTY**, **WAGE BILL**, **WAGE BUDGET** and **BOARD CONFIDENCE**, then **NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION**: each offer for one of your men with **SEE HIM**, **ACCEPT** and **REJECT** in its row, then the news that needs you (one of your eleven hurt or banned, the board, a transfer request, a contract running out), injured and suspended men, contracts, a match waiting. Read it every week.
- The number by **ALL NEWS** counts only what needs you; everyone's routine news (managers coming and going, cup draws) is folded into one **AROUND THE GAME** line a week. **MARK ALL READ** clears the rest; an offer stays open until you answer it. A club that bids again for the same man changes its offer ("raised their bid to...") rather than adding another, and an offer nobody answers lapses after a fortnight.
- **MANAGER OFFICE** is the same Snapshot with the news list, **ALL NEWS** and **OTHER JOBS**.
- **CLUB** has two big buttons: **ASS MAN** (the opposition report, the morale report, the scratchpad, friendlies) and **CHAIRMAN** (club info, the board, the budget, accounts and contracts).
- **COMPETITIONS** holds the tables, fixtures, results, cups, top scorers and the past winners.
- The game saves itself every match day. **SAVE GAME** keeps a copy of your own.

2. THE WEEK AND CONTINUE

- Nothing happens until you press the big green button in the **GAME** row. It says what comes next: **SATURDAY FIXTURES**, **MIDWEEK FIXTURES**, **SUNDAY FIXTURES** or, out of season, **CONTINUE SEASON**. Until you press it the week stands still: pick, buy and sell for as long as you like.

- It plays on until your next match is due, or a week has gone by. After a match comes one **MATCH DAY** screen: your result and the paper's headline, the day's results, the table, the performance of the week, **READ THE DIGEST** and **TRANSFER NEWS**, and what needs you. **MATCH STATS**, **READ THE PAPER**, **THE VIDIPRINTER**, **EVERY DIVISION** and **FULL TABLE** each open from it and come back. Then the squad news that needs you, and you are back on the Snapshot.
- **OPTIONS**, **THE WEEK**: **THE FULL 1993 WAY** brings back every screen after a match one after another (the vidiprinter, each results screen, the paper, the table, the Digest, Transfer News, every squad news pop-up). **QUICK WEEK**: one Continue plays on to your next match and takes it on Auto, straight to the Match Day screen. It stops early for an offer, the board or your job, and before the match if one of your eleven is hurt or banned (then you pick the team as usual).
- The season starts with four weeks of pre-season. The Ass Man fills any week you leave without a friendly, or arrange them yourself: **CLUB**, **ASS MAN**, **ARRANGE MY FRIENDLIES** or **ARRANGE FRIENDLY**.
- Deals you agree are done when the week turns, not on the spot. The week's moves are in the Transfer News.

3. PLAYING WITH YOUR MATES

A hosted game runs on the host's PC; you play it in your own browser from the link he sends. There are two ways, and the host picks.

- **ALL TOGETHER**: everyone is in his office at once (team, tactics, buying and selling). When you're done press **READY** (where Continue usually is); the strip at the top shows who's ready. The week moves on when everyone is. Dawdle and the host can press **HURRY**: you get two minutes, then your Ass Man picks the side and you count as ready.
- On match day everyone picks his team (with quick week on, your team stands as it is and you go straight to the round), then the matches are played one at a time with everyone watching. **FULL MATCH**: you watch yours live and make the changes. **AUTO**: your Ass Man runs it on your orders and everyone watches the highlights.
- Results last: no score, table or paper can be seen until the last match has been watched. Then each of you gets his own results and back to the office.
- **HOT-SEAT**: one manager at a time, as in the old days. On your turn you run your club, then press Continue and it's the next man's turn. While you wait you see his screen live; the bar at the top takes you to your own.
- **CHAT** (the tab on the right edge) goes to everyone, the host too. **WATCH** shows any other manager's screen, read only. **GUIDE** opens this page. A red number on **CHAT** is messages you haven't read.
- **SNAG** (the little tab at the bottom left, or the ` key): anything wrong or odd, click it and say what happened. It goes straight to John with the screen you were on.

4. DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL

When you start a game (or take a new job) you choose your job: **MANAGER** or **DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL**. Friends in the same game can choose differently. You can change it only on the day you take a job.

- A director of football runs the club: transfers, loans, contracts, wages, money, staff, scouts and youth, all as a manager does. His coach picks the team, sets the tactics and makes the changes in a match. You never pick the team.
- **CLUB** has **COACH** where **ASS MAN** was: who your coach is, his football, how good he is, what he believes (young players, favourites, a settled side or rotation, how stubborn he is about his football, how much he minds being told), how he gets on with you, your promises to him, his contract and his record. All in words, never a number.
- How he gets on with you moves with what you do: requests (he minds them more the more you ask), the signings you make (no veto, but he says what he thinks), selling his favourites, results, promises kept or broken, and your verdict after each match. A coach at odds with you says less, and may walk out.
- The squad screen shows the coach's team, read only. **REQUEST** beside a name (or on his page) asks the coach to **PLAY HIM**, **REST HIM**, **TRY HIM THERE** (a position), **GIVE THE KID A GAME** or **HAVE A WORD**. On the Coach page you can ask him to change the shape (braver, tighter, another formation) or for a training focus. He answers yes, yes but (from the bench, at home only, for a month), not yet or no, and says why. Every answer is in your news, and the Snapshot has a **FROM THE COACH** box.
- **CLUB STYLE** on the Coach page is your wish for how the club plays: mentality, on the ball, off the ball, a shape. He takes it up as far as he will (all of it, halfway, or not at all) and it changes his plan from his next match.
- **SACK HIM** pays him off from the club's cash and the Ass Man minds the team as caretaker until you hire another. **HIRE A COACH** lists the men who would come; **INTERVIEW** one first: he says how he plays, what he thinks of young players and what he wants to do, then his terms, sometimes with a promise he wants from you (leave me to pick the team, money for players, keep my best men, let me play my way). Break a promise and he won't forget.
- His contract runs out in time: in his last months the Coach page offers **OFFER A NEW CONTRACT**, or you let him go. He gets older each summer and may retire. A bigger club may take him from you.
- Match day: the coach's team sheet, then **FULL MATCH** or **HIGHLIGHTS**, your choice each time. You watch from the stand: no tactics, no substitutions. In All together press **READY FOR KICK-OFF** after his team sheet.
- After the match comes **THE COACH'S WORD**: his team and why it changed, his plan, his substitutions and when, any late change, and the match's real counts. He says only what he decided and what the match counted, not why it went the way it did. Then **JUDGE**: **BACKED HIM**, **FAIR ENOUGH**, **NOT HAPPY** or **HAVE A WORD**. It moves how he gets on with you, and the board remembers.

5. PICKING THE TEAM

The squad screen is the old one with modern handling. Every column sorts by clicking its heading.

- Picking is in the **SHIRT** column beside each name: click it and give him a shirt, a place on the bench, or take him out. To swap two men, press on one name, hold, and drag it onto the other. Every pick saves itself; **UNDO** and **REDO** are at the top left.
- **BEST XI** picks the best eleven from scratch, **LAST XI** puts back your last match's team, **FILL** fills any empty shirts, **CLEAR** empties them all. **DONE** when you're finished.

- The columns: **ABILITY** is his rating in his own position, out of 20. **CND** is match fitness, per cent: the lower, the more tired. **MOR** is morale, with an arrow for which way it's going. **SHOW CONTRACTS** swaps the season's stats for wages, contract, value, squad status and **FITNESS**: anything wrong with him (injured, ill, suspended, away with his country, listed, unhappy), or Available.
- The letters by a name: **IJ** injured, **SU** suspended, **INT** away with his country, **UN** unhappy, L on the transfer list, C out of contract (a free agent). A little yellow card with a number means he is one booking from a ban (hover over it for the words).
- Positions have four levels: natural, accomplished, competent, awkward. On the pitch pictures green is natural or accomplished (as good as his own place), orange competent (a bit off), yellow awkward (more off), red out of position. The little pitch on a player's page shows where he can play. A man learns a place by playing there.
- The three-foreigner rule (1993 rules): no more than three players from outside the home nations on the pitch at once. The squad screen counts them for you. You can carry as many as you like; only three can play.
- The bench is three men and you can use two of them, as in 1993-94. The squad and tactics screens say so: **BENCH**: 3 **NAMED**, 2 **MAY COME ON**.
- **RESERVES** (the chip above the table) shows the reserves so you can pick them; **RSRV** in the grey row is the reserves and youth team on their own screen. **MOVE** sends a man down or brings one up.
- The grey row also has **INFO**, **STAF**, **LEAG**, **FIXT**, **ACCS** and **TRNS** (your own transfers); the green row **PEN** (penalty takers: the first of them on the pitch takes it), **PRV** (your last match), **TCT** (tactics) and **OPP** (the next opponents' squad).
- Squad status (**KEY PLAYER**, **REGULAR**, **ROTATION**, **BACK-UP**, **YOUNGSTER**, in the contract view) is where you've told a man he stands. He expects the games to match it, and sulks if they don't.

6. TACTICS

The tactics screen fits on one screen: the choices along the top, the pitch, your players and on the right the saved formations and the Ass Man. The four choices that matter most:

- **FORMATION**: one of the game's formations (most have one shape with the ball and another without it: the **WITH THE BALL** and **WITHOUT THE BALL** buttons over the pitch switch the picture), or your own.
- **MENTALITY**: **DEFENSIVE** (men behind the ball), **COUNTER-ATTACK** (secure first, then break), **FRONT FOOT** (take the initiative) or **ATTACKING** (take risks to get a goal).
- **ON THE BALL**: **CONTINENTAL** (play out and keep it), **SHORT-MIXED** (short, with the odd ball through the lines), **MIXED-DIRECT** (forward early, through balls and channels) or **LONG** (miss out midfield).
- **OFF THE BALL**: **LOW BLOCK** (sit deep and frustrate them), **MID BLOCK LOW PRESS**, **MID BLOCK MEDIUM PRESS** or **HIGH LINE HIGH PRESS** (win it back high, with room left behind).

Then the extras, all optional:

- **TACKLING**: **STAY ON YOUR FEET**, **NORMAL** or **GET STUCK IN** (more tackles won, more fouls and cards). **FOCUS PLAY**: where the attack goes: **MIXED**, **LEFT**, **RIGHT**, **BOTH WINGS** or **CENTRE**. Hover over any choice and it tells you what it means.

- Roles: each man in **PLAYERS** has a role drop-down with his rating in each role. The formation gives every shirt a role; your own pick shows in yellow. **THE FORMATION'S ROLES** puts them all back.
- Drag one man onto another to swap them (off match day the rest of the squad is listed underneath to drag in). **FOC**: a **TARGET MAN** or a **PLAYMAKER** (or **NEITHER**). **CPT**: the captain.
- **SAVED FORMATIONS**: four slots, one for each kind of game (home games you should win, tougher home games, cautious away games, riskier away games). Set each one up the way you like; the Ass Man picks between them for each match and a star marks his pick. **RENAME** lets you name them.
- **SET PIECES** (on the right): corner, free-kick and long-throw takers and who goes up for corners. The Ass Man picks them if you don't.
- **AGAINST** the next opponents: name their **DANGER MAN** and how to **DEAL WITH HIM**: **MAN-MARK**, **DOUBLE UP ON** or **ROUGH HIM UP**, with the men to do it.
- Under the tactics the Ass Man says what suits the plan and what to watch out for, and how well the lads know the formation: a new one takes a few games to bed in.
- **ASS MAN'S ORDERS** (along the bottom): what he does when you aren't watching (Auto, or handing over part way through): winning late, losing late, a man sent off, tired men and so on, each with what to do.

7. MATCH DAY

When Continue reaches your match the game walks you through it:

- The Ass Man's opposition report: how they play, their danger men. **PICK THE TEAM** goes on to the squad screen.
- Pick your side, then the bar across the top, **PICKED YOUR FINAL TEAM**? **GO TO TACTICS**. If the team is short it says what's wrong instead.
- Tactics, then **READY TO PLAY**? **GO TO MATCH** (or **KICK OFF**).
- **HOW DO YOU WANT TO TAKE IT**? **FULL MATCH** to watch it all and make your own changes, or **AUTO** for the Ass Man to play it on his orders. After Auto you choose **WATCH THE HIGHLIGHTS** or **SKIP TO THE RESULT**.

Watching the full match:

- Click anywhere to pause and make a **TACTICAL MOVE**: **TACTICAL CHANGE** (the tactics screen, for changes and substitutions), **MATCH STATS**, **OPPONENTS TEAM**, **HAND OVER TO THE ASS MAN** or **EXIT** to carry on. Hold Space to hurry the clock. **PITCH** (or P) shows a big pitch.
- A substitution: on the tactics screen drag a man from **SUBSTITUTES** onto the shirt of the man coming off. It asks **BRING ON** ... **FOR** ...?: **YES**, **MAKE THE CHANGE** or **NO**. Changed your mind? The yellow bar's **UNDO** takes it back until you change anything else or go back to the match.
- **LATE ON** (only in a match): **PARK THE BUS** or **KITCHEN SINK**, and **BACK TO THE PLAN**. Changes in a match last till full time.
- The Ass Man stops the match once or twice when something needs saying. **DO IT** takes his advice.
- Half-time: **HALF TIME**. **WANT TO CHANGE ANYTHING**? **CHANGE TACTICS**, **SUBSTITUTIONS**, **START SECOND HALF** or **HAND OVER TO THE ASS MAN**.
- After the match: **STATS** (the whole match in numbers), the **ASS MAN**'s report and the paper.

8. TRANSFERS

Finding a man:

- **SEARCH** on the home screen. Player search has tabs across the top for where to look: **ALL PLAYERS**, **TRANSFER LIST**, **LOAN LIST**, **FREE AGENTS**, **ABROAD**, **NON-LEAGUE** and your **SHORTLIST**. The filters down the side work on every tab and every column sorts. A name in yellow means your scouts or the Ass Man think he would join you.
- **COMPARE WITH MY SQUAD** slots your own men into the same list, so you can see who'd be an upgrade.
- Scouts: click a scout's name to send him to watch a man on your shortlist, or **FIND PLAYERS** to send him looking to a profile (position, age, most fee, rating, where to look). He comes back with a longlist. A better scout looks wider and judges better.
- **ADD** on a player's page puts him on your shortlist (**DROP** takes him off).

Buying him (all from his page, the **BUY** button at the top):

- **APPROACH PLAYER** shows your **TRANSFER KITTY** and what his club, the player and your Ass Man say about a move, in words. Read it: "not for sale" means it, and a player who doesn't want to come won't.
- **APPROACH TO BUY**: the fee haggle. Set your offer with - and + (or type it) and press **DONE**. The club accepts, or rejects and says what it wants. Each low offer uses up its patience; a silly one uses up twice as much. When it says it is losing patience, make your next offer serious, or talks break down for four weeks.
- Fee agreed: **AGREE TERMS WITH THE PLAYER**. Set the **LENGTH**, the **WAGES P/W** and the **ROLE PROMISED** (key player down to youngster). He says what he wants and what matters most to him (the money, the length of the deal or his place in the side), gives ground round by round, and walks away after three offers well short.
- The role you promise is binding: it becomes his squad status, and he expects the games.
- Other clubs may come in once you've agreed a fee ("best offers by the end of the week"), so a deal is only done when the week turns. A free agent costs no fee: straight to terms.
- The board won't sanction a fee bigger than the kitty you have left. Your squad can hold 32 (first team and reserves).

Loans, selling and your own men:

- **APPROACH TO LOAN**: one to three months, the share of his wages you pay, and the role you promise. If he isn't getting it his club recalls him. Two loans in at once, four a season, and your share must fit the wage budget.
- On your own man's page **STATUS** has **LIST HIM FOR TRANSFER**, **LIST HIM FOR LOAN**, **INCREASE WAGES**, **NEW CONTRACT**, and **RETRAIN AS**: pick a new job for him and **START RETRAINING** (the coaches reshape his game over months; young men change most). Bids for your men come as offers in the news: **ACCEPT** or **REJECT**.
- Contracts: the Snapshot warns you of any ending within 13 weeks. Let one run out and he can leave for nothing.
- The transfer deadline is 24 March. The Snapshot and the Approach screen count down to it (red in the last fortnight) and a news item comes a week before. After it nobody can be bought or borrowed until the summer.
- **TALK TO HIM** is on every one of your men's pages. It's greyed out ("He's happy: nothing to talk about") until he wants a word or is unhappy.

9. MONEY AND THE BOARD

- The Snapshot's **MONEY** box is the one to watch: **CASH**, **TRANSFER KITTY** (what the board lets you spend), **WAGE BILL** (players and staff, a week) and **WAGE BUDGET** (what the board will stand: it says "over budget" when you're past it).
- **CLUB**, **CHAIRMAN**: **FINANCIAL STRATEGY** is the season's budget (wages, the transfer kitty, the ground, the youth academy, facilities) and where you ask to move money between them. **ACCOUNTS** is income and spending. **SEE THE CHAIRMAN** is for asking for a bigger ground, youth money or more kitty, and for resigning.
- **BOARD CONFIDENCE** moves every week with where you are in the league against where the board expect you to be (the home screen says where that is). Let it fall far enough, after the first dozen weeks of a season, and you're sacked. A patient chairman gives you longer.
- Spend past the overdraft limit and the club is in a money crisis. The board warn you as you get near it. Stay in it for weeks and they sell players over your head.
- Out of work? **MANAGER OFFICE** becomes the job list: apply for a vacancy.

10. INJURIES, BANS AND FITNESS

- A club has about thirty injuries a season, from matches and from training, plus a dozen or so illnesses. Your own come as squad news; **IJ** marks them and the player's page says how long he's out.
- Bookings: five yellow cards and he's banned for a match. A straight red is three matches, a second yellow one. **SU** marks a banned man. A man one booking from a ban has a little yellow card by his name on the squad screen, and the Ass Man mentions it in his pre-match report.
- The squad screen's **FITNESS** column (in the contract view) says what's wrong with a man, or Available.
- In international weeks your internationals go away (**INT**).
- **CND** is match fitness. It drops with every game and comes back with rest; a tired man plays worse and gets hurt more. Rotate in a busy spell.
- You won't be left without a keeper: a youth keeper comes up, or the club signs emergency cover.

11. A DOZEN TIPS

- Read the Snapshot's **NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION** every week before you press Continue.
- Play men in their own positions. Green on the pitch is good; yellow and red cost you.
- Don't change the formation every week: the lads need a few games to learn one.
- Set up your four **SAVED FORMATIONS** once and let the Ass Man pick between them.
- Look over the **ASS MAN'S ORDERS** before you use **AUTO**: he follows them (his defaults are filled in).
- Short on time? **AUTO** and the highlights take about a minute. A full match takes a few.
- Read the **APPROACH PLAYER** words before you bid: they tell you whether there's any point.
- Open low but not silly: an offer far below what they'll take burns their patience twice as fast.
- Don't promise everyone **KEY PLAYER**: they hold you to it and sulk when they don't play.
- Watch the **WAGE BUDGET**: a fee is paid once, wages go out every week for years.

- Get your buying done before 24 March.
- Anything odd, press **SNAG**. Anything you don't get, ask in the **CHAT**.

Ron Manager is a private fan project. Not affiliated with any club, league or publisher.

© 2026 Ron Manager