1.5bn spent & no striker in sight - how did Chelsea get here?



Before Friday's Premier League game against Brighton, Chelsea boss Enzo Maresca said they "need to find something different" without a genuine centre-forward currently available.

Despite spending more than £1.5bn since the Clearlake Capital and Todd Boehly takeover went through less than three years ago, a recent injury crisis has left Chelsea's squad looking remarkably threadbare - none more so than up front.How have they ended up with no fit strikers to call upon and how do they solve their problems in attack?

Chelsea have signed a lot of attacking players since the takeover.The Blues have forked out £445m on forwards - but aside from a now-injured Nicolas Jackson none have proved to be a high-quality number nine.Pierre Emerick Aubameyang was signed for former manager Thomas Tuchel at a cost of £12m from Barcelona, but the veteran was frozen out soon after the German was sacked following a 100-day review from the ownership without a chance to prove his worth. He went on to score goals for Marseille in a sensational season in France before moving to Saudi Arabia.

The only other central strikers signed were David Datro Fofana, Deivid Washington and Marc Guiu, all young players at a combined cost of just £34m. None have looked ready for the Premier League, never mind the level required to meet the expectations at Chelsea

The majority of that £445m went on Christopher Nkunku, Raheem Sterling, Mykhailo Mudryk, Pedro Neto, Joao Felix and Cole Palmer - all predominantly wingers or number 10s.

And only Palmer has produced on a consistent basis, having been involved in a league-high 39 goals (26 goals and 13 assists) in 2024.

Felix remarkably commanded an eye-watering £10m loan fee during his initial spell from Atletico Madrid in 2023, before he re-joined the club on a permanent basis for £45m last summer. He is now on loan at AC Milan.