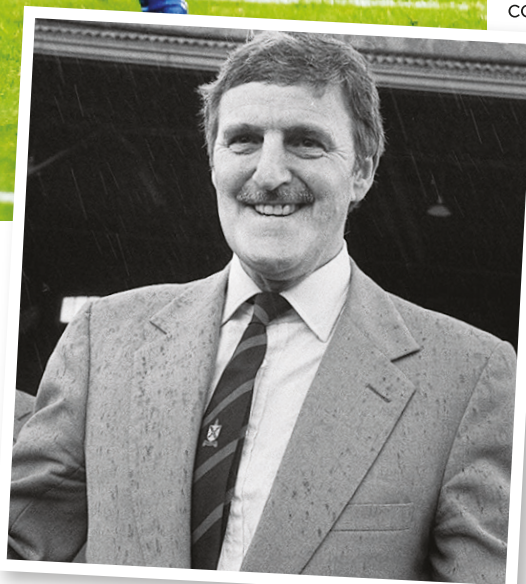




All over: Man City's Leroy Sané scores their third goal in the 4-0 win at West Ham after just 34 minutes – with the seven-point system there would still have been plenty to play for
Inset: Jimmy Hill



better goal difference). With the seven-point system, there is a connection between points and goals.

The more goals you score, the more likely it is that you will win by three or more goals and bag seven points. In the above example, a 1-0 victory would earn you five points, but a 5-0 win would give you seven.

The idea is that matches will not peter out so early. Say, for example, you go to a game and one team scores a couple of early goals - it could be virtually all over.

But the seven-point system encourages teams to increase their victory margin and their opponent to try to cut the deficit to salvage something from the match.

There could be something resting on

the game until the final minute. Yes, the winner may be resolved, but whether or not they will get seven points or not, and whether the opposition can get a goal to bag an extra point could still remain open.

Another plus is that it could keep

league issues alive for longer – at both ends of the table. If you've got the chance to get seven points in a game, it could help you to catch the league leaders.

Likewise, you may be adrift at the bottom, but you could haul yourself up the table if you can string a run of decent-sized wins together.

This can apply to season-long competitions or group stages in club and national team competitions.

If those are some of the positive aspects, there are potential downsides. For example, an underdog may consider that it's in their interests to go out and play for a draw.

They're starting the game with three points and may decide that is something they want to try to hang on to. Instead, of going out to attack, they could 'park the bus' and try to force a draw or narrow defeat from which they would still pick up a point or two.

Others may think there shouldn't be points for 'losers' and that is something to ponder. At present, the team that wins gets three points and the team that loses gets nothing.

Is that winner-takes-all prize something that makes the game special? Would the pain of an injury-time defeat not feel so bad if you still picked up a couple of points?

There is lots to consider and the Swiss group would love their innovative idea to be tested, perhaps in a youth league, to see how it works and whether it would encourage more attacking football.

They would be interested to see what strategies the various coaches would take to something so revolutionary. It would be fascinating to see how it panned out.

From a personal point of view, I wonder if something simpler might be possible. For example, you get a bonus point in rugby if you score four tries. Could you do likewise in football and give an extra point to any team that scores four goals in a game?

That way you are rewarding attacking football and teams that hit the back of the net with frequency.

And don't forget that football is entertainment, or meant to be, and that it's competing against a host of other sports all eager to knock it off its perch.

Changing the points system would be controversial – but it has been done before. Why not again?