



Leicester City F.C.

Pre-Match Analysis

Expected Line-up:

Manager: **Ruud Van Nistelrooy**

Expected Formation: **4-2-3-1**



Injuries and Suspensions list¹

Injured Players

#07 Abdul Fatawu (Knee)

Possible returns from Injury

#25 Woyo Coulibaly

#21 Ricardo Pereira

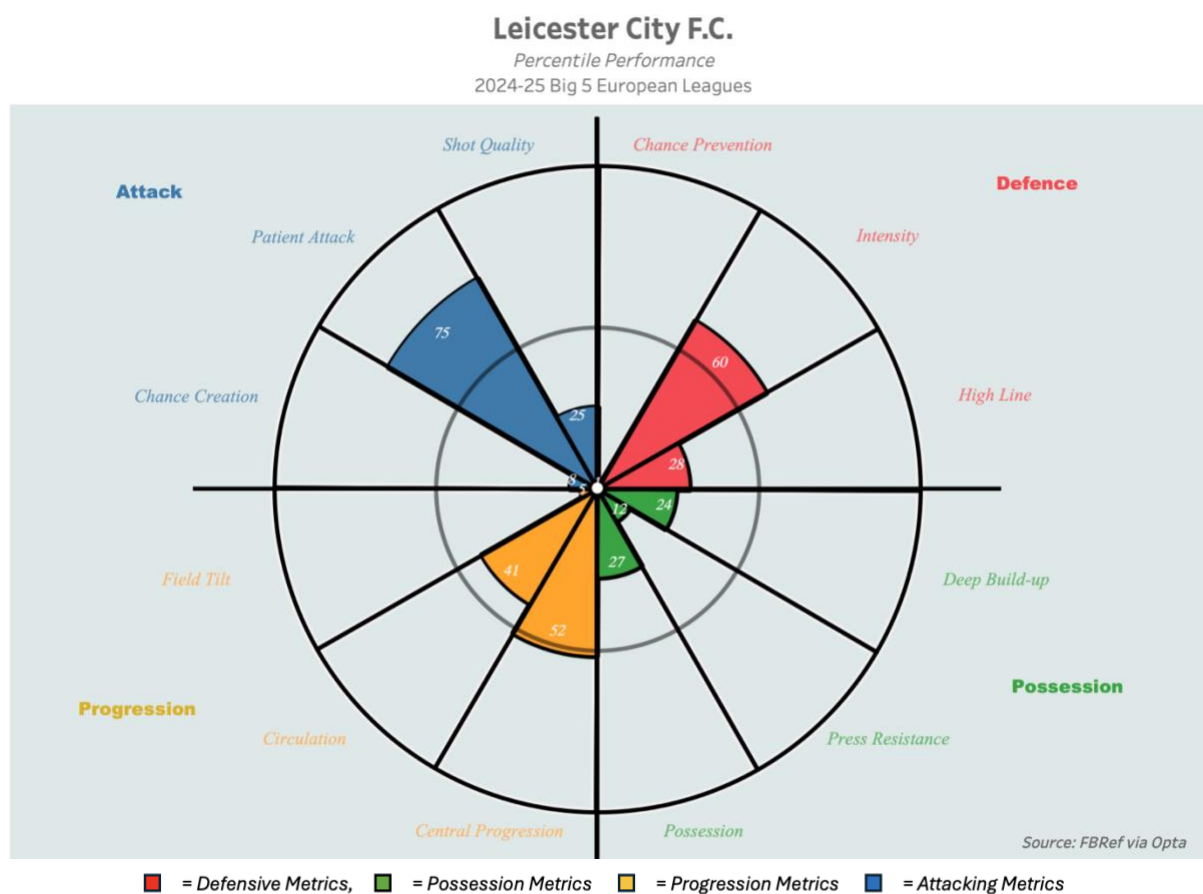
Suspended Players

None

¹ Source: <https://www.premierinjuries.com/injury-table.php>

Playstyle Wheel Insights:

Figure 1:
Leicester City Playstyle Wheel



Please view [this article](#) on The Athletic for details on the calculations of the above metrics.

Possible Indications from the Playstyle Wheel:

Counter-Attacking Football

Lower Percentile numbers in metrics such [Field Tilt](#), [Possession](#), and [High Line](#) can be indicative of a more defensive approach taken by Leicester City. Low [Circulation](#) numbers in addition to the above metrics can indicate that Leicester City like to take a very progressive approach once they do have possession. These metrics could possibly describe a team that defends deep in their half and plays on the counter-attack.

Lacking Quality on both ends of the pitch

Ranking low in [Field Tilt](#) but high in [Patient Attack](#) could be an indication of a team's inability to create shooting chances. Additionally, having low [Chance Creation](#) and low [Shot Quality](#) numbers further indicate a poor **Attacking Performance** over the season.

Leicester City also rank among the worst teams in the top 5 European Competitions in terms of their [Chance Prevention](#) numbers, indicating that their **Defensive Performances** have also been quite weak this season.

In-Possession Tactics

All charts and tables in the following section are created using data obtained from [FBRef via Opta](#).

Playstyle Wheel Highlights: No Deep Build-up; Quick and Progressive, but Inefficient.

Phase 1: Build-up

- **Long Balls played towards the wide midfielders.**
 - Leicester City record the 5th highest launch rate in the league at 47.46%.
 - Their long-balls are usually aimed at Jordan Ayew, indicated by him having the highest number of attempted aerial duels competed per90 compared to his teammates ([see figure 3](#)).
- However, during goal-kicks, **Leicester City opt to play short passes across the defensive line.** It is eventually worked back towards the goalkeeper who then plays it long ([see table 1](#)).
 - This could be a tactic used to force a press from the opposition, thereby opening space in midfield and allowing Leicester City players to pick up loose balls even if they lose their aerial duels ([see figure 4](#)).

Table 1:
Goalkeeper Passing Metrics

| Metric | Value per90 | EPL Ranking (high → low) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| GK Open-Play Passes: Average Length | 37.20 yards | 5 th |
| Goalkicks: Average Length | 29.60 yards | 15 th |
| GK Open-Play Passes: Launch Rate | 50.10% | 5 th |
| Goalkicks: Launch Rate | 37.60% | 12 th |

Phase 2: Progression into Final Third

- Leicester City play long balls from the defensive third to the attacking third, using a direct route to progress into the final third.
- Centrally-positioned midfielders are instructed to pick up loose balls after aerial duels to quickly progress into the final third ([see figure 4](#)).
- Leicester City also use fast-breaks very often, attempting to play find Jamie Vardy – who makes runs behind the opposition defensive line.

Phase 3: Final Third

- Leicester City often **cross the ball into the box**, with a lot of these deliveries floated towards the far post. They attempt 2.29 crosses per90, ranking 5th highest overall.
 - Their attacks are usually played down the flanks, especially due to the attacking involvement of left-back, Victor Kristiansen ([see figure 5](#)).
- Another important aspect of Leicester City's play in the final third is midfielders making **underlapping runs into the penalty box**, and then looking to make a cut-back.

However, Leicester City's underlying numbers in attack have been very poor this season:

Figure 2:

Shooting Trends of Premier League Clubs in 24/25 season



Leicester City have the worst underlying shooting metrics this season. Not only do they shoot the least amount of times per game at 9.11 shots, they also have the joint-lowest xG per shot at 0.10, indicating that when they do shoot, it is usually from low quality chances.

Table 2:

Leicester City's poor attacking numbers this season

| Metric | Value per90 | Ranking (high → low) |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Goals For | 0.64 | 19 th |
| xG | 0.81 | 19 th |
| Touches in Attacking Third | 111.43 | 19 th |
| Touches in Attacking Box | 17.64 | 18 th |

Their poor shooting and chance creation numbers are further evident in their attacking outcome this season, consistently ranking as the 2nd worst team in key attacking metrics.

Out-of-Possession Tactics

All charts and tables in the following section are created using data obtained from [FBRef via Opta](#).

Playstyle Wheel Highlights: Deep Defensive Line, Poor Chance Prevention

Defensive Strategy:

4-4-2 Mid-Block / Low-Block



Pressing Approach:

Shifting from Mid-Block to Low-Block

- Leicester City deploys a **low intensity mid-block** (see table 3) when the opposition team's defensive unit has possession in their defensive third. They aim to prevent passing options to opposition midfielders.
- Once the opposition progresses into the midfield third, **Leicester City gradually drop into a compact low-block** (see table 3), denying any kind of space to the opposition between and across units.

Table 3:

Leicester City's poor defensive numbers this season

| Metric | Value per90 | Ranking (high → low) |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Tackles in Attacking Third | 1.79 | 17 th |
| Tackles in Midfield Third | 8.29 | 6 th |
| Tackles in Defensive Third | 9.14 | 6 th |

Their pressing tactics are evident in the number of tackles they make in each of the pitch thirds on average. A low number of tackles in the attacking third indicate their low pressing intensity, while a high number of tackles in midfield and defensive thirds indicate their mid-block and low-block strategy.

Defensive Line Height and Width:

Low and Compact

- Leicester City keep a low defensive line, denying space between units.**
 - Because of the lack of space behind the defensive line, teams are able to play an average of just 1.815 through balls per 90 against Leicester City, ranking them 10th lowest in the league in terms of through balls conceded.
- They also stay very narrow, denying the opposition to play through the middle.**

However, this does leave space for the opposition to attack down the flanks.

 - Teams put in an average of 15.36 crosses against Leicester City, ranking them 4th highest in the league in terms of crosses faced.

However, Leicester City have performed very poorly in several defensive metrics:

Table 4:

Leicester City's poor defensive numbers this season

| Metric | Value per90 | Ranking (high → low) |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Goals Against | 2.43 | 2 nd |
| xGA | 1.88 | 3 rd |
| Shots Against | 16.22 | 4 th |
| Non-Penalty xGA per shot | 0.12 | 8 th |
| Touches in Attacking Box | 31.78 | 3 rd |

Not only are they allowing teams to get into their defensive box often, but also allow them to shoot often and from high-scoring chances. All these factors indicate why Leicester City have conceded the second highest number of goals this season.

Transition Tactics

Defence to Attack Transition: Counter-Attack

- Leicester City defend deep and **try to hit teams on the counter-attack** in transitions.
- Their aim is to get the ball into the final third as soon as possible and they do this using two ways:
 - Quick, one-touch passes through the middle, to release players making runs into the attacking third.
 - Longer length through balls behind the opposition defensive line for Jamie Vardy to run onto.

Attack to Defence Transition: Retreat into Defensive Shape

- Leicester City look to **retreat into their defensive shape as soon as they lose possession**.
 - However, their holding midfielders can be slow in getting back into their defensive position, making the team **vulnerable to opposition attacks during defensive transitions**.
 - Leicester City have conceded 5 goals from counter-attack situations this season, the 5th highest in the Premier League this season.

SWOT Analysis

| Leicester City Strengths | Leicester City Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compact Low-Block can make it hard for Chelsea to break Leicester City's defensive structure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Defensive Transitions can be costly against a pacey Chelsea side strong in attacking transitions |
| Threats for Chelsea | Opportunities for Chelsea |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No discernible threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using fast breaks after winning possession can be useful to create strong goal-scoring opportunities. |

Potential Opportunity for Chelsea:

When Leicester City are defending in their mid-block shape, a gap between the midfield and defensive units opens up. This gap shuts when Leicester City gradually move into their low-block shape.

By being patient in-possession in their defensive half, Chelsea can drag Leicester City's attacking and midfield units out and then quickly progress the ball into gap in Leicester City's mid-block structure. This can open space for Chelsea's creative midfielders, like Enzo Fernandez and Cole Palmer, to receive the ball in those half-spaces. If implemented successfully, this could help Chelsea unlock Leicester City's defensive structure.

APPENDICES

Figure 3:
Leicester City Players: Total Aerial Duels

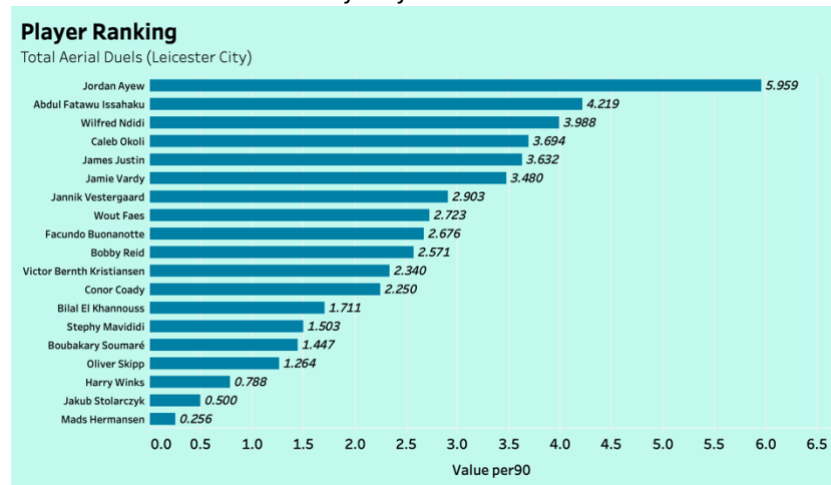


Figure 4:
Leicester City Players: Loose Ball Recoveries

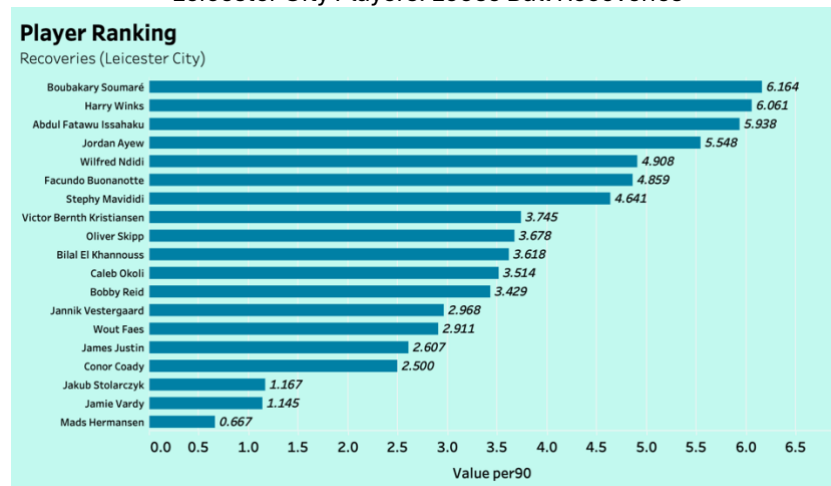


Figure 5:
Leicester City Players: Crosses into the Penalty Area

