



# Tottenham Hotspur

## Pre-Match Analysis

### Expected Line-up:

Manager: **Ange Postecoglou**

Formation: **4-3-3**



### Injuries and Suspensions list<sup>1</sup>

#### Injured Players

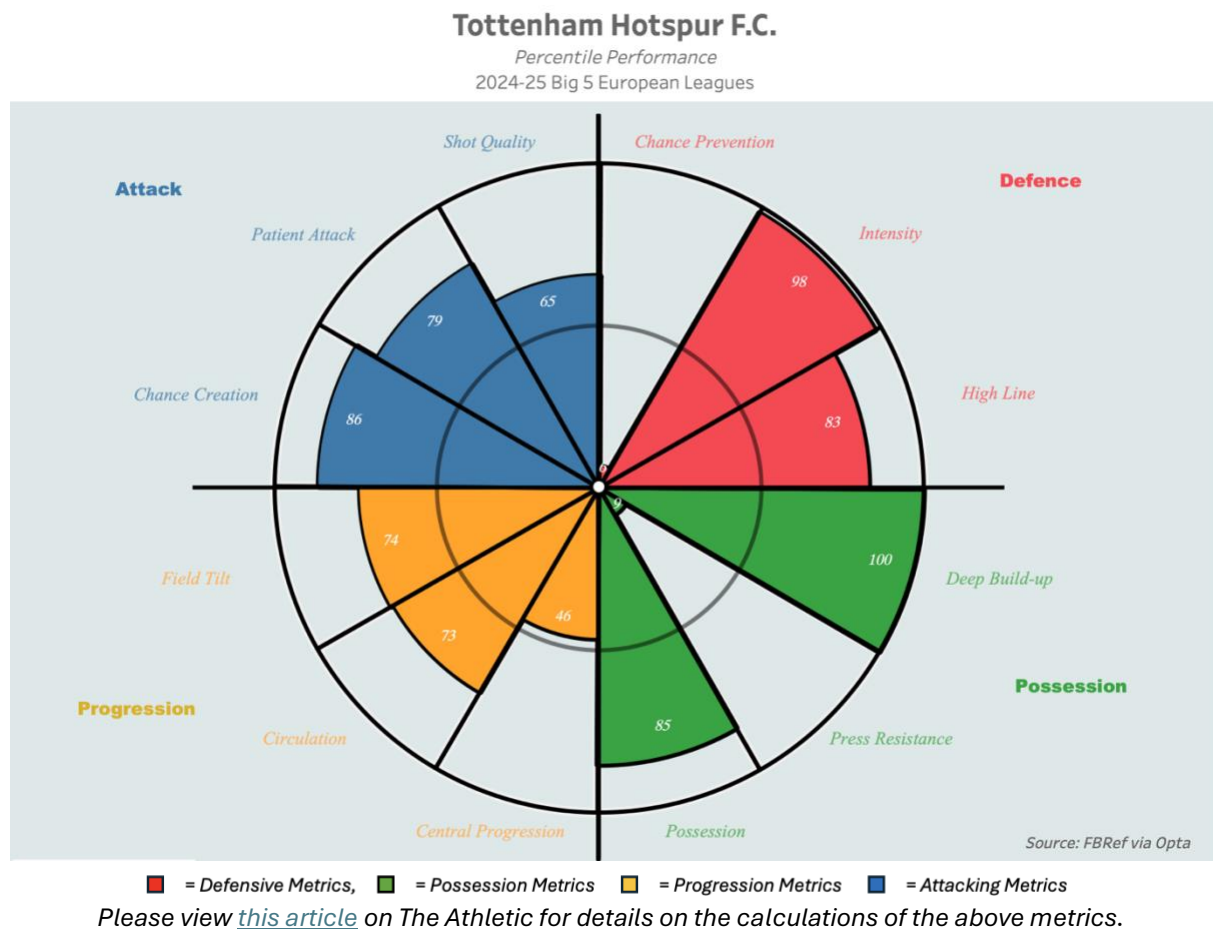
- #06 Radu Dragusin (Knee)
- #09 Richarlison (Calf)
- #21 Dujan Kulusevski (Foot)
- #04 Kevin Danso (Hamstring)

#### Suspended Players

None

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.premierleague.com/latest-player-injuries>

## Data-Driven Analysis:



Tottenham play with **High Intensity** off-the-ball, often pressing high while holding a **High Line**. Their pressing and counter-pressing instructions help them record high amounts of average **Possession** and **Field Tilt** percentages.

Tottenham often **Build from Deep**, often playing out from the back when in-possession. They have recorded some of the shortest goalkeeper passing distances and have very low launch rates on average. However, they are also prone to making errors during build-up which is indicated by their low **Press Resistance** figures. A narrow rest defence and errors during build-up play have resulted in Tottenham being the 4<sup>th</sup> worst team in the Premier League in terms of **Chance Prevention**.

Low **Central Progression** figures indicate their preference to move the ball through the wide areas, often utilizing their wingers and full-backs to move the ball into the final third and create chances.

**Let's dive deeper into the tactics utilized by Ange Postecoglou that allow them to put up these numbers.**

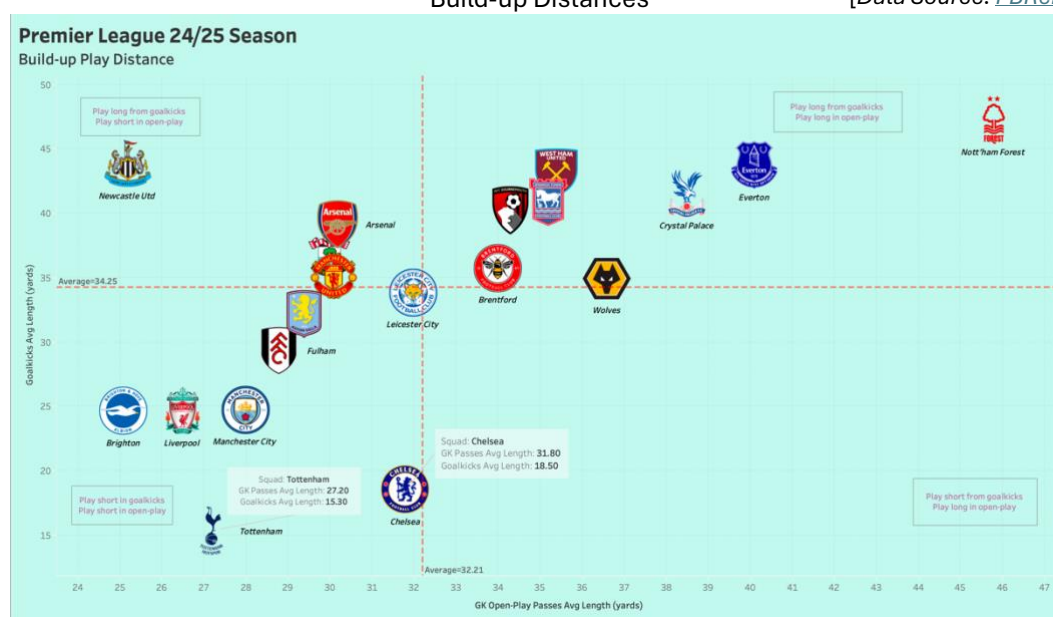
## In-Possession Tactics

Playstyle Wheel Highlights: High Deep Build-up, Low Press Resistance, Low Central Progression, High Chance Creation

### Phase 1: Build-up play in the Defensive Third

Playing out from the back, aiming to get the ball to their central midfielders in the middle third of the pitch.

Figure 1:  
Build-up Distances [Data Source: [FBRef](#)]



Tottenham have the lowest goalkicks average length at 15.30 yards while having the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest open-play pass length for goalkeepers at 27.20 yards, thereby indicating their preference to play short during build-up.

They also have the lowest launch rates for open-play passes and goalkicks:

Table 1:  
Tottenham: Goalkeeper Launch Rates [Data Source: [FBRef](#)]

Metric	Value	EPL Ranking (high → low)
GK Open-Play: Launch Rate	14.6%	20 <sup>th</sup>
Goalkicks: Launch Rate	4.7%	20 <sup>th</sup>

## How do Tottenham play out from the back?

- Playing through the lines of opposition press to find central midfielders
- If passing lanes are blocked by opponent, they use the movement of wingers and full-backs to create space in midfield.

Figure 2:  
Tottenham: Build-up play movement

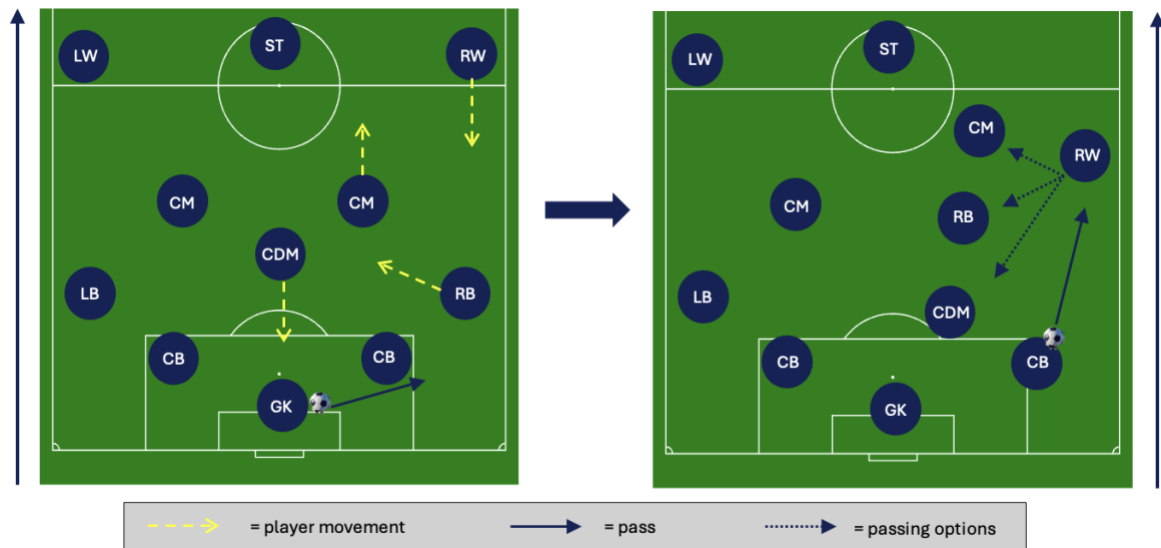
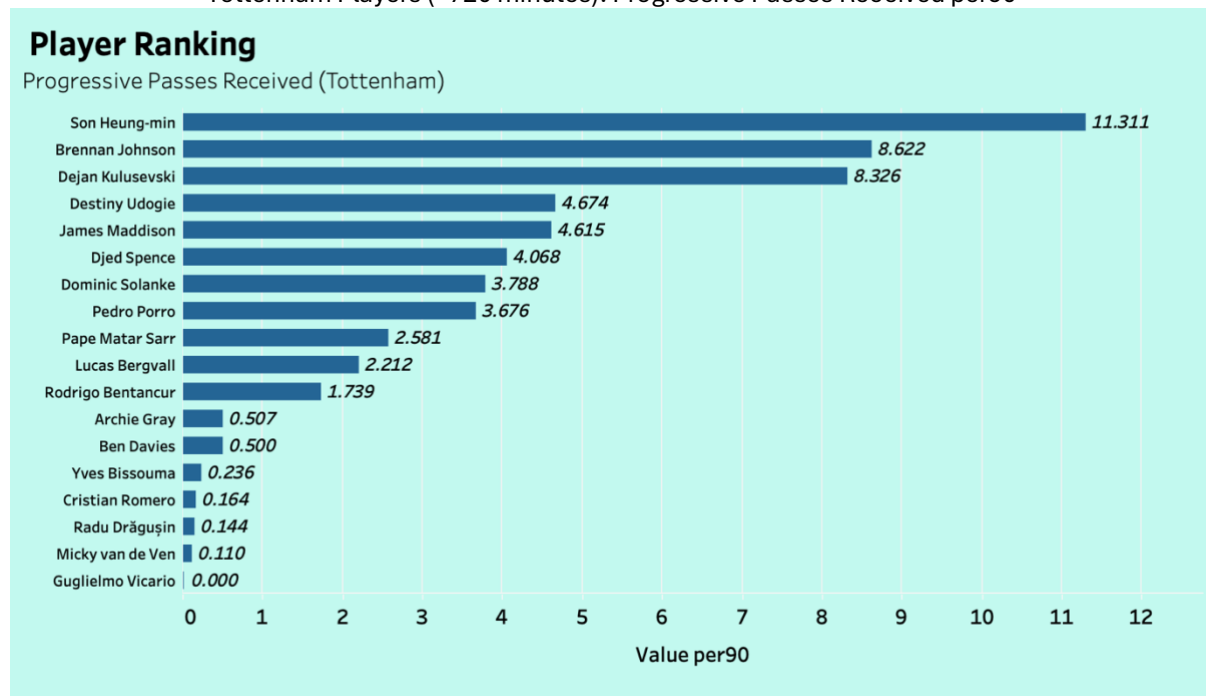


Figure 3:  
Tottenham Players (>720 minutes): Progressive Passes Received per90



Tottenham's wingers (Son, Johnson, Kulusevski) rank the highest among their teammates in terms of progressive passes received, followed by their full-backs (Udogie, Spence) and central midfielders (Maddison).

## Phase 2: Progression through the Midfield Third

Tottenham instruct their **midfielders and full-backs** to **carry the ball forwards** when given the opportunity to do so, often taking-on opposition players to progress the ball through the midfield third.

Figure 3:

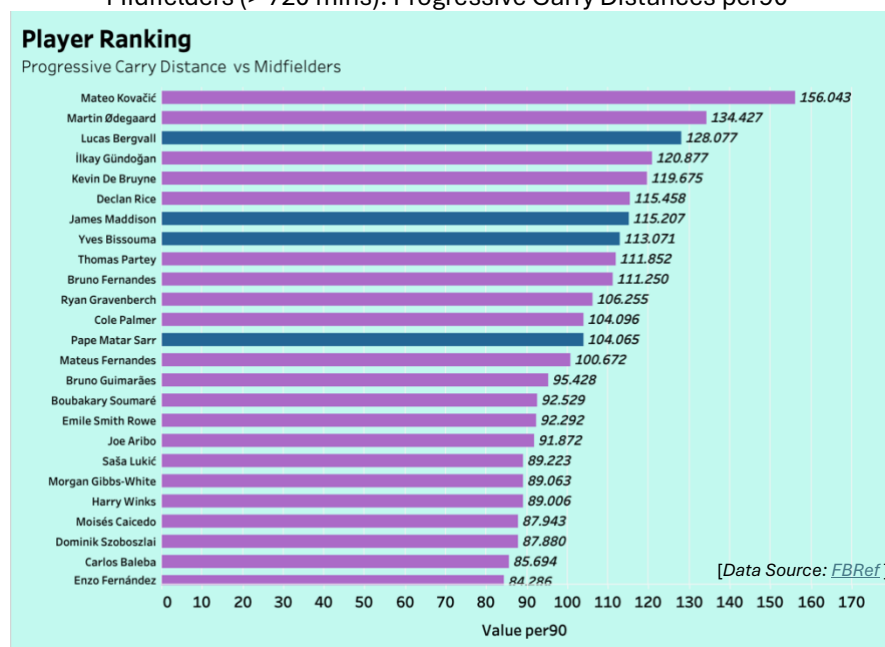
Midfielders (> 720 mins): Take-Ons Attempted per90



Tottenham's Central Midfielders – James Maddison and Lucas Bergvall – rank highest among all midfielders in the premier league in terms of take-ons attempted.

Figure 4:

Midfielders (> 720 mins): Progressive Carry Distances per90



Tottenham's midfielders rank very high in terms of distance covered by progressive carries per game this season when compared to other Premier League midfielders.

Tottenham likes to absorb pressure during their build-up phase to open space for their wingers and central midfielders in the midfield third.

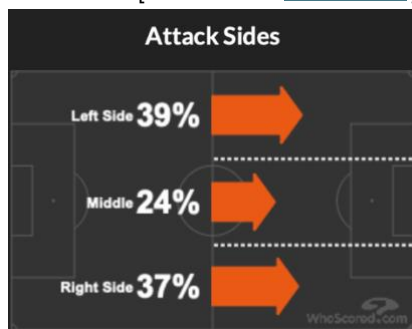
- Their midfielders are strong in protecting the ball and making progressive carries through their defensive half. However, this has led to several errors and turnovers in the attacking and midfield thirds (see *table 2*).

Table 2:  
Tottenham: Possession Loss metrics in their defensive half [Data Source: [FBRef](#)]

Metric	Value	EPL Ranking (high → low)
Errors leading to Shot	32	4 <sup>th</sup>
Opposition Tackles in Midfield Third per90	8.90	1 <sup>st</sup>
Opposition Tackles in Attacking Third per90	3.03	5 <sup>th</sup>
Take-Ons: Tackled Rate	51.2%	2 <sup>nd</sup>

## Phase 3: Attacking in the Final Third

[Data Source: [WhoScored](#)]



Attack through wide areas using their wingers and full-backs.

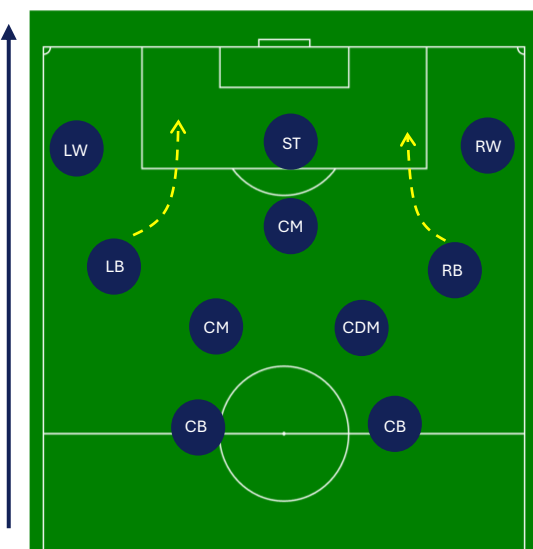
Wingers and full-backs are tasked with beating their defenders and crossing the ball into the box.

- If the player moves to the byline, they usually play a cut-back aimed at the edge of the six-yard box.
- If the player cuts back, they whip an in-swinging cross aimed at the striker.

Table 3:  
Wide-Play Statistics [Data Source: [FBRef](#)]

Metric	Value	EPL Ranking (high → low)
Take-ons Attempted per90	22.14	1 <sup>st</sup>
Crosses attempted per90	20.45	4 <sup>th</sup>

## Player Movements in the Final Third



- **Full-backs join attack and makes underlapping runs.**
  - This movement also allows the wingers to cut inside to create chances.
- **One of the two central midfielders stays central at the edge of the box.**
  - The holding midfielder and second central midfielder provide support.

## Out-of-Possession Tactics

Playstyle Wheel Highlights: High Intensity, High Defensive Line, High Field Tilt, Poor Chance Prevention

### Defensive Shape: 4-1-4-1

Their **defensive shape adjusts to prevent the opposition midfielders from getting on the ball**, with Tottenham players man-marking pivot players and pressing against the defensive unit.

Figure 5:  
Expecting Pressing Map vs Chelsea



Tottenham press with two out of their three midfielders against teams that use two pivots during their build-up.

Based on how Chelsea sets-up during build-up, Tottenham are expected to press in a 4-1-4-1 shape:

- Wingers pressing against the wide central defenders when in-possession.
- The two central midfielders are expected to man-mark the pivot players to prevent them from getting on the ball during build-up.
- Main defensive unit will include the centre-backs, the full-backs and a defensive midfielder providing support.

### Pressing Approach: High Intensity Press

Designed to reduce time on-the-ball for the opposition defensive unit during build-up.

- Their press is triggered when ball is passed backwards, forcing the opposition to play the ball back to the goalkeeper, who clears under pressure.

Maintaining a **High Defensive Line** also helps reduce space for the opposition to play through them by staying compact between units.

Table 4:  
Tottenham High Press Metrics

[Data Source: [FBRef](#)]

Metric	Value	EPL Ranking (high → low)
PPDA <sup>2</sup>	8.78	18 <sup>th</sup>
Tottenham: Tackles in Midfield Third	8.03	4 <sup>th</sup>
Tottenham: Tackles in Attacking Third	2.72	7 <sup>th</sup>
Opposition: Goalkeeper Launch Rate	50.46%	1 <sup>st</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Data Source: <https://understat.com/league/EPL>

## **Defensive Width:** Compact

- Once the opposition breaks through the press or hold possession in the Tottenham's defensive half, **Tottenham take up a very compact defensive shape.**
  - Wingers are instructed to track back and cover the wide areas.
  - Full-backs and midfielders stay compact to reduce space in the middle of the pitch.

## ***Transition Tactics***

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### **Defence to Attack Transition:** Fast Breaks

Tottenham try to break through the middle quickly after winning possession.

- Midfielders play an important role since they are strong in taking-on players and making progressive carries through the opposition players.

Table 5:  
Tottenham: Counter-Attacking metrics

[Data Source: [FBRef](#)]

Metric	Value	EPL Ranking (high → low)
Fast Breaks Shots	29	7 <sup>th</sup>
Fast Break Goals	10	2 <sup>nd</sup>

### **Attack to Defence Transition:** Counter-Press

Tottenham try to win back possession quickly after turnovers.

- This helps them keep high amounts of possession as well as holding a higher field tilt as compared to their opposition on average.

Table 6:  
Tottenham: High Possession Metrics

[Data Source: [FBRef](#)]

Metric	Value	EPL Ranking (high → low)
Average Possession	56.8%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Tottenham: Tackles in Midfield Third	55.66%	6 <sup>th</sup>



## SWOT Analysis

### Tottenham Hotspur Strengths:

- Skilful wingers and midfielders, who are quick and strong in carrying the ball.
- Attack-minded full-backs who often push forward to join attacks and create numerical overloads to put pressure on opposition defence

### Tottenham Hotspur Weaknesses:

- Prone to making errors and turning over possession in dangerous areas.
- Have some of the weakest chance prevention numbers in the top 5 European Leagues this season
- Dealing with numerous injuries to key players this season, with some of them returning very recently.

### Potential Opportunities for Chelsea:

- Breaking through Tottenham press can allow creative players like Cole Palmer and Enzo Fernandez to receive the ball in attacking half-spaces.
- Tottenham have a narrow, centrally-focused rest defence that can be exploited on the flanks after winning possession.



### Potential Threats for Chelsea:

- Allowing Tottenham to build from deep and falling into their trap of attracting the press.
- Allowing Tottenham wingers to receive passes without pressure.