



# Southampton F.C

## Pre-Match Analysis

### Expected Line-up:

Manager: **Ivan Jurić**

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



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

#### ***Injured Players***

#35 J. Bednarek (Knock)  
#06 T. Harwood-Bellis (Ankle)  
#10 A. Lallana (Hamstring)  
#24 R. Fraser (Lower Leg)  
#11 R. Stewart (Lower Leg)

#### ***Suspended Players***

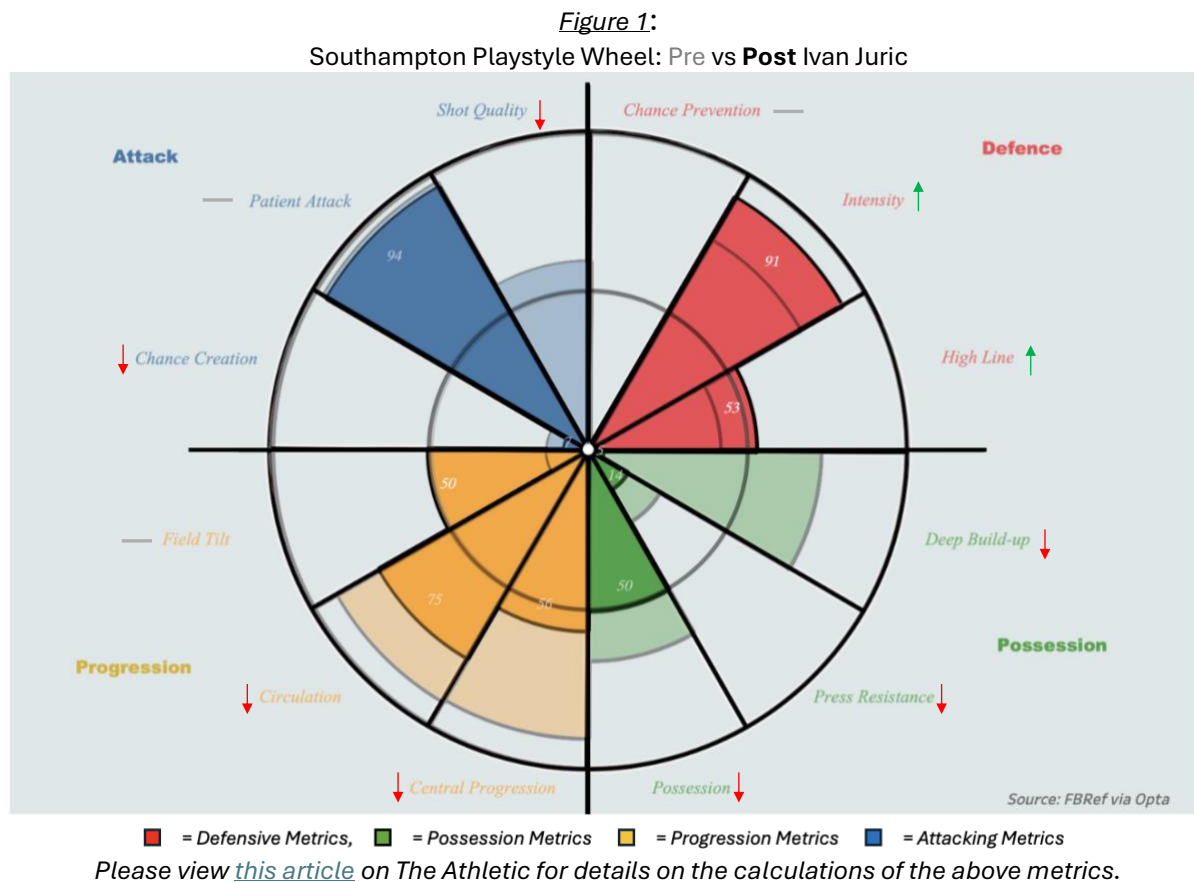
None

#### ***Ineligible Players***

#26 L. Ugochukwu (parent club)

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

## Playstyle Wheel:



## How has Southampton's tactical approach changed after the appointment of Ivan Jurić?

- The biggest change in Southampton's tactical approach under Ivan Jurić has been in the way Southampton move the ball in **Possession**.
  - The biggest change has been in Southampton's preference to **play short out the back** and **Build from deep**, abandoning this tactic and choosing to launch the ball into the final third.
  - Consequently, Southampton have also seen a slight drop in their **Average Possession** values, while also reducing their **Circulation** and **Central Progression** values – both of which are normally simultaneous with teams that keep high amounts of possession and pass their way out of defensive and midfield thirds.
- Another difference has been in Southampton's **Pressing** approach.
  - They have increased their **Pressing Intensity**, while also keeping a slightly **Higher Defensive Line**.
  - However, this has not had an effect on their ability to **prevent their opponent from creating goal-scoring opportunities**, as they still rank bottom among the teams competing in the Big 5 European Competitions.
- Southampton's **Attacking** metrics have seen a slight drop since the appointment of Jurić
  - Although they take more shots per game, their **average shot distance** has increased, while their **non-penalty xG** generated per game has reduced even further than what it was R. Martin.

## In-Possession Tactics

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

### Phase 1: Build-up

- **Long, Aerial balls** played during Goal-kicks and when Goal-Keeper is under pressure from opponent's attackers. (Launch rate (passes, Goalkicks), success %, Long Balls att)

*Table 1:*  
Build-up Metrics

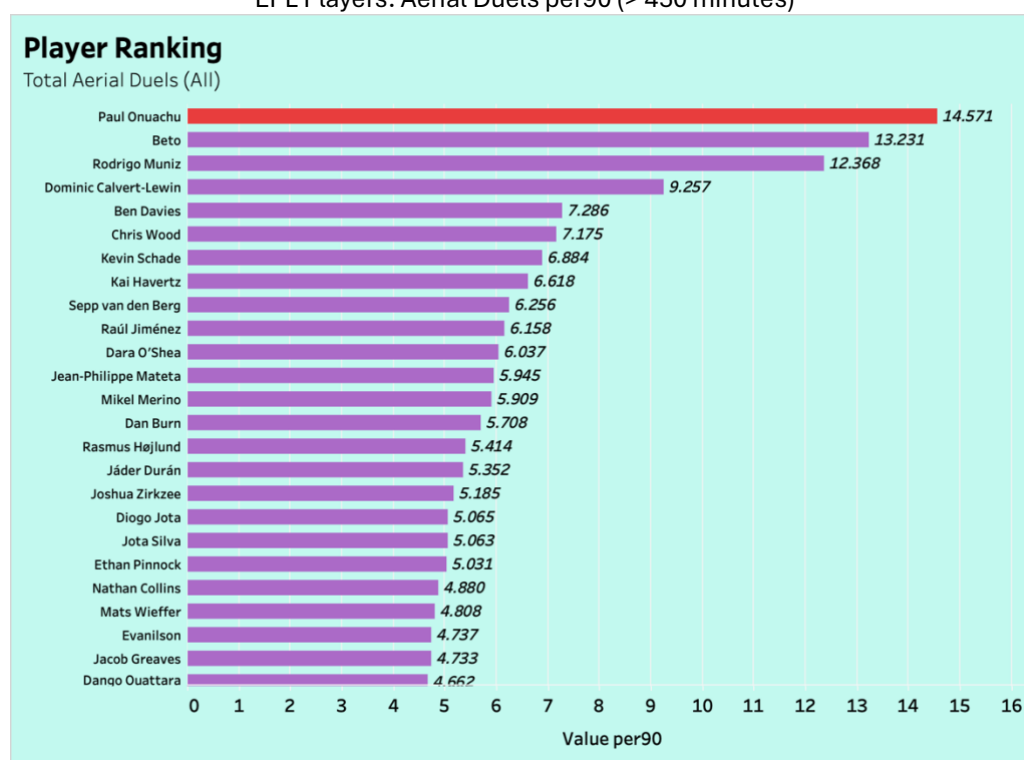
Metric	Value per90	EPL Ranking (high → low)
Launch Rate	65.80%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Goalkicks: Average Length	67.20 yards	1 <sup>st</sup>
GK Open-Play Passes: Average Length	41.50 yards	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Long Passes Attempted (> 40 yards)	71.00	5 <sup>th</sup>

- However, when Southampton win the ball back in the defensive third, they choose to build using short passes especially when there is no pressure from the opposition.

### What player(s) are frequently involved in this phase?

- Southampton's launched passes from their defensive half are normally aimed at their 6' 7" striker – P. Onuachu (#32)

*Figure 2:*  
EPL Players: Aerial Duels per90 (> 450 minutes)



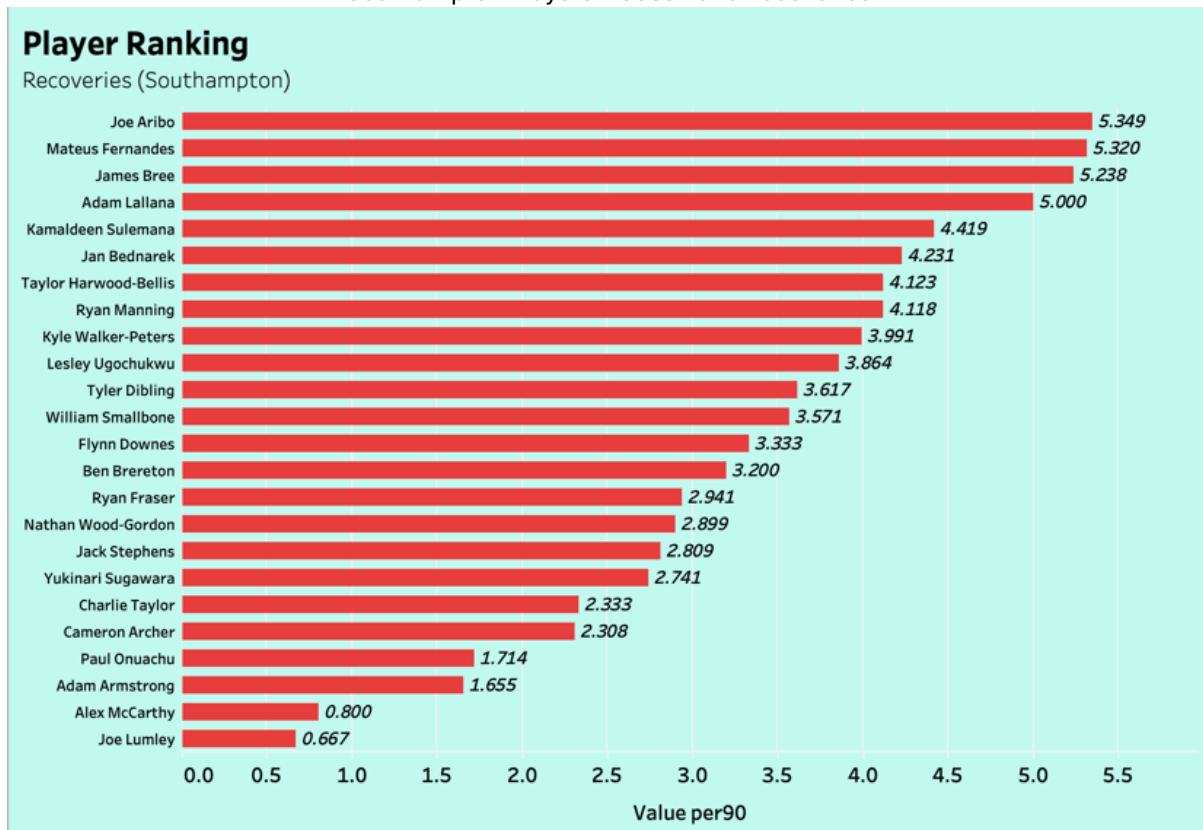
P. Onuachu is involved in the highest number of aerial duels among all players in the Premier League this season, competing in 14.571 duels per game on average. His aerial strength is seen in the numbers as well, with him winning 64.7% of his aerial duels – recording the second highest aerial duels win rate than all other forward players.

## Phase 2: Progression into Final Third

- Southampton's build-up phase tactics bypasses the midfield third and moves directly into the final third.
  - Central midfielders are responsible for trying to **win loose balls** if P. Onuachu loses his aerial duel, with the midfielders recording the highest number of recoveries at the club (see figure 4 in appendices).

Figure 2:

Southampton Players: Loose Balls Recoveries



- When Southampton choose to build from deep, they **progress the ball through the midfield third using their central midfielders**.

## Phase 3: Final Third

- A lot of Southampton's attempts to create chances come by **crossing the ball into the penalty area**.
  - They record the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of crosses into the penalty area since Jurić's appointment, recording 2.50 crosses into the penalty area per90.
- Key Attacking Movements of Southampton players
  - K. Sulemana (#20) occupies space on the left wing, opting to **take on defenders** using his speed and dribbling ability. He records the highest number of take-ons attempted at the club with 6.51 take-ons per 90.
  - J. Bree (#14) leaves his right center-back position and joins the attack as a right winger when the ball is being progressed through the right wing. One of the holding midfielders drops into the role of RCB to cover his position.
- Slight improvements in attacking metrics but continued **struggles to break opposition defences** and create goal-scoring chances.

*Table 2:*  
Attacking Metrics since Jurić's appointment

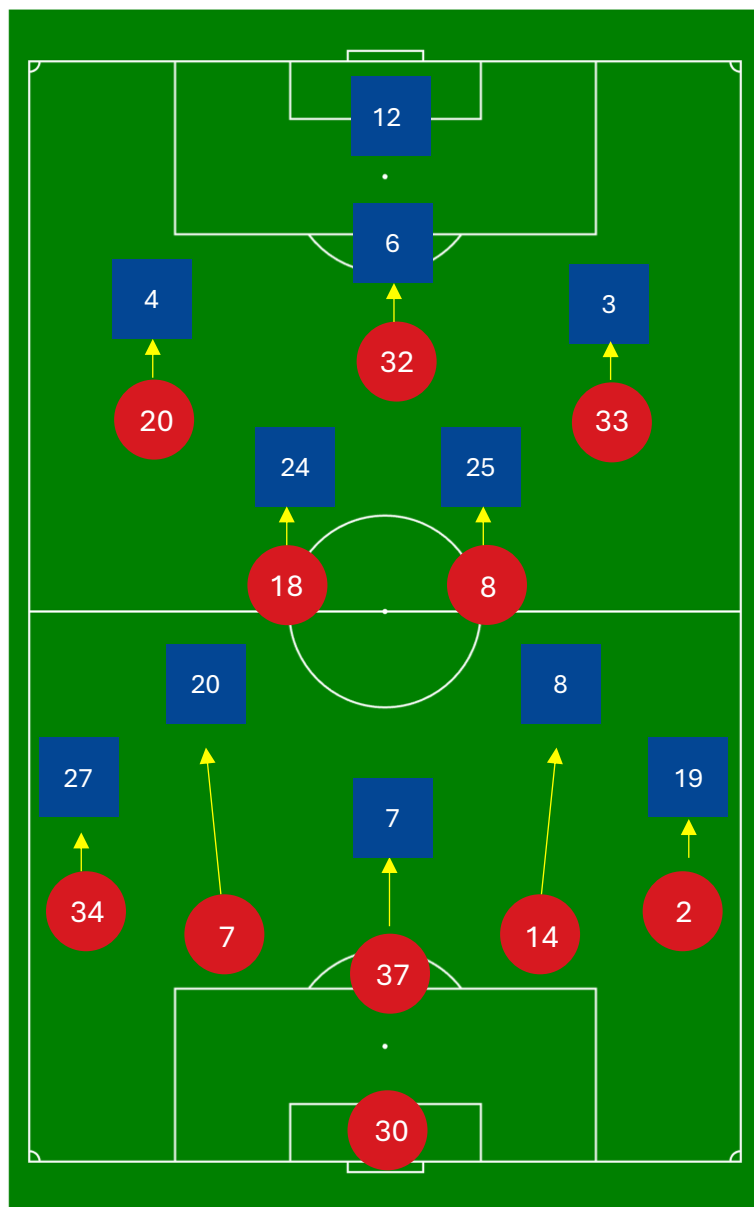
Metric	Value per90	EPL Ranking (high → low)
Goals Scored	0.80	19 <sup>th</sup>
Non-Penalty xG	0.77	19 <sup>th</sup>
Shots	9.90	17 <sup>th</sup>
Touches in Attacking Penalty Area	17.60	17 <sup>th</sup>
Shot-Creating Actions	18.20	17 <sup>th</sup>

## Out-of-Possession Tactics

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

Figure 3:

**Southampton's** expected man-marking pressing system against **Chelsea** during Chelsea's build-up.  
**5-2-3** **3-4-3**



### Defensive Shape: 5-2-3

#### Man-Marking Tactics:

##### *Role of Central Midfielders:*

Southampton's central midfielders (#8, #18) track the opposition holding midfielders deep into Southampton's attacking half, leaving a lot of space open between the defensive and midfield units.

##### *Role of Central Defenders:*

Southampton's Right and Left sided Center Backs, #7 and #14 respectively, often leave their defensive line to mark the opposition attacking midfielders.

The two wing-backs are then responsible to cover runs being made into the spaces left by the central defenders.

### Pressing Approach: High Press

Table 2:

Attacking Metrics since Jurić's appointment

Metric	Value per90	EPL Ranking (high → low)
PPDA <sup>2</sup>	9.83	6 <sup>th</sup>
Tackles in Midfield Third	9.20	2 <sup>nd</sup>

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

## Transition Tactics

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

- Southampton try to break fast after winning possession, hoping to catch the opposition before they set into their defensive shape.

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

- Southampton's shape in-possession often leaves them with a lot of open space once possession switches hands.
- To prevent opposition from counter-attacking them, Southampton counter-press once they lose possession in an attempt to reduce time and space for opposition player on-the-ball.

## SWOT Analysis

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Southampton Strengths	Southampton Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerially Strong – they win 56.90% of their aerial duels, more than any other team in the Premier League.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak defensive structure – concede the highest amount of xGA.</li> <li>• Susceptible to counter-attacks</li> </ul>
Threats for Chelsea	Opportunities for Chelsea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K. Sulemana (#20) can be the biggest threat against Chelsea on the left wing – very quick and strong dribbler.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chelsea's attacking movement can pull Southampton's defenders out of their shape, allowing other players to make runs into space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Southampton's RCB (#14) and LCB (#7) track their players deep into midfield as well, often leaving gaps in their defensive line.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Southampton is very weak in defending counter-attacks, and Chelsea's quick attackers can cause trouble.</li> </ul>