

Premier League

Matchday 28 of 38

Chelsea

vs

Leicester City



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60' Marc Cucurella

BRIEF SUMMARY OF FIXTURE OUTCOME

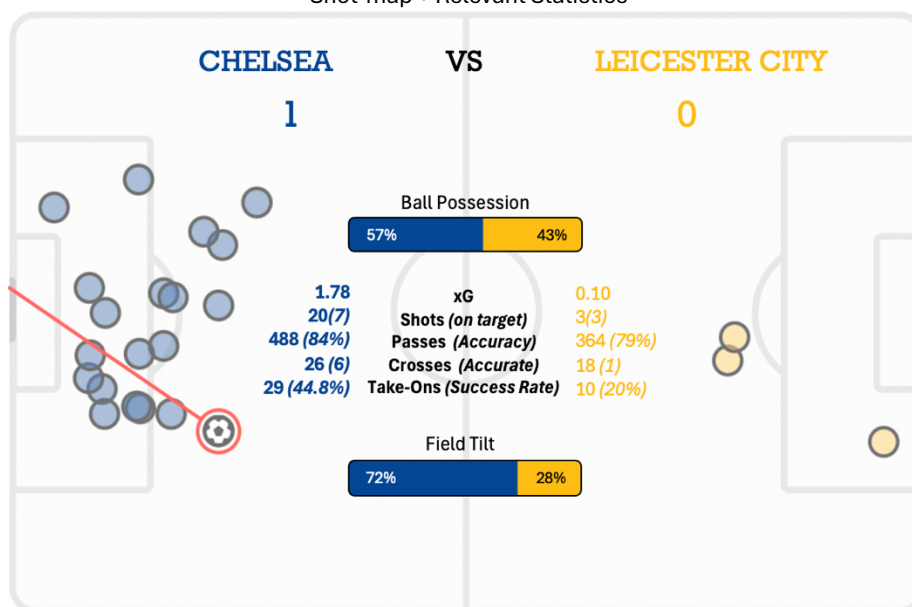
CHELSEA : controlled-possession and patient-attack system

VS

LEICESTER CITY : low-block and counter-attack system

Figure 1:

Shot-map + Relevant Statistics



Leicester City's gameplan against Chelsea was to frustrate them – often settling into a low-block system with 5 defenders and 2 holding midfielders in front of them. This allowed Chelsea to control possession throughout the game, holding around 68.2% of possession until Marc Cucurella's goal in the 60th minute.

Figure 2:

Shot-map + Relevant Statistics

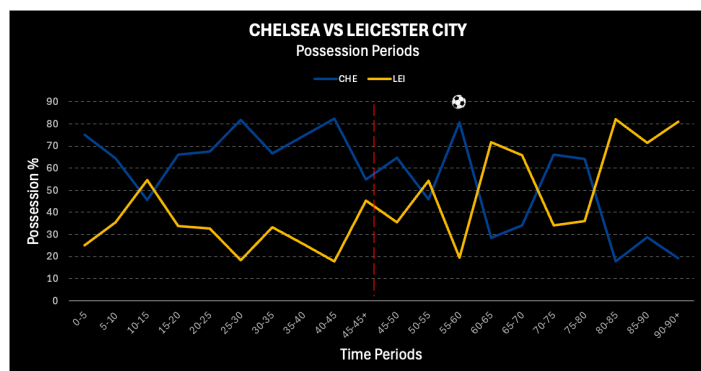
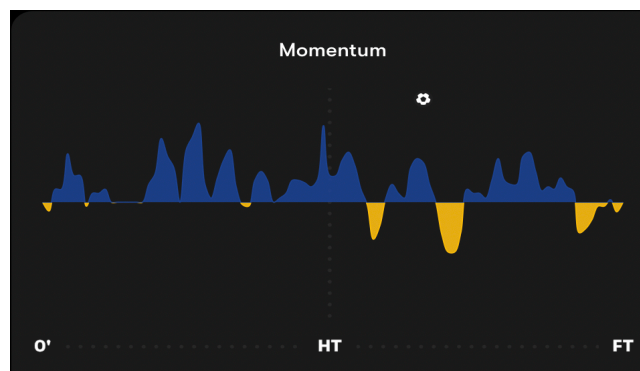


Figure 3:

Momentum Chart



Leicester City shifting into a 5-back system also forced Chelsea to make adjustments in their tactical system, committing left-back **Marc Cucurella** in a 6-man attacking unit to create numerical advantages against Leicester City's 5-man defensive unit. However, Leicester City's compact low-block made it difficult for Chelsea to create threatening goal-scoring chances through the middle, forcing them to attack down the right wing.

Let's dive deeper into the tactical analysis of both teams to get a better understanding of how the teams were set-up and why key events occurred during the fixture.

CHELSEA'S TACTICAL APPROACH

[All live-match screenshots shown in the report below have been taken from JioHotstar's Replay of Chelsea vs Leicester City on 9th March 2025. All rights belong to JioHotstar. They have been telestrated on by the author of this report]

In-Possession

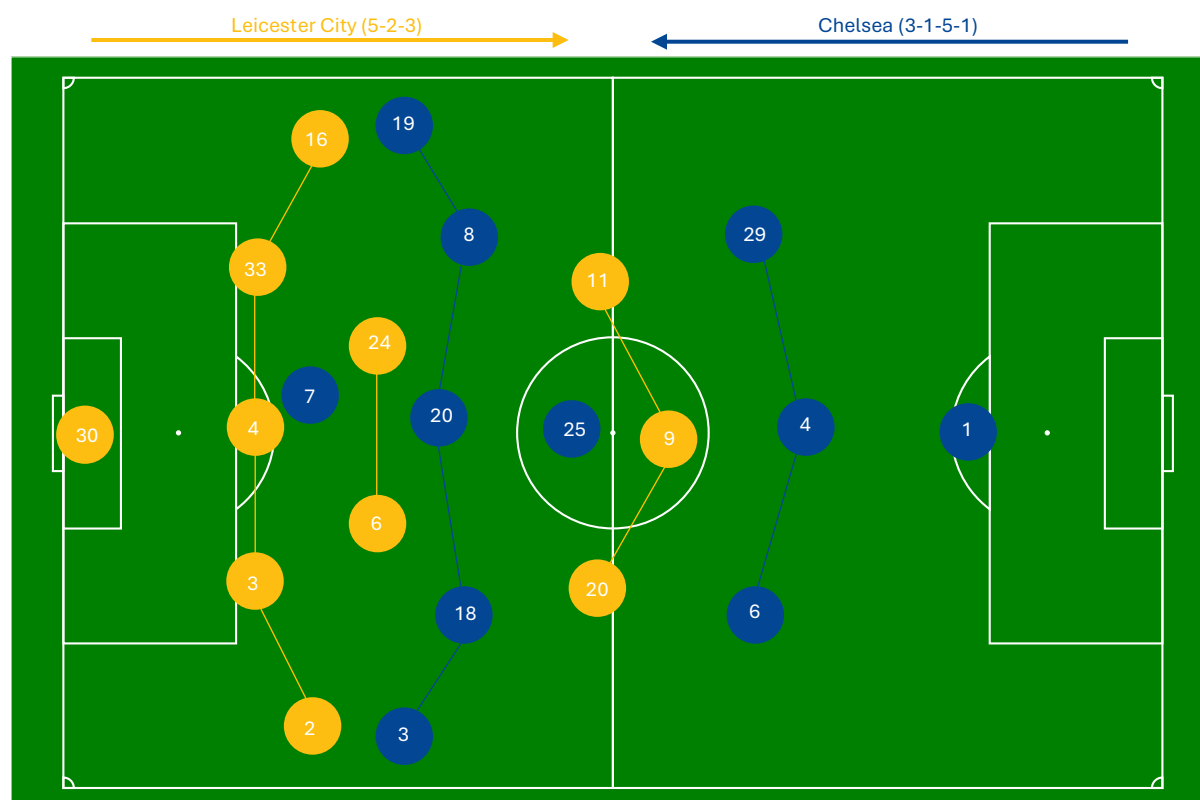
Chelsea shifted into a **3-1-5-1** shape, effectively attacking with 6 players against Leicester City's **5-2-3** defensive formation.

Chelsea usually invert one of the full-backs into the holding midfield position alongside Moises Caicedo. However, in this fixture, left-back **Marc Cucurella (#3)** was given the responsibility to advance up the pitch – essentially operating as a winger / wide midfielder on the left flank.

Pedro Neto (#7) was instructed to roam freely: making runs in-behind, dropping deep to open passing lanes and/or occupying open space left by defenders jumping out of the defensive line.

Figure 4:

Chelsea Attacking shape vs Leicester City defensive shape



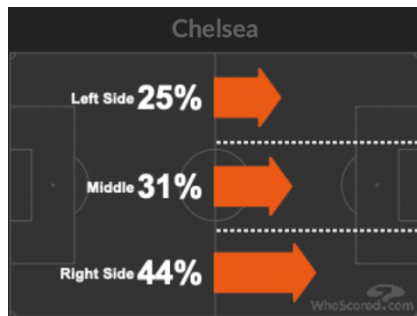
Enzo Maresca's tactics are often designed to create 1v1 situations in wide positions, giving his wingers the opportunities to take-on opposition defenders to create goal-scoring opportunities.

Table 1:

Chelsea Take-on Metrics (Benchmarked against Season Average)

Metric	Avg. value this season per90	vs Leicester City	League Ranking (high → low)
Take-Ons: Attempted	21.25	29 ↑	4 th
Take-Ons: Successful	8.93	13 ↑	5 th

Figure 5:
Chelsea Attack Sides
vs Leicester City

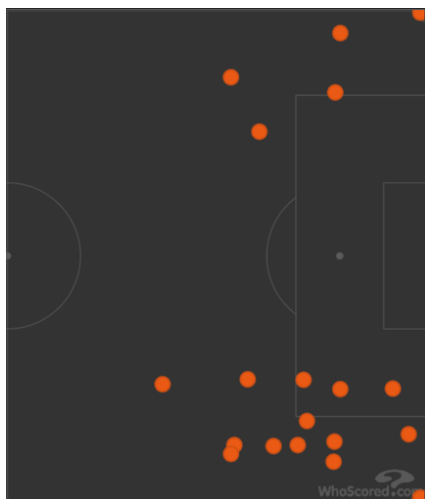


Source: [WhoScored.com](https://www.whoscored.com)

- However, with multiple attacking options unavailable, **Marc Cucurella (#3)** occupied the wide left flank position while Christopher Nkunku (#18) occupied the left pocket, with both players lacking the quality to directly take-on defenders and beat them in 1v1 situations.
- Chelsea were therefore dependent on the players on the right side to create chances.

With Leicester City staying compact in the middle of the pitch and Chelsea using their width to attack, Chelsea attempted to create chances by playing crosses into the penalty box from the right flank.

Figure 6:
Crosses Attempted by Chelsea
vs Leicester City



Source: [WhoScored.com](https://www.whoscored.com)

The pitch map here shows the number of crosses played by Chelsea against Leicester City. Evidently, the number of crosses they played from the right flank (13 from open-play) exceed the crosses played from the left flank (4 from open-play).

Over the course of this season, crosses have accounted for 9.63% of Chelsea's touches in the attacking third. However, this value increased by over 25% against Leicester City, with crosses accounting for 12.10% their touches in the attacking third.

How did Chelsea's set-up allow them to carry out their tactical plan?

Chelsea primarily used Leicester City's man marking system to drag central defenders out of the defensive line, thereby opening gaps in their defensive unit.

Chelsea's progression through the middle third of the pitch usually occurred through the left side, with Cucurella and Nkunku dropping to receive passes. This pulled Leicester City's midfield and forward line towards the left, opening space on the opposite end in the middle third.

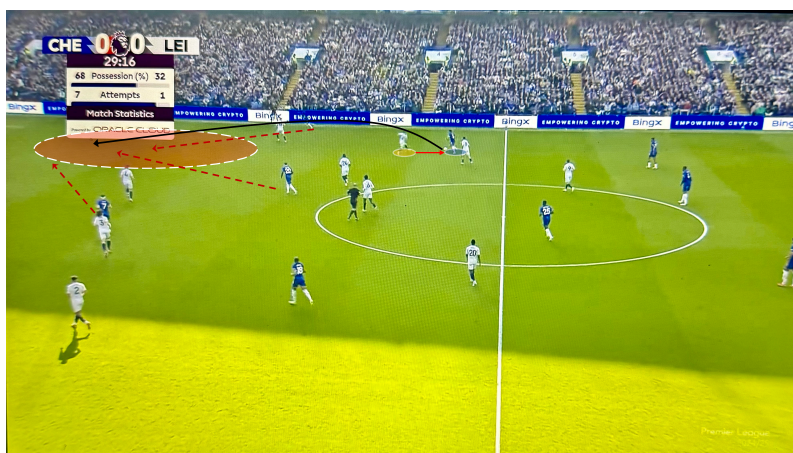
Figure 7:

Enzo Fernandez Heat Map
vs Leicester City



Enzo Fernandez often dropped into this space to receive the ball.

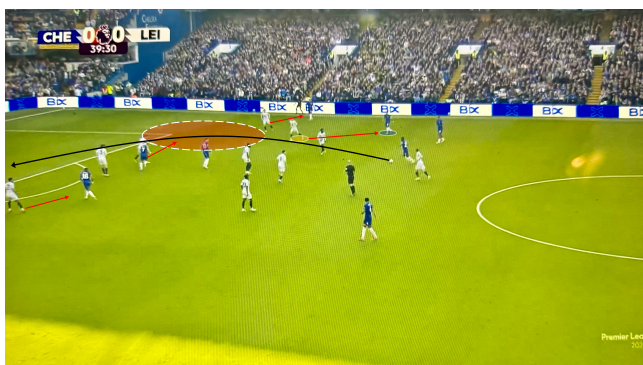
Wanting to prevent Enzo Fernandez from using his creative abilities to progress the ball, Leicester City often used **Luke Thomas (#33)** to apply pressure on him in the right half-space.



Luke Thomas leaving the defensive line opened a gap between **Victor Kristiansen** (who stays close to **Jadon Sancho**) and **Conor Cody** (who stays close to **Pedro Neto**).

This space was used by **Neto**, **Palmer**, and **Sancho** to make runs in behind the defensive line.

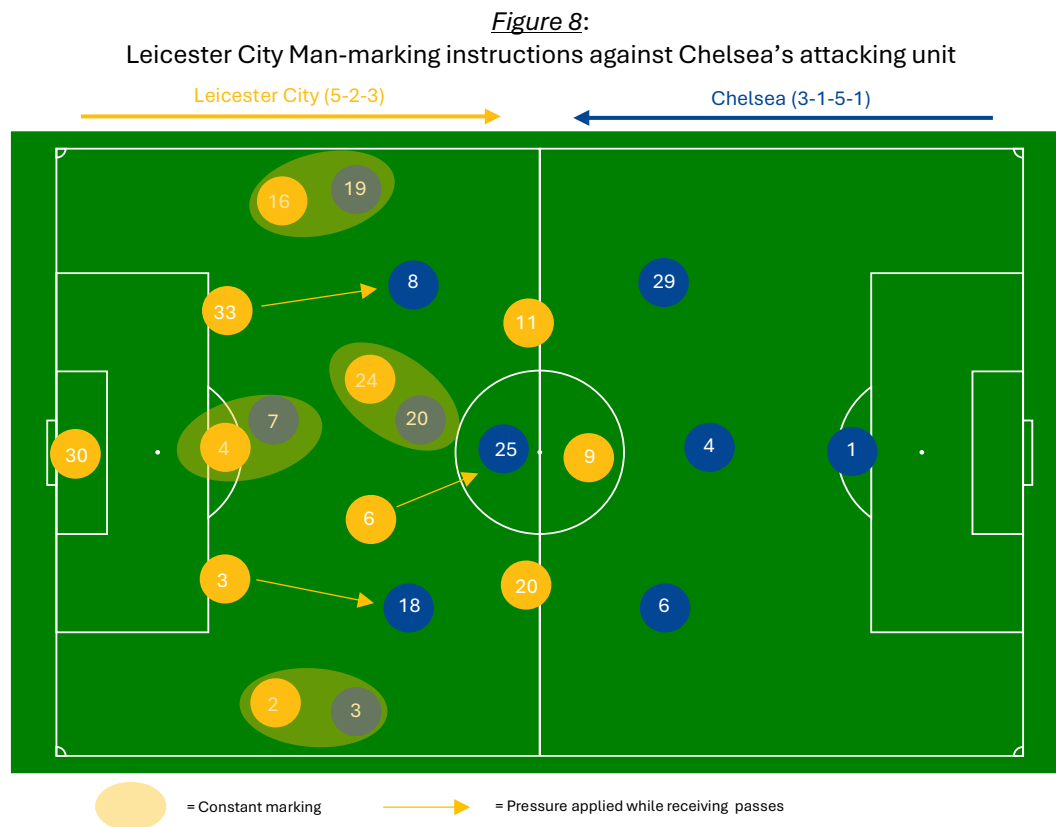
If Leicester City are able to shift the defensive line to shut the passing lane before Chelsea could exploit the space, it usually left Marc Cucurella free on the opposite flank to make runs behind Leicester City's defensive line.



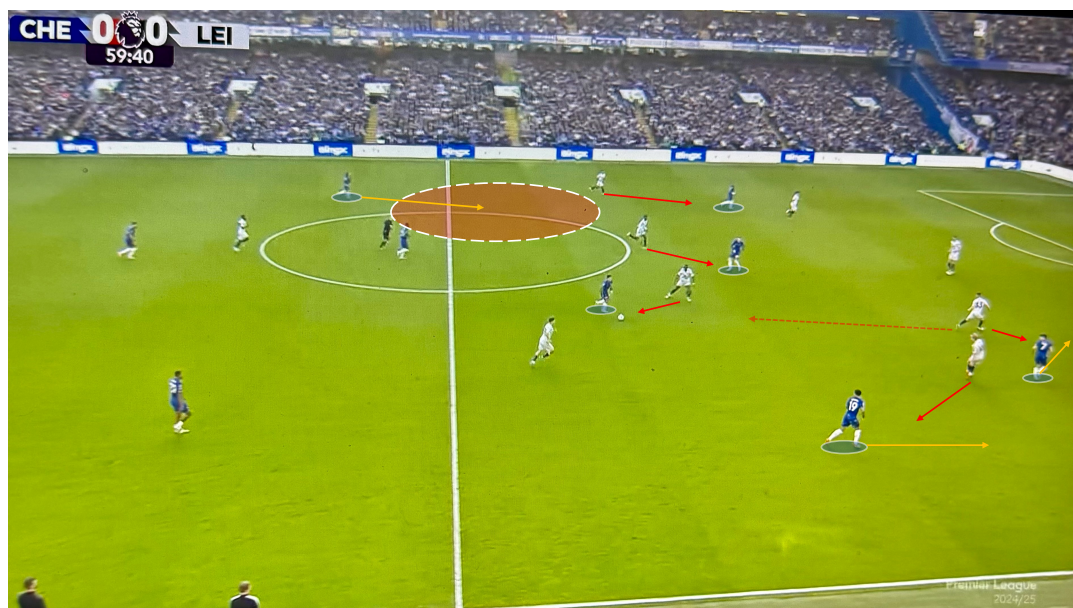
This movement was also the reason why they were the targets for most crosses played from the right flank, usually positioning themselves on the back post.

GOAL 60' Marc Cucurella | Chelsea 1 – 0 Leicester City

Pedro Neto's free-roaming role and its consequent effect on Leicester City's man-marking instructions was instrumental in the build-up of Chelsea's goal.



The above pitch map indicates how Leicester City's defensive and midfield units marked and pressed Chelsea's attacking players.



In the build-up to the goal, **Pedro Neto** (#7) drifts closer to **Luke Thomas** (#33) in the right half-space, preventing him from pressing out to cover **Enzo Fernandez** (#8) .



As a result, **Boubakary Soumaré** (#24) leaves **Cole Palmer** (#20) to cover Enzo Fernandez, leaving **Wilfred Ndidi** (#6) to mark Cole Palmer. **Christopher Nkunku's** (#18) movement towards the wing forces a retreating **James Justin** (#2) to mark him, leaving a massive gap in the left pocket for Chelsea.



Marc

Cucurella (#3) who arrives late to join the attack is left without a marker at the edge of the box, with the defensive line unwilling to step out of their low-block 5-man shape and the holding midfielders occupied with Cole Palmer and Enzo Fernandez.

Cucurella shoots from the left pocket into the bottom right corner to give Chelsea the lead, scoring the only goal in this fixture.