Twitter Thread by AbuBakar Siddiq



AbuBakar Siddiq
@BigManBakar

The Review: GW 19 - A thread

Hi everyone, welcome to the latest edition of “The Review” where I look at the double GW gone by, De Bruyne and Vardy replacements in detail:

#FPL #FPLCommunity @OfficialFPL

(Data taken from @FFScout and @FFH_HQ with consent)

Before I start, I'd like to introduce you to this game called Fantasy5. It’s free to enter, with a £10k weekly prize. All you have to do is to pick 5 players that you think will beat their Fantasy points target. I find it to be a lot of fun! Link here:

https://t.co/heKE1cB7N8

At this point, I’d also like to mention that I post about FPL on my Instagram too, so if you have an Instagram account, follow up here!

https://t.co/1tZ92vBXIT

Q: Is Son the obvious De Bruyne replacement? Is it worth doubling up on Spurs attack and if not, who to choose if picking one?

I think we’re at that point where avoiding Heung Min Son despite having the option to get him for De Bruyne if you don’t own him already has to be...

... classified as overthinking. I say that because Son over the past three GWs is top for xG and big chances in the league which is incredible given that Son featured only thrice during that period while some other players played four times. Son is averaging two big chances...

... per game during this run and has managed to accumulate at least one big chance in his previous three games. Granted the fixtures were easy but his big chance numbers have gone up even by his own high standards:

Son GW 17-19 v Son GW 1-16

Mins per chance created: 38.43 v 46.67
Mins per big chance created: 134.5 v 252
Mins per shot in the box: 38.43 v 70
Mins per big chance: 44.83 v 105
Mins per expected involvement (xGi): 113.5 v 209.3

Liverpool may be a tough fixture on paper it will suit Son as he will get plenty of space to exploit behind Trent on the left. Besides, Liverpool's defensive numbers away are fairly poor compared to their numbers at home so I'd expect Spurs to get quite a few big chances:

Liverpool (Home 20/21) vs Liverpool (Away 20/21)

Shots conceded inside the box per game: 5.1 vs 5.44
Big chances conceded per game: 1.7 vs 2.33

Only seven teams have conceded more big chances away from home than Liverpool this season. Hence, I think that Son is a great...

... shout this week as all sorts of underlying numbers are screaming points for him. I don't think I'd double up with Kane given the fixtures Spurs have though (LIV bha CHE WBA mci). I think one of Son or Kane is enough for now. I'd pick Son – here is why:

Son v Kane (last 6 matches):

Chances created: 13 v 6
Big chances created: 4 v 3
Shots in the box: 11 v 13
Big chances: 8 v 4
Mins per expected involvement (xGi): 149.7 v 173.8

Q: Who is the best Man City midfielder to own? Is it worth investing in either or is triple Man City defence the way to go?

I first look at Sterling's numbers this season in comparison with his previous averages to assess the level he is playing at:

Sterling 19/20 v Sterling 20/21

Mins per shots in the box: 32 v 48
Mins per big chance: 80.6 v 150
Mins per expected involvement (xGi): 105 v 165.6

As you can see, Sterling's numbers have witnessed a significant decline from last season. He seems to be more of a nostalgic...

... pick these days as his underlying numbers don't justify his premium price. I now look at some of his recent numbers in comparison to the other Man City midfielders:

Gündo■an v Foden v Bernardo v Sterling (GW 13-19)

Mins per chance created: 45 v 26 v 64 v 48
Mins per shot in the box: 37 v 33 v 73 v 48
Mins per big chance: 99 v 183 v 255 v 133
Mins per expected involvement (xGi): 152 v 174 v 259 v 131

Gündo■an seems to be matching Sterling more or less for underlying statistics over recent times, which makes it all the more difficult to justify Sterling as he costs almost twice as much. Foden's numbers are okay as well, but he seems to be at the highest risk of a random...

... Pep benching so I wouldn't be considering him. Bernardo, meanwhile, is not posting underlying numbers good enough to warrant investment. Gündo■an would be my pick here – over the past 7 GWs, he is topping the charts among Man City players for shots in the box and big...

... chances. During the same run, he has scored five times and now averages 5.1 FPL points per game this season. He seems to be safe in terms of minutes too, he has started 11 times and been subbed on just twice this season. With penalties and an affordable price tag in...

... his locker, he is a safe option for investment. I personally don't think tripling up on the Man City defence is a bad option either – particularly for those FPL managers who have a wildcard in-tact. Stones and Dias have now started eleven games together in which Man City...

... have won ten and drawn one, having conceded just one goal in the process which is incredible in itself. Cancelo continues to flirt with huge hauls and I remain (stupidly!) steadfast in my belief that a big FPL haul will come soon. Stones and Dias will carry some degree...

... of goal threat due to the sheer numbers of corners that Man City tend to get – they were awarded 27 corners in this double GW alone which was eight more than what any other team managed. With favorable fixtures (wba SHU bur) on the cards the...

... triple up could be a decent idea. However, it does put one at risk of fielding ten men should there be a random postponement.

Q: What is wrong with Liverpool and is it worth holding onto Mohamed Salah?

Liverpool GW 1-9 v Liverpool GW 10-19

Mins per shots in the box: 7.79 v 9.57
Mins per chance created: 5.4 v 6.4
Mins per big chance: 25.8 v 49.8

The numbers tell their own story...

From GW1-9, Liverpool were ranked top in the league for xG and big chances but from GW 10-19, they don't even feature in the top seven when it comes to the same underlying stats which is quite telling about their struggles. I further bifurcate the data into home and away numbers:

Liverpool GW 10-19 Home v Liverpool GW 10-19 Away

Mins per shots in the box: 8.18 v 11.54
Mins per chance: 6.16 v 11.25
Mins per big chance: 75 v 34.6

What I read from this is that of late, Liverpool are more suited to playing on the counter away from home rather than...

... against deep blocks at home where they still tend to create a decent amount of chances but are struggling for form due to lack of quality chance creation. Even despite their recent struggles, Liverpool were ranked in the top three for big chances and xG per game in away...

... matches from GW 10-19 so their underlying numbers away from home aren't too big of a worry. Liverpool's next two fixtures (tot whu) are both away from home so I don't think I'd be selling Salah at this point. In the league, he has a better minute per big chance ratio away...

... from home (90 mins per big chance) compared to his home ratio (~125.3 mins per big chance) anyway so these away games should suit him. And I wrote this before his brace against Man United!

Q: How will the loss of Vardy impact the Leicester team? Maddison or Barnes?

Maddison v Barnes (last 4 matches):

Chances created: 9 v 4
Big chances created: 0 v 0
Shots in the box: 3 v 8
Big chances: 1 v 3
Penalty area touches: 9 v 18
Expected involvement (xGi): 1.1 v 2.36

As you can see, Barnes over the past 4 GWs is out-stating Maddison in almost all key departments. He possesses more direct goal threat which can be seen over the span of the season as well:

Maddison v Barnes (over the season):

Mins per chance created: 34.8 v 114.33
Mins per big chance created: 1115 v 1372
Mins per shot in the box: 85.8 v 47.3
Mins per big chance: 1115 v 196

Mins per expected involvement (xGi): 309 v 227

There has been a lot of talk about Maddison, but his numbers over the season have been dire to say the least. He has registered just a single big chance and created one big chance for his team-mates which is not something you'd expect from someone of his quality...

... Personally, for someone who reads stats week in week out, I find Leicester incredibly hard to read. To put things into context, Leicester are not even in the top 10 teams for xG at home but at the same time they are ranked second for xG away from home. Despite being...

... second for xG away from home, Leicester are not even in the top ten for non-penalty xG away from home (even Palace have a better non-penalty xG than Leicester away!) which tells me that Leicester's away numbers are inflated because they get a lot of penalties away from...

... home – perhaps due to their counter attacking style. The loss of Vardy will impact this counter attacking style and I'm sure we'll witness a drop in attacking numbers. It's hard to say how the loss of Vardy will impact Vardy and Barnes – however, I run a comparison...

... between them based on how they fared the last four times Vardy didn't play:

Maddison v Barnes (previous 4 matches played without Vardy):

Mins per chance created: 39.4 v 86.25
Mins per shot in the box: 197 v 57.5
Mins per big chance: 197 v 345

Granted that the sample size is small, but numbers for either without Vardy are poor. It's also worth noting that Leicester's average xG without Vardy drops to ~1.13 per game as compared to ~1.52 with him.

Q: How will the return of Barkley affect Jack Grealish? Is it worth keeping Ollie Watkins?

Villa are in the top five for xG, xG non-penalty and big chances over the season so their assets continue to offer good value. Since Ross Barkley has returned to match fitness, El Ghazi...

... will probably not be involved in the starting eleven for the Villa side. I look at El Ghazi's impact on Grealish's numbers:

Grealish with and without El Ghazi:

Mins per shot inside the box: 56.2 vs 45
Mins per big chance: 450 vs 216
Mins per chance created: 17.3 vs 30.86
Mins per big chance created: 90 vs 154.29
Mins per penalty area touch: 15.5 vs 11.25

Simplest explanation of given underlying numbers is that without El Ghazi in the team, Grealish takes on a more direct role and is more involved in the opposition's penalty area hence increasing his goal threat. With El Ghazi in the team, Grealish tends to play the role of a...

... playmaker and allows El Ghazi to do the shooting. Further, with El Ghazi not starting, it is likely that Grealish will be on penalties. More evidence of this is shown by another computation I made. Without El Ghazi in the team, Grealish took 20.87% of Villa's shots inside...

... the box. However, during El Ghazi's spell in the team, that number dropped down to 12.3% for Grealish while El Ghazi carried the chief goal threat accumulating 21.53% of the shots in the box in the Villa team. Ollie Watkins continues to offer good value too. Over the...

... past three GWs, Watkins is second for big chances and over the season Watkins has the best expected involvement (xGi) in the entire Villa side. In summation, given the run of mixed fixtures (bur, sou, WHU, ARS) and the analysis, I would recommend...

... having one Villa asset in the team. Doubling up might be overkill, but having one asset could be fruitful.

Q: Who is the best captain this week and why?

The absence of De Bruyne makes this a fairly straightforward one this week. Bruno Fernandes being the likeliest goal scorer according to the bookies makes him a relatively safe choice. No player has created more chances at home...

... in the league too, which also helps Bruno in bonus accumulation. Hence with goal threat, assist and bonus potential all in his locker, Bruno looks to be the standout option this GW. There’s a lot been said about the Bruno with and without Pogba theory as to how the...

... Frenchman reduces Bruno’s ceiling. It might be true to some extent but it isn’t enough to put me off from captaining Bruno – even with Pogba on the field, Bruno has created two big chances and registered a big chance in his past two matches. There’s also the fact...

... that Ramsdale, along with Patricio and Guaita, is among the worst three keepers in terms of variance between actual goals conceded and expected goals conceded which is also likely to help Bruno’s case...

West Brom (under Bilic) vs West Brom (under Big Sam)

Shots inside the box conceded per game: 10.7 vs 11.2
Big chances conceded per game: 2.69 vs 2.8

De Bruyne if fit would have made a very compelling case for captaincy as West Brom are still as leaky under Big Sam as they...

... were under Bilic. Even though the numbers suggest that City will score quite a few, it’s hard to make a case for any of their midfield options as none of them seem to be as reliable as you’d want your captaincy picks to be. Could be a case of

high risk, high reward though.

Q: Who is the best Jamie Vardy replacement?

Vardy's owners have every right to feel hard done by this week – not only did he register two successive blanks despite accumulating eight shots in the box (including two big chances and one big chance created) in the double GW but...

... now finds himself sidelined. My first choice for a replacement would be Bamford, who I have written more about in the next section. Michail Antonio is also a decent shout if you don't already own. He recorded four shots inside the box, two big chances and one big chance...

... created in the two fixtures of the double GW. Those numbers are extremely encouraging and suggest that Antonio looks to be back to his absolute best. All 41 of his Premier League goals have come from inside the penalty area so he's the definition of a true poacher. He has...

... a decent run of fixtures to follow too (cry LIV avl ful SHU). I've already spoken about Kane and as to why ideally, I wouldn't want a Spurs double up with their fixtures coming up. The forgotten man, Dominic Calvert Lewin could be worth considering as well...

I wrote last week as to how his numbers had dropped off:

DCL (GW 1-11) v DCL (GW 12-17)

Mins per shot in the box 31.29 v 54.63
Mins per big chance 69.28 v 145.67

However, with the cavalry (James Rodriguez, Digne, Richarlison) all back and available, I think Calvert Lewin could be worth considering again. Rodriguez created eight big chances, including two big chances, in the FA Cup game and we know Calvert Lewin is a different beast...

... when chances are being supplied to him. He is one definitely worth keeping an eye on – particularly with a favorable run of fixtures coming up (LEI NEW lee mun FUL).

Q: What to do with Newcastle and Leeds assets – keep or sell?

Over the past four matches, Newcastle are ranked in the bottom two for xG, big chances and chances created which is a matter of serious concern for Callum Wilson's owners. The Sheffield United fixture has been...

... the only game where Wilson has been able to register a big chance over the past six GWs, so his numbers have significantly declined. I'd be selling Wilson if I owned him. I also think this might be a good time for FPL managers who own Leeds defenders to play them as Leeds...

... will be coming on the back of a good amount of rest, so should be well set up in this one. I'd keep the likes of Patrick Bamford and Raphinha for this one – Leeds are ranked top for shots inside the box and chances created away from home

this season while no team has...

... conceded more big chances than Newcastle over the past six matches. Bamford in particular I think should be good for a goal here, he’s on penalties and is second only to Vardy for the highest number of big chances in the league this season. Leeds failed to turn up for...

... the Brighton game but had been posting decent attacking numbers prior to that so I’d like to think that game was a statistical outlier. Rodrigo has been involved in just one of Leeds’ previous six big chances so his goal involvement rate is minimal and he tends to get...

... substituted early – there are far better forward options out there so I’d sell. Raphinha is another one on thin ice as his numbers aren’t great either, but his chance creation is still decent so I’d give him one more week.

Q: In this section, I analyze the reasons behind Sou■ek’s successive blanks recorded in the double GW.

Sou■ek with and without Antonio:

Mins per shot inside the box: 72 vs 61.8
Mins per big chance: 360 vs 198
Mins per penalty area touch: 36 vs 26.8

Not only have his numbers dropped off, but in both the double GWs Sou■ek had a deeper average position than even Declan Rice which is worrying news for his owners. It is worth noting that Sou■ek is yet to score in a game that Antonio has started this season. However, it's...

... important to note that the drop Sou■ek's numbers might not just be down to Antonio. It could be because of a different formation without Masuaku and the fact that when Noble was playing, Sou■ek was playing advanced but now is part of a midfield pivot which has...

... significantly reduced his open play threat. He failed to record a single shot in either of the games in the double GW. A lot of FPL managers own the likes of Coufal and Cresswell so my recommendation would be to play one of the West Ham defenders over Sou■ek this week...

... West Ham are ranked only second to Man City for xG conceded over the past four matches, while Crystal Palace have failed to register even a single big chance during that period so chances of a West Ham clean sheet look bright.

Q: In this section, I talk about Arsenal’s assets.

Over the last four matches, Arsenal are ranked second based on their xG. Aubameyang can also be seen getting back to his best considering he’s top in midfielders for xG and xGi over the same period...

... Hence it is no surprise to see them score eight times in the last four matches. I now run a comparison to analyze their budget midfielders:

Saka vs Smith-Rowe (GW 15-19)

Shots inside the box: 11 vs 2
Big chances: 1 vs 1
Chances created: 9 vs 10
Big chances created: 2 vs 1
Penalty area touches: 22 vs 12

For their value, Saka and Smith-Rowe are both good options but if picking one of the two, Saka seems more preferable based on his attacking threat and an advanced average position. Arsenal now face SOT MUN wol avl over the next four GWs which are not...

... the easiest of fixtures – I would not recommend buying an Arsenal asset but if you own any of them, I'd feel safe keeping them considering their attacking threat.

Here is my Fantasy5 team for the week! Che Adams' tends to do better with Ings in the team so he's a decent shout this GW. Tielemans and Gündo■an are on penalties so there's a good chance they are able to beat their fantasy targets of 4.5 and 6.5 points respectively as well.



This brings me to the end of the article. I would like to thank @urboihamza for helping me compile my piece this week. It would be nice if you could offer him some encouragement too (follows/feedback appreciated!).

If you are looking to follow my work, follow me at:

Twitter: https://t.co/oBvQzf7Dor

Instagram: https://t.co/1tZ92vBXIT

YouTube: https://t.co/mDw5fLXaAG

YouTube Patreon: https://t.co/VQGEYrnnpO

I await your feedback with anticipation!