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The Review: The festive fixtures - A thread

Hi everyone, welcome to the latest edition of “The Review” where I look at the blanks, doubles and the new fixture rescheduling in detail:

#FPL #FPLCommunity @OfficialFPL

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

Before I start, I'd like to make a small request. I post about FPL on my Instagram too, so if you have an Instagram account, follow up here!

https://t.co/1tZ92vBXIT

Q: How do we tackle the next three GWs?

Given the unfortunate and untimely postponements of last GW, a lot of FPL managers were left deflated. For luck to have the final say was always going to be infuriating – given the amount of planning that goes into...

... each GW, particularly the amount of work being put into all kinds of strategies by FPL managers of late. Just a slight point I’d like to make here, your frustration is only natural but it’s worth noting that a lot of gains are still to be made in the season so try and keep...

... your heads up as we head into the most crucial stage of the season. Last evening, the Premier League announced that Burnley v Man United will be played in GW 18, meaning that Man United and Burnley no longer have any blank coming up. Bruno Fernandes is highly owned, so...

... his owners directly get an additional player available in GW 18. Whether that is enough for you as a FPL manager to avoid the Free Hit chip depends on your team, but in my opinion, 7-8 quality players heading into GW18 should be good enough reason to avoid the Free Hit...

...The other news that came out was that Aston Villa v Man City will now be played in GW 19, meaning that like Burnley and Man United, both these teams not only have a fixture in GW 18 but also have a double GW in GW 19. This is of particular importance to...

... Martinez, Grealish, Watkins, De Bruyne and City defence's owners who suddenly find themselves with the ideal core of players heading into GW 18 and 19. I would not be selling any of these players at this stage. What stands out for me here is that Man City have great...

... fixtures either side of the double now, and have the standout fixtures in the GW itself too (che BHA CRY+AVL wba SHU bur). Triple Man City is an absolute must to navigate this run of fixtures in my opinion. Someone like a De Bruyne is probably the go-to captain...

... heading into the double GW 19 and potentially an outside shout for triple captaincy too. Investing in Man United players could be worthwhile too, given that they have have low ownerships (differentials alert!) and equally good fixtures either side of the...

... double too (AVL bur liv/ful SHU ars SOT). This new COVID outbreak also raises slight doubts in my mind for the GW 19 Bench Boost strategy, as during these uncertain times, you never know which games might get called off...

... The Premier League has set a dangerous precedent cancelling fixtures hours before the games, hence we may not know if any GW19 fixtures are to be cancelled prior to the deadline.

Q: Who is the best captaincy shout this week and why?

I think the Spurs v Leeds fixture is the one to target here. I see Bruno Fernandes is the most popular choice in most social media polls, but I find the Man United v Villa game extremely hard to call. I think Bruno...

... should be safe to get some returns, but I don't think Villa will get obliterated. Man United's attack has been in form, accumulating the most chances created and big chances created in the past six GWs but they will now come up against an extremely resilient Villa side...

... who limited Chelsea to just the one big chance in midweek and have been 3rd best for big chances conceded all season. I can see Jose being pragmatic and picking Leeds off on the counter which should suit Harry Kane and Son Heung Min, in particular. This could be a...

... very similar game to the Southampton vs Spurs game earlier in the season where Spurs get dominated but end up making merry on the counter. Despite two clean sheets in their last two games, Leeds are still ranked worst for big chances conceded and expected goals conceded...

... in the past six GWs. Spurs, meanwhile, are also the bookies favorites to score 2.5+ goals this week. Regarding Mo Salah, I think like any other week he should be a safe choice for captaincy but I don't think his ceiling is as big this week either. Southampton are ranked...

... second best for shots conceded at home this season, so they will make it tough for Liverpool.

Q: Is Robertson a better FPL asset than Trent Alexander Arnold this season?

(read below)

Robertson v Trent (over the 20/21 season):

Mins per shot inside the box: 240 vs 1142
Mins per big chance: 720 vs 1142
Mins per chance created: 50 vs 50
Mins per big chance created: 205 vs 381
Mins per touch in the final third: 2.47 vs 2.55
Mins per penalty area touch: 30 vs 54

The numbers above are self-explanatory. Robertson is out-stating Trent in almost all the key underlying numbers. The quality of his chance creation means that he tends to do better for bonus as well. Further, it's significant to note that Robertson...

... is almost twice as involved in the opposition penalty area as compared to Trent. I think the sample size is large enough to safely say that Robertson is a superior asset this season.

Q: Is Trent Alexander Arnold a worse FPL asset than he was last season?

(read below)

Trent 19/20 vs 20/21:

Mins per shot inside the box: 212 vs 1142
Mins per big chance: 1588 vs 1142
Mins per chance created: 36.5 vs 50
Mins per big chance created: 176 vs 381
Mins per touch in the final third: 2.52 vs 2.55
Mins per penalty area touch: 58 vs 54

The numbers above suggest that it's important that we see Trent in a different light this term. He's still a good asset to own in isolation on a standalone basis but when you compare his numbers to his previous ones, it's noticeable that he hasn't reached the same heights...

... this time – particularly when you notice the decline in the creativity department. Not only is Trent creating fewer chances this season but the quality of chances created has dropped significantly too.

Q: Who should be the budget midfielder of choice, Raphinha or Soucek?

(read below)

Raphinha vs Soucek (last 8 GWs):

Mins per shot inside the box: 38 vs 65
Mins per big chance: 686 vs 240
Mins per chance created: 40 vs 720
Mins per big chance created: 343 vs 720
Mins per penalty area touch: 17 vs 27
Leeds xG 15.1 v West Ham xG 9.2

Both Raphinha and Soucek would be my budget midfielders of choice heading into the double GW. Picking one is extremely tricky given that both are of a similar price and that both Leeds and West Ham have good fixtures in the DGW...

... Raphinha tends to do better for underlying numbers overall, but Soucek gets chances of higher quality and is being encouraged by Moyes to get more involved in the opposition's penalty area, so I'd imagine his numbers will only improve...

... If I had to pick one, I would pick Raphinha because Leeds are a more attacking side, but it's super close.

Q: Che Adams, sell or keep? Does he fare better with or without Danny Ings?

Adams (with Ings 20/21) vs Adams (without Ings 20/21)

Mins per shots inside the box: 55.28 vs 90
Mins per big chance: 124.4 vs 360
Mins per big chance created: 199 vs 180

Southampton (when Ings and Adams play) vs Southampton (with Adams only)

Shots inside the box per game: 7 vs 5
Big chances per game: 1.67 vs 0.75
Chances created per game: 7.83 vs 6.5

By looking at the above comparisons, it can be seen Adams and both Southampton as a whole...

... tend to do far better in terms of underlying numbers when Danny Ings is playing. Now that Danny Ings is fit and there to support him, it is worth keeping Adams heading into his double GW (LIV - lei + ARS AVL mun).

Q: Is Anwar El Ghazi the go-to Aston Villa midfielder of choice now?

Firstly, I'd like to look at how the addition of El Ghazi has affected Villa in terms of their goal threat:

Aston Villa (GW 2-12) vs Aston Villa (GW 13-16)

Shots inside the box per game: 10 vs 13.25
Big chances per game: 2.8 vs 3.25
Chances created per game: 12 vs 15.5

By looking at the stats, it can be seen that El Ghazi has given Villa a different dynamic. Villa's attacking numbers were impressive enough as it is but have since further improved with El Ghazi's addition to the team. Now I compare him to Jack Grealish:

Grealish (last four GWs) vs Grealish (GW 2-12) vs El Ghazi (Last four GWs)

Mins per shot inside the box: 45 vs 39 vs 28.9
Mins per big chance: 360 vs 180 vs 69.4
Mins per big chance created: 120 vs 129 vs 347

By looking at the underlying stats it can be seen that El Ghazi has been providing a better goal threat than Grealish, who has seen a slight decline in his goal threat numbers versus his season averages and seems to have taken up a more creative role which is due to him...

... dropping into midfield and acting as a playmaker. With El Ghazi on penalty and direct set piece duties and approximately being a couple of million cheaper than Grealish, he would be the Villa midfielder...

... I would pick if I were picking one right now considering they have a double GW coming up. (mun TOT EVE + mci bur sou)

Q: In this section I look at the defensive assets of Leeds:

Dallas vs Alioski (over the season):

Mins per shot inside the box: 238.5 vs 151.5
Mins per big chance: 477 vs 454.5
Mins per big chance created: 715.5 vs 303
Mins per touch in the final third: 4.44 vs 3.63

In my analysis above I have ignored Ayling as he has been playing centre back of late so carries little to negligible threat. Dallas is the more secure asset in terms of his starting place, but I'd assume that Alioski would also keep his starting position, at least...

... for the short term given his stellar performances of late. When both him and Dallas play, he is the superior asset as the numbers above highlight. I now look at Leeds' recent defensive performances:

Leeds (GW 1-14) vs Leeds (GW 15-16)

Big chances conceded per game: 3.21 vs 1.5
Shots inside the box conceded per game: 11.5 vs 6

The stats from the last two GWs show improvement for Leeds in the defensive department compared to their season averages. Investing in a...

... Leeds defensive asset could be worthwhile since Leeds play twice during DGW 19, but be aware of the lack of fixture in the blank GW. (tot - BHA + SOU new lei).

Q: Should faith be kept in Dominic Calvert Lewin?

FPL managers are growing increasingly frustrated by the lack of big returns from the Everton talisman, who has been averaging ~3.83 points in his previous six matches. I now look at his numbers during this spell:

Calvert Lewin (GW 10-15)
Shots inside the box: 13 (Forward Rank: 5th)
Big chances: 6 (Forward Rank: 1st)
xG: 3.22 (Forward Rank: 3rd)

Despite the loss of Richarlison and James Rodriguez to injury, it can be seen that Calvert Lewin is still posting good numbers averaging...

... a big chance per game. With Richarlison back to help him against West Ham and favorable fixtures to follow (WHU wol avl LEI NEW), it might be worthwhile keeping faith in the forward.

Q: What has been the impact of Sam Allardyce West Brom's defence?

Here I compare West Brom's numbers under Bilic to their numbers under Allardyce, which I have further bifurcated...

...when I compare his first game in-charge against an inform Villa with the next two fixtures against Liverpool and Leeds:

WBA (GW 1-13) vs WBA (GW 14) vs WBA (GW 15-16)

Shots conceded inside the box per game: 10.7 vs 11 vs 8
Big chances conceded per game: 2.7 vs 3 vs 2

By looking at the underlying stats, it can be seen that West Brom have improved defensively over the past two GWs despite the fact that they conceded five times to a Leeds side who were ruthlessly clinical. This might be early signs of a bigger improvement incoming...

... It's too early to invest in their defence as yet but Sam Johnstone owners can hope for better returns should their numbers continue to improve with mixed fixtures and a double GW to follow (ARS - wol + whu MCI FUL).

Credit to my friend @SFK7 for helping me in my work!

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

I await your feedback. Wishing you all a very happy new year!