Twitter Thread by Man City Tactics



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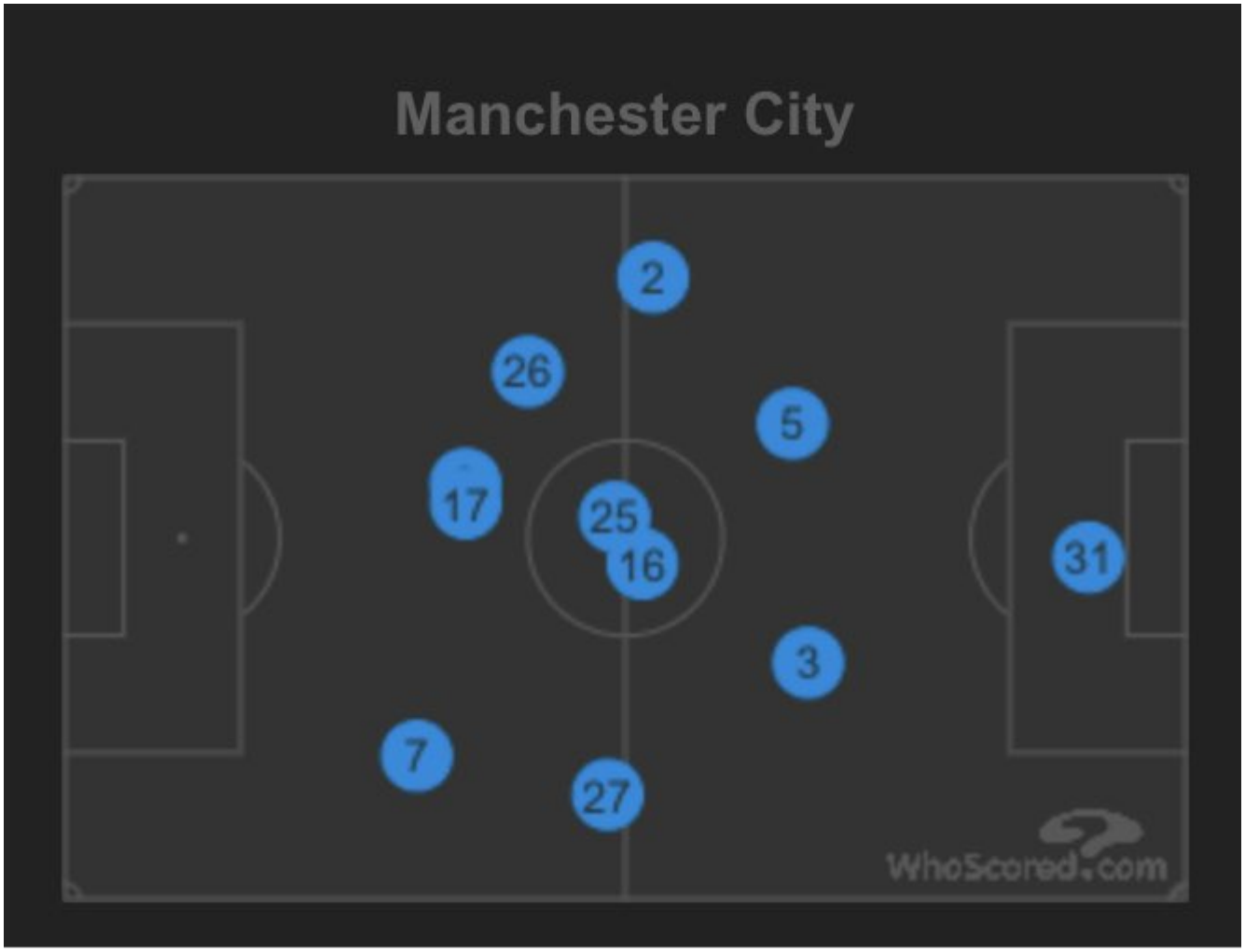
Pep's approach on Saturday bored a global audience to tears. Let's look at:
Why he did it?
Why it worked?
And why we might have to get used to it?
A thread 1/

Pep sent Fernandinho and Rodri out in a double pivot. Since defeat at Spurs, when City set up in the traditional 4-3-3, Pep has deployed a double pivot for the last 6 matches. It stops the dm being isolated and subsequently the centre backs being exposed 2/



Pep set up like this in order to keep control. In the Spurs defeat and the derby defeats last season City lost control when the opposition countered. It was impossible to track runners on quick breaks with 1 dm and City were often all at sea 3/

With the addition of an extra dm, and consequently a more defensive approach, City were able to cope with United's counters.
United didn't create any big chances and only looked dangerous from set pieces 4/

0	Big chances	3
0	Big chances missed	3
7	Shots inside box	6
4	Shots outside box	3
2	Goalkeeper saves	2

City created 3 big chances, all of which were spurned. That was Pep's plan in a nutshell, completely nullify United's main threat and rely on City's front 4 to create big chances. From that perspective it worked. Pep's post match comments told the story 5/

'They punish you when they can run. They are so dangerous. We controlled them really well'
'When we struggle to score goals we have to be solid at the back, we had the chances'
'We created 3 or 4 clear chances' 6/

The entertainment factor was lost and this didn't look like a Guardiola team. But after 12 defeats last season, often where City dominated possession and lost goals to counters, it's hard to argue against the theory that something needed to change 7/

And Pep sees the issue elsewhere, the missed chances:
'Put the ball in the goal. That is the solution'.
The double pivot is working, we can look at how City have performed when a Fernandinho/Rodri or Gundogan/Rodri double pivot has been deployed this season (PL/CL only) 8/

In 8 matches City have won 5 and drawn 3 (United, L'pool & Porto) conceding 2 goals .
In the other 8 matches City have won 5, drawn 2 (Leeds & West Ham) and lost 1 (Spurs) conceding 5 goals 9/

The one match left out of this analysis probably best illustrates the stability the double pivot provides. City started with a Fernandinho/Rodri double pivot against Leicester. On 51 mins with the score 1-1, Pep brought Delap on for Fernandinho and abandoned the double pivot 10/

City suffered a 5-2 defeat.
So, with City now on a run of 6 consecutive clean sheets it was no surprise to see Pep stick with the shape throughout the 90 mins at Old Trafford and not go chasing the 3pts 11/

Currently the stability the double pivot gives trumps the additional creativity an extra 8 provides for Pep. Looking at the evidence, that's understandable.
It may be frustrating for fans but Pep's caution might be something we have to get used to 12/

Thanks for reading!
This week we'll focus on how the double pivot can be deployed in a more offensive style than we saw on Saturday.
And whether 4-3-3 could be revived with some tweaks in personnel 13/

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