Twitter Thread by Venkatanarayanan

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Thread:

Are Manchester United shooting and allowing shots more frequently in the 20/21 PL season?

RTs appreciated :)

#MUFC rank 3rd for volume of shots in the Premier League this season. United also rank 1st for SoT but that is not a surprise when you consider that they have scored the most goals in the league.

Sh/90 = 14.3 (5th)
SoT/90 = 5.48 (=2nd)
Accuracy = 38.4 % (3rd)

Yes, #MUFC do well for shot accuracy but it has to be mentioned that 32% of #MUFC's goals came in two games - against Leeds United and Southampton. Similarly, 23% of #MUFC's shots came in three games - against Newcastle United, Leeds United, & Southampton.

Shooting:

At this rate, #MUFC are projected to finish with roughly 540 shots this season. That's roughly 2% more than last season. That number is equivalent to 14.2 shots per 90 minutes. Again, a marginal increase from last season's 13.9 shots per 90 minutes.

Hitting the target:

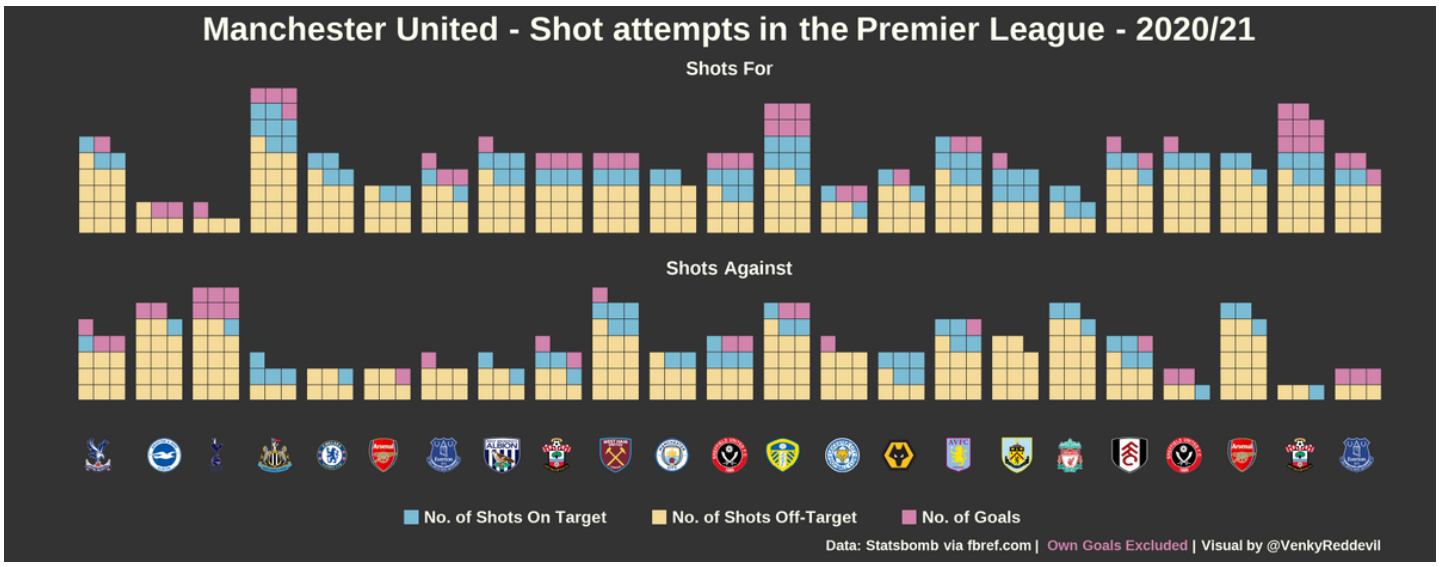
If #MUFC maintain their current level of accuracy, they will finish with 5.47 shots on target per 90 minutes, which is once again more than last season, again only slightly more.

These are very fine margins that could prove vital come the end of this season

Visualization:

The below visualization shows United's shot attempts for and against, from every match in the league so far this season.

Off target = Every shot attempt that was not on target or a goal (Blocked, Missed, etc.)



#MUFC have struggled to score in the big games this season, most notably against Chelsea and City. In both the games #MUFC had more than 10 attempts but struggled to get the attempts on target.

The Brighton game earlier in the season was also one of United's poor performances.

In the game against Tottenham, #MUFC had only one attempt on target for the first time since Wolves away (GW 2 of 19/20)last year.

27 attempts against Newcastle United away from home was United's highest in a game since the 2-2 draw against Burnley at Old Trafford in 2018/19.

Are United shooting more often in games this season?

The average shots / 90 minutes in the league this season stands at 12 shots per 90 minutes. United have more than 12 shots in a game 16 times this season already and lost twice in those 16 games (Palace and Sheffield United)

Compare that with last season, United attempted more shots than the average per 90 shots in the league 18/38 times and lost four times in those 18 games. Crystal Palace was one of those defeats as well. Watford, Burnley and Bournemouth being the other three.

United have had more than 15(randomly chosen number) attempts in the goal in 8 games this season - with the game against Newcastle United being the highest(27)

Many say the problem for #MUFC this season has not been attempting shots but conceding shots too often (or is that the case, actually?) #MUFC have conceded 28 goals and are projected to concede more than 50 goals this season. That is very

bad for a team involved in the title race

Manchester United have allowed more shots than any other team in the top six and have only allowed only slightly fewer shots than Fulham (who are in the relegation zone). United have already allowed 66% of last season's shots.

Shots against:

At this rate #MUFC are projected to allow 425 shots. That's a 10% increase from last season. But United's shots on target allowed per 90 minutes of 3.30 is among the best in the league.

Sh/90 allowed = 9th
SoT/90 allowed = 5th best
Accuracy against = 4th best

Shots on Target allowed:

If #MUFC maintained this level of accuracy for shots on target allowed, they would have allowed 3.3 shots on target per 90 minutes which is on par with last season but the actual problems for #MUFC actually lies with their GK and silly team errors.

Goals per Shot on Target:

While David de gea did show flashes of improvement at the start of the season, United are conceding at the rate of 0.32 goals per shot on target which is a 23% increase from last season.

In terms of shots allowed, yes there has been a marginal increase but most of the shots #MUFC allowed this season are converted to goals. Set-piece defending has been a real talking point at #MUFC for a few years now and the issues still persist.

Coupled with the full backs staying higher up the pitch and the wingers not tracking back — this leaves heaps of space for the opponent to maximize the number of players in the defensive third, which has resulted in some goals that should have been prevented.

These are issues that United should look to resolve with both personnel and coaching.

Conclusion:

Overall, as quite evident in the games, there is improv. in the attacking side of the game. Defensive game has come under a lot of criticism this year but a large part of that has to be attributed to some of the players failing to do their basics right in some games.

Future work:

I have scratched the potential to use shots data to analyze the trends in performances of a team but the future research in this topic could include analyzing shot maps, using video to analyze individual mistakes etc.

Thanks to @fbref for the data and the brilliant @jaseziv for the package that helped me collect the data easily.

You can check out his package #worldfootballR in the link below

https://t.co/AZCXb3vWJ0

Special mention to @jonollington and @utdmaram who helped with me feedback and few ideas in the viz. Both of them are probably best in the business and you should follow them, if you aren't following them already.