Twitter Thread by JK



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— THREAD —

Reasons I would like United to keep playing the system they played against Aston Villa

United decided to field four midfielders against Aston Villa, but like I mentioned before the game, they didn't use a diamond and went for their usual 3-1-6/3-2-5 with Pogba higher up the pitch.

This system United played against Villa isn't new since they used it multiple times this season with Martial instead of Pogba and Cavani instead of Martial. They also used it after the restart but the profiles were completely different as those from this season.

This season, it is much more balanced in my opinion, and the new depth in the team can allow injuries without changing the system. Now, I will look at the various profiles United have upfront to explain why this new system can fit United well.

Rashford drives at players better but also his shooting technique and the way he attacks the channels suit the right better. His goals from the 2018/19 season and the 2020/21 season in the PL are seen below.

You can also remember his goal against Spurs in Ole's first season in charge. Rashford seems to be more instinctive off the right and while I'm not a big fan of him off the left, I absolutely love him off the right. He feels more dangerous.

Rashford is off the right here and his pass towards Bruno gives dynamism to United's attack and Pogba helps Martial by his runs into the box as the latter won't be alone within the box despite Rashford being wide right in this 3-2-5 system

Pogba can also now play higher up the pitch where he is afforded more freedom in his movements, which players like him thrived off. The Frenchman is now able to receive the ball either wide and allow Shaw to underlap or connect with Martial and Bruno in tight spaces when inside.

It also allows Bruno, Pogba, and Martial to find space when there isn't any thanks to their technical facilities. But, more importantly, you can now replace Pogba by either Grealish or Sancho without seeing any difference to your system.

Finally, I will talk about what the system really means for United in deeper areas, whether it is when playing in a 3-2-5 or in a 3–1-6, depending on what AWB is doing.

3-2-5 WITH AWB AS A RCB:

AWB can connect easily with Rashford as Rashford will provide width on the right. They have two holding midfielders that prevent transitions but one of them (Fred) can open passing lanes thanks to his movement.

United can also play in a 3-1-6 when Rashford comes inside and allows AWB to get forward. Access to the left halfspace from Fred with his left foot towards Pogba or Bruno. Mctominay can sometimes drop deeper off the right to allow Fred to receive as the lone pivot as well.

The 3-1-6 gives you three major things, even more major for United in my opinion. It gives you extreme width at any time thanks to your two full-backs being wide. You can see an example below with AWB going forward while Rashford is inside.

This also gives you more space to attack inside for your forwards as it stretches up the opponent's backline. And these four players (i.e. Pogba, Bruno, Rashford and Martial) are particularly good at creating space when interchanging.

And the final thing it gives you is more players into the box. You now have four players who have the instincts to get into the box, which means your full-backs have more options to cross to. United scored from a cross against Villa. An occurrence is depicted below.

You can see below that Shaw is free as the opponent doesn't defend with 6 player on the last line. Maguire is able to reach Shaw into space, which created dynamism. And now, four players are close to or inside the box.

If Pogba is injured, Martial can replace him in that role. If Rashford is injured, United now have Amad Traoré in that role. The former Atalanta winger loves to keep the width off the right despite being left-footed (seen below). This is perfect to find habits on a regular basis.

However, Shaw could be more dominant to be honest with you. Someone like Théo Hernandez would be perfect for this role. Someone who can bomb up and down the pitch while delivering good crosses.

This system United played against Villa isn't new since they used it multiple times this season but not only it's the best system to get the best out of Pogba, it's also the best system to get the best out of Rashford. Martial and Bruno will also benefit from this.