Twitter Thread by Armband

Armband
@armbandmedia

Bruno Fernandes

Player Analysis | A THREAD



An analysis where we look at how Bruno Fernandes, the Portuguese magnifico has revived the confidence of the Red Devils.

(Data accurate till 31st December, 2020)



When Bruno arrived at Old Trafford, @ManUtd was sitting at 5th on the table - six points behind Chelsea and fourteen behind Leicester! The image given below explains why United had to sign the Portuguese and how he turned the table around pretty much single-handedly.

Why did Manchester United buy Bruno Fernandes ?

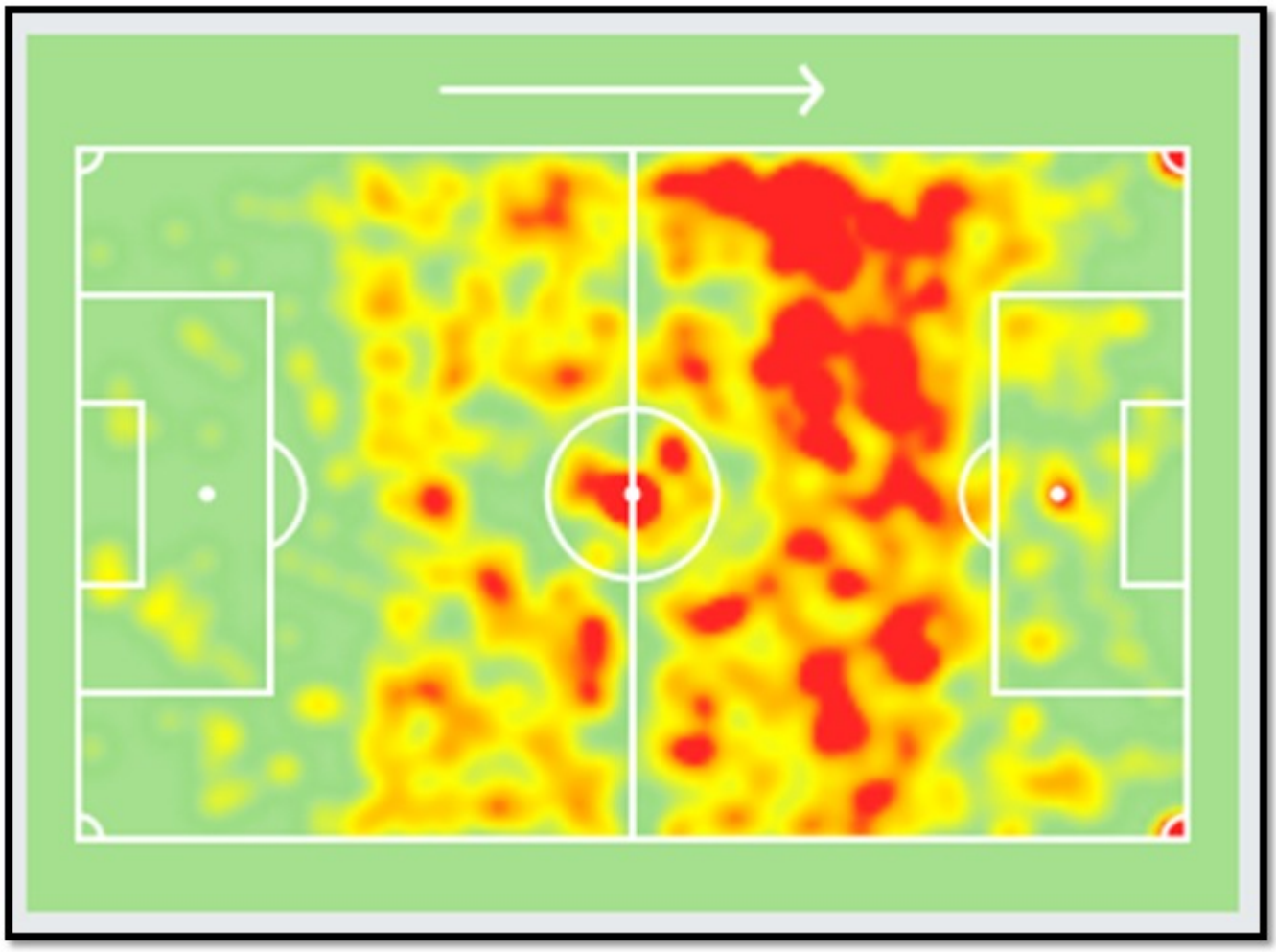
	Minutes Played	npxG + xA / 90	GCA/90	SCA/90
Paul Pogba	522	0.45	0.34	5.52
Bruno Fernandes	1,186	0.40	0.91	4.40
Juan Mata	630	0.40	0.29	4.86
Andreas Pereira	1,364	0.36	0.46	3.63
Daniel James	1,821	0.34	0.35	2.57
Jesse Lingard	889	0.28	0.30	3.85
Fred	1,591	0.18	0.00	3.51
Scott McTominay	1,451	0.12	0.19	1.86
Nemanja Matic	599	0.11	0.00	1.95

Here, we look at the creativity stats of Manchester United midfielders before Bruno Fernandes was signed and compare it with the numbers which Fernandes generated. Paul Pogba was the only midfielder who was getting into good goalscoring positions and creating chances for others more than Bruno later did. However, the problem with Pogba was he only played 522 minutes before Bruno made his debut. Another player who made similar numbers was Juan Mata but Mata had his injury problems as well. None of the others come close to the creativity statistics which United needed for a number 10. As a result, United were falling behind Chelsea and Leicester in the race for the top 4. This made Manchester United to shell out the pounds in the winter transfer window of 2020 and sign Bruno Fernandes.

Created by @peezee31 | Armband

United manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer mostly plays in a 4-2-3-1 formation with Bruno Fernandes as the player behind the striker. At times, Solskjaer has employed Fernandes as the highest central midfielder behind the two strikers in a 4-1-2-1-2 setup.

(Source: @SofaScoreINT)



In general, like most other creative midfielders, Bruno Fernandes tries to occupy the gap in between the opposition’s midfield line and defensive line. He often drifts to both sides as well, to support the wide players.



Here is an example of United on the counter. Once United regains possession, they attempt to find a pass to Bruno. Bruno is in sync with the player further upfield, Marcus Rashford. Rashford successfully goes behind Newcastle’s defence and all it then needed was a finish.



It is this high risk, high reward style with which Ole Gunnar Solskjaer deploys Bruno. This has meant Bruno has lost possession on an average 20.7 times per 90 minutes, according to @SofaScoreINT. (1/2)



His passing accuracy per game is 76% which reduces further to 69% in the opposition's half. But that has also meant Bruno is involved in 82% moves which ends with the ball in the opponent's net as per @smarterscout. (2/2)



When in possession in the opponent's half, Bruno is quick at identifying spaces and overloads the wings. Here, Bruno is quite aware that the Wolves defender on the left flank (right side of the image) is attracted by the free Greenwood. (1/2)



This leaves Telles free with some space to be utilized. As a result, Bruno plays the through pass into the vacant space behind the Wolves right back. Telles utilizes this space to drill a ball in towards Cavani inside the box. The result was a corner kick. (2/2)

According to @Wyscout, Fernandes has played 74 through passes and 4.78 through passes per 90 minutes in the Premier League this season, which makes him the highest in both categories. The next is Trent Alexander-Arnold with 47 and 3.47 respectively, some distance away from him.



One of Fernandes' best performances in the United jersey came recently against Leeds. Against United, the duty to mark Fernandes came naturally to their midfielder Kalvin Phillips. However, Fernandes ran him ragged. It led to Marcelo Bielsa substituting Phillips at half time.



Here is the move which resulted in United's second goal of the game. Notice, how Fernandes near the half way line has again distracted Phillips in resulting in a large amount of space in front of Fred. Fred runs with the ball towards the retreating Leeds' defensive line. (1/2)

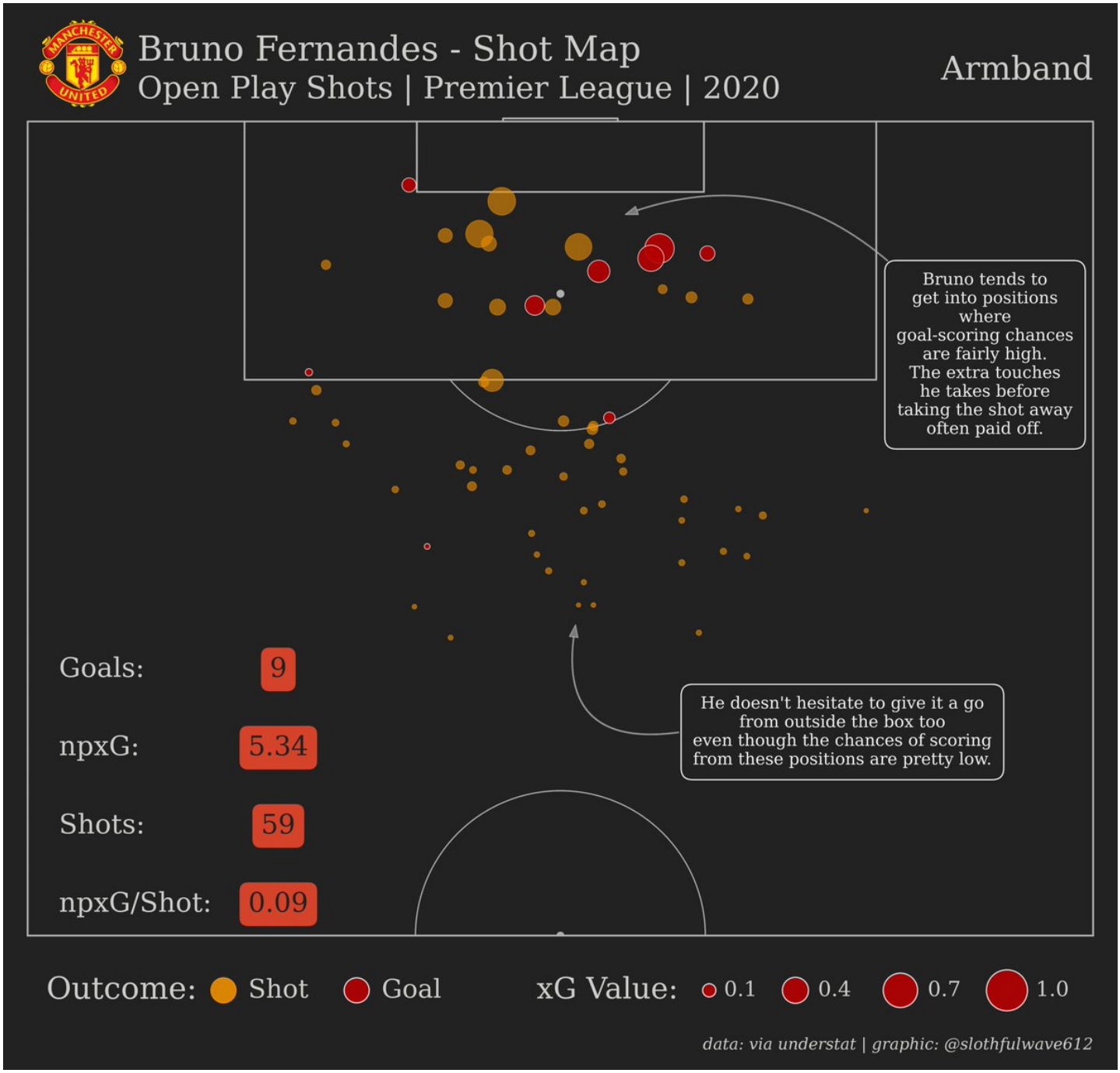


Meanwhile, Bruno has moved towards the right wing and Phillips stays close to him which is an unusual area of the pitch for a CDM to be in. Fred notices the run Martial is making across the defenders. (2/2)

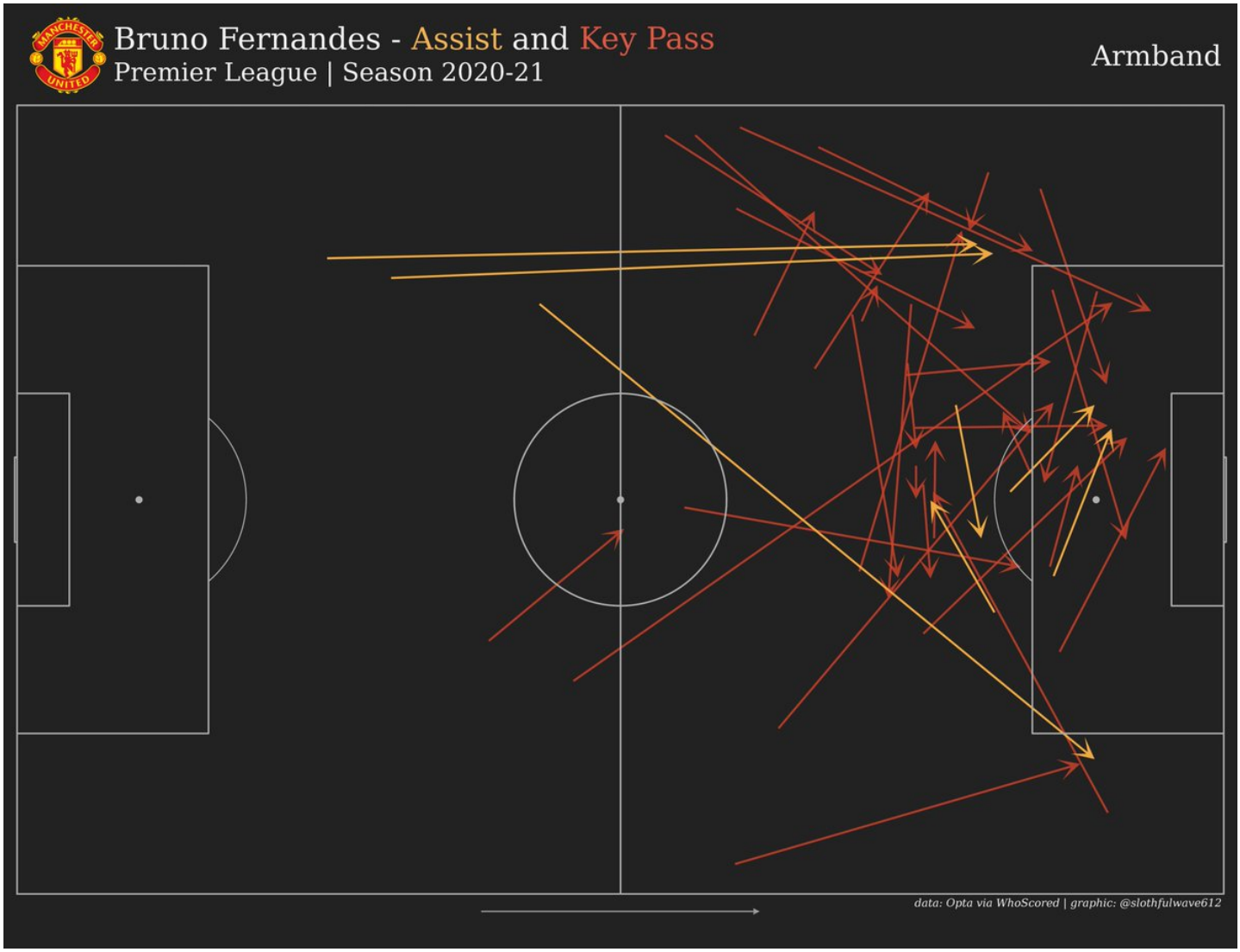
Martial fails to control the ball after Fred plays the pass. Here, Phillips has got sucked inside the box since he feels Martial is in a dangerous position and his side is 0-2 down already. This leaves Fernandes unmarked. Eventually, Fernandes receives the ball and slots it home



The shot map proves that Bruno is an embodiment of a self-confident footballer, willing to give his everything to secure the win.



Most of his assists and key passes, coming from the left wide region and centre of the pitch, are directed towards the left half-space - indicating how he operates and creates opportunities for his team's inside forwards and centre forward to score.



During corner kicks, Bruno is often seen occupying the space outside the box. Due to his great technical ability on the ball, this opens the opportunity for a long distance shot if the kick is played directly to him or when the ball lands at his feet after the initial clearance.

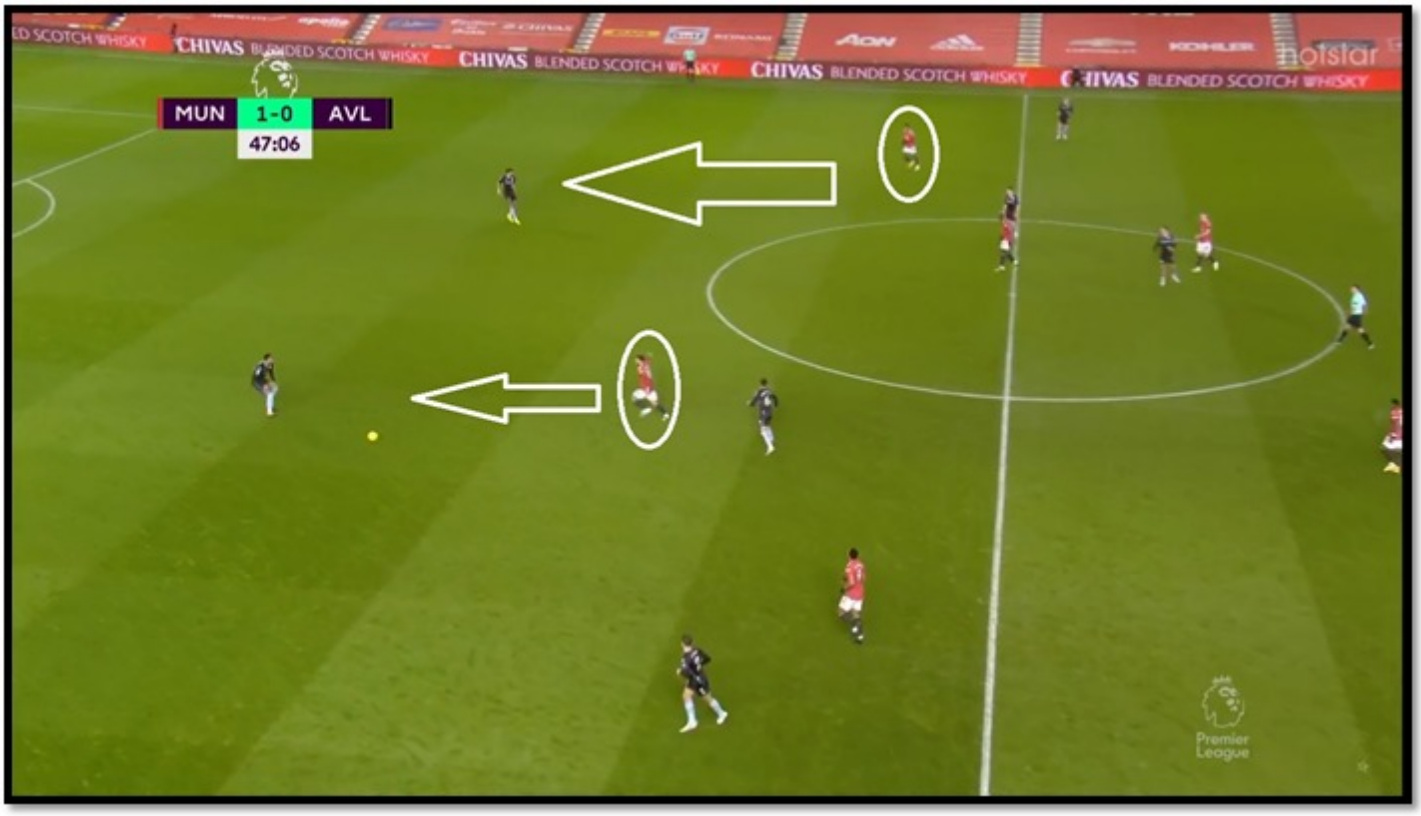


Without the ball, he generally likes to press when the ball is in the opponents' half and around the half line mark. He tries to block off passing lanes from the opponent's defensive third to the midfield third.



Here is an example of the Fernandes press. Once Matty Cash plays the ball to Villa CB Ezri Konsa, Fernandes is seen running towards him. In addition, he indicates to Rashford on the other side to press the other CB, Tyrone Mings as well so

as to force Konsa to go back to his GK.

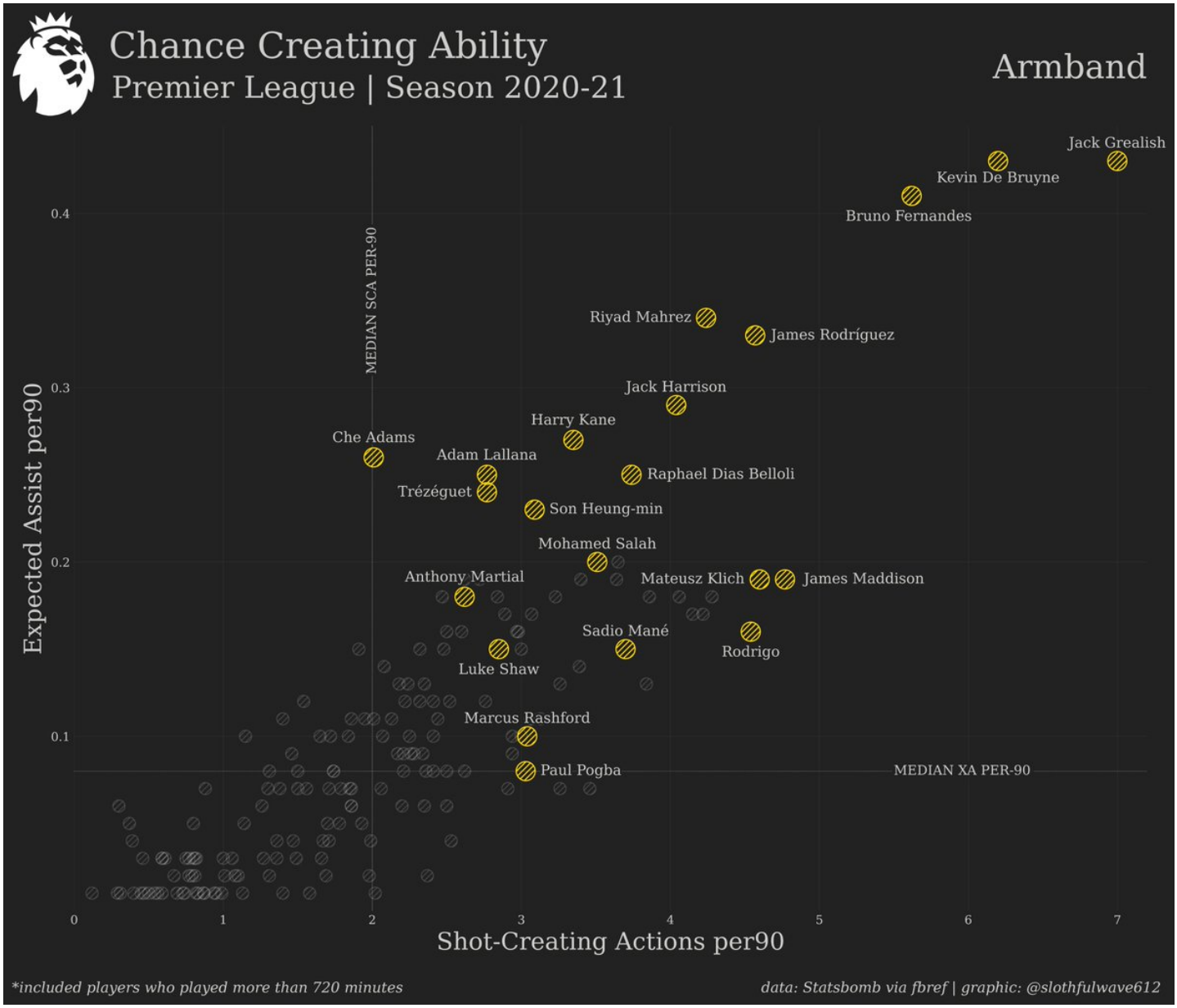


This is exactly what Konsa does but Fernandes does not stop here. He continues his press and runs towards Martinez, the goalkeeper. Martinez has three options: Pass to Mings (but Rashford is already pressing him), Pass back to Konsa or send a long ball into midfield. (1/2)

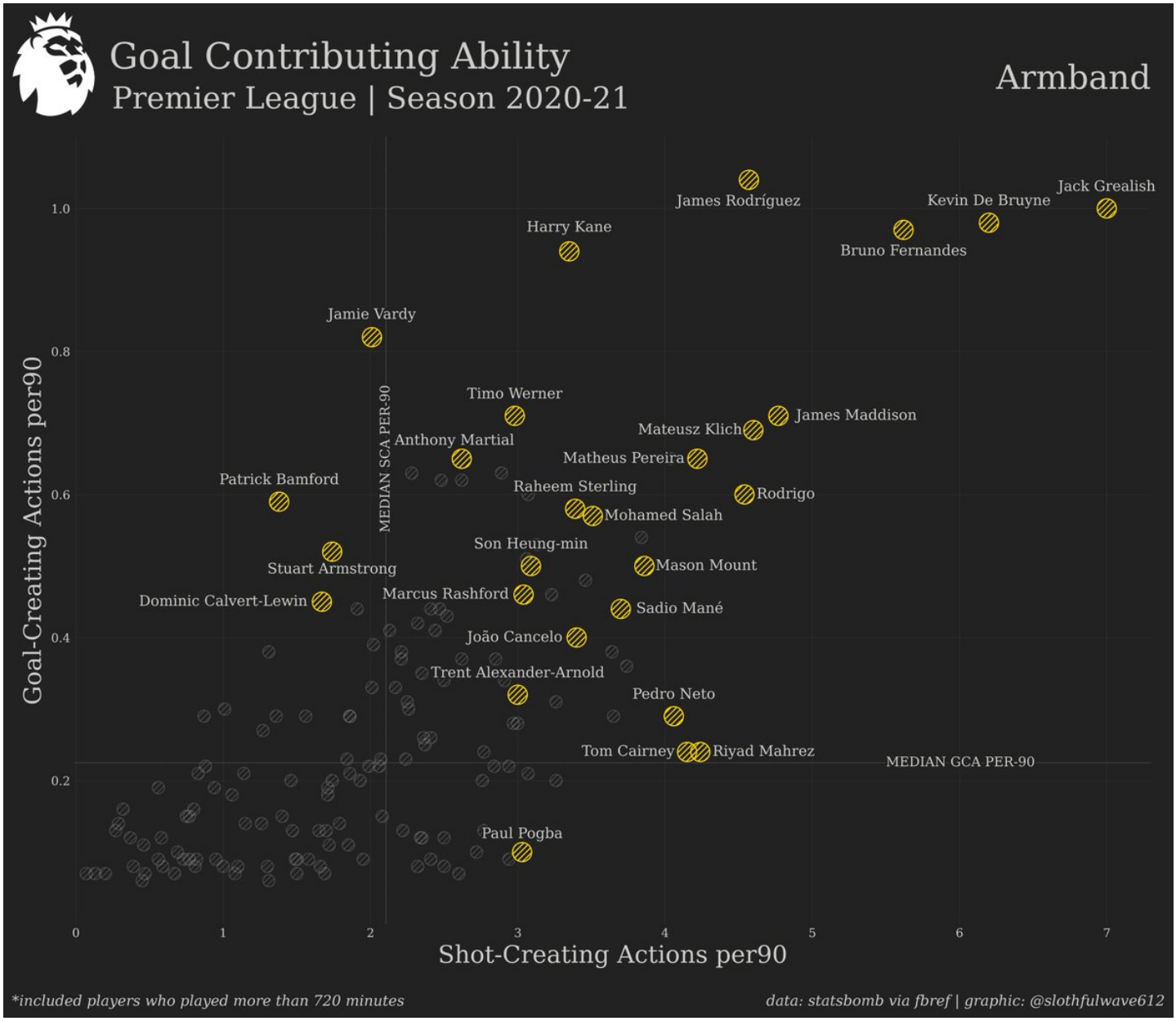


Martinez resorts to the long ball up field and concedes a throw-in. All this due to the press initiated and continued till the end by Bruno Fernandes. (2/2)

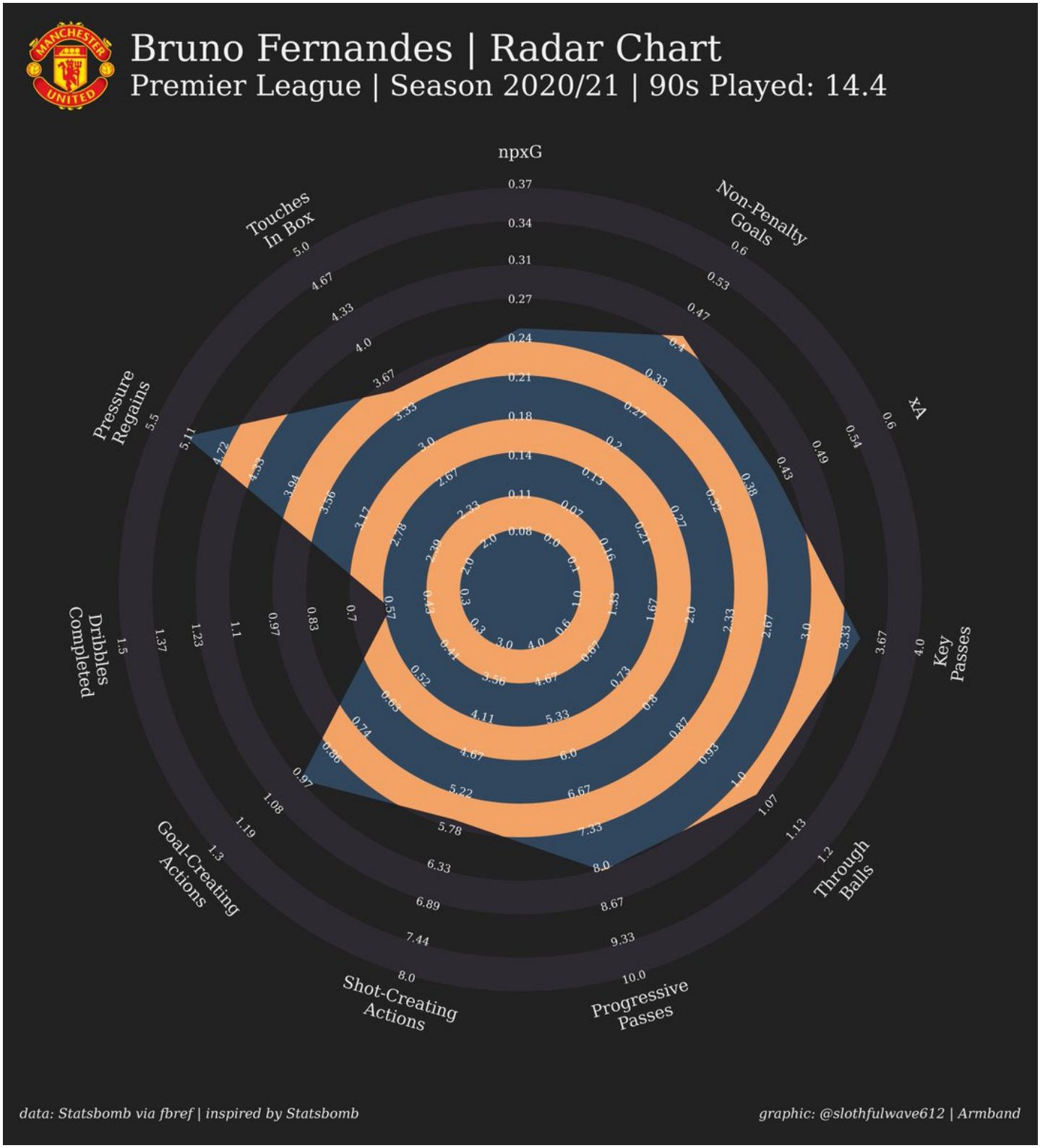
Since the start of this season, he has been able to continue with his good form and it’s clear from this scatterplot showcasing the shot-creating ability of Premier League footballers.



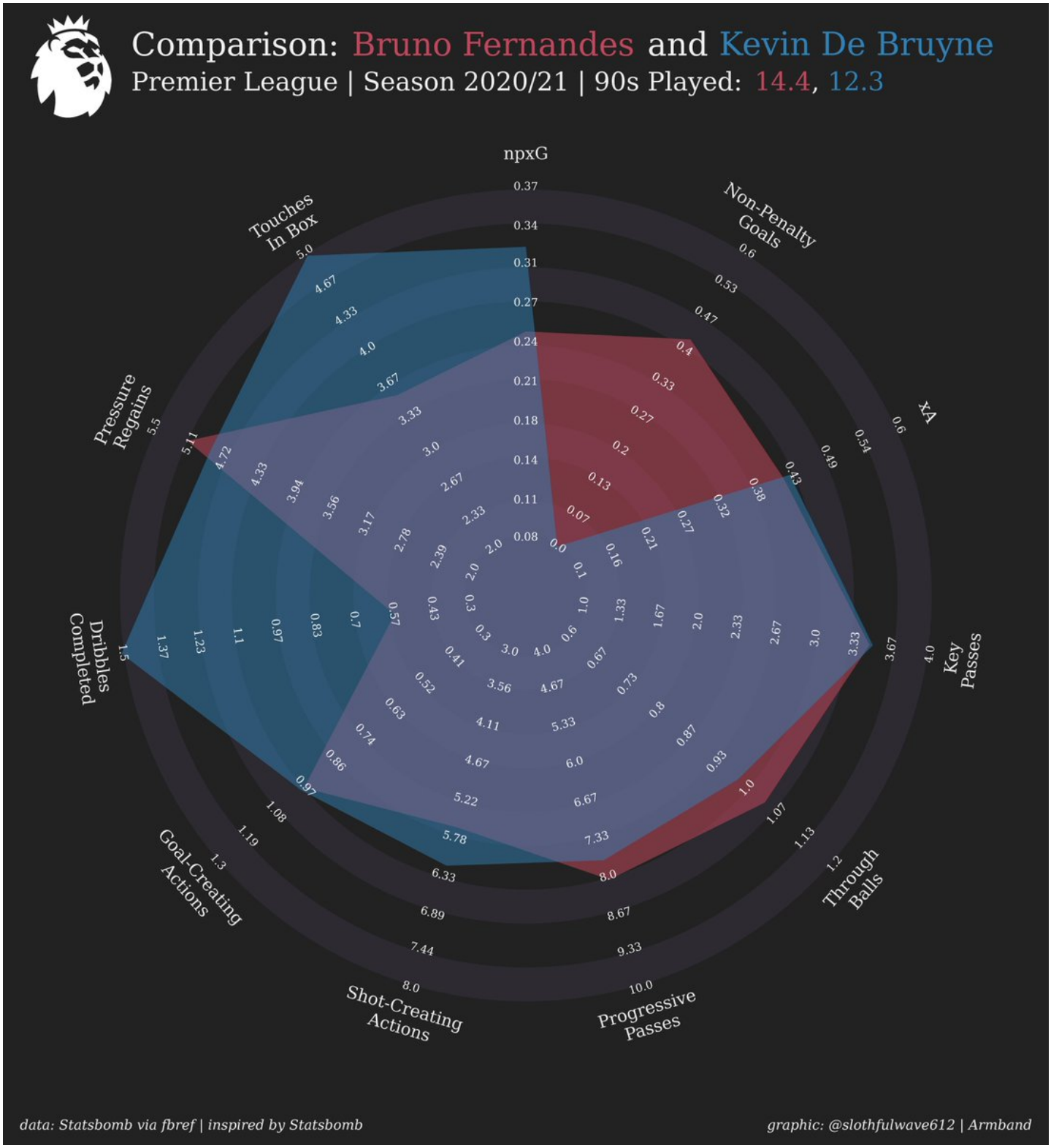
He is a prime creator in United’s midfield and he proves that week in week out!



An overview of just how good he has been throughout this season till now in the attacking aspect. An unstoppable driving force in the midfield for the Red Devils.



Manchester City’s Kevin de Bruyne has pretty much been a landmark midfielder in the attacking aspect in Premier League for past couple of seasons now. This comparison below shows how well Bruno has done this season compared to Kdb till now. Pretty much ‘a clash of the elites’!



All these points ascertain to the fact that Bruno has been an amazing signing for Manchester United. A leader without an armband on the pitch who cares more about his teammates than his own accolades. The perfect silver lining Manchester United can't afford to lose.



End of the thread.