Twitter Thread by AbuBakar Siddiq



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The Review: GW 18 - A thread

Hi everyone, welcome to the latest edition of “The Review” where I look at Bench Boost, Triple Captaincy and the upcoming double GW 19 in detail:

#FPL #FPLCommunity @OfficialFPL

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

Before I start, I'd like to introduce you to this game called Fantasy5. It’s free to enter, with a £10k weekly prize. All you have to do is to pick 5 players that you think will beat their Fantasy points target. Link here:

https://t.co/heKE1cB7N8

At this point, I’d also like to mention that I post about FPL on my Instagram too, so if you have an Instagram account, follow up here!

https://t.co/1tZ92vBXIT

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

I jump straight away to what is the toughest question of the week. I first try and work out which one of the Liverpool midfielders to own:

(read below)

Salah (20/21) vs Mane (20/21)

Mins per shot inside the box: 33.73 vs 34.15
Mins per big chance: 96.4 vs 111
Mins per big chance created: 224.8 vs 333
Mins per chance created: 49.9 vs 57.9

Even though Mane’s numbers in comparison to his numbers in the yesteryears have...

... improved, he is still behind Salah as a FPL asset, although not by much. Now that we have established that Salah is the Liverpool option to have, I run a comparison to assess the level at which he's playing at:

(read below)

Salah (Home 20/21) vs Salah (Home 19/20)

Mins per shot inside the box: 27.3 vs 26.3
Mins per big chance: 104.8 vs 83.1
Mins per big chance created: 314.5
Mins per chance created: 52.4

As you can see, what's significant to note is that Salah's minute per big chance has...

... gone down quite significantly at home as compared to his home numbers last year. This comes across as no surprise given that at the same stage last season, Salah has registered nine big chances at home but this season that stat has witnessed a 33% drop which has seen...

... Salah register just six big chances at home. Surprisingly, Salah has a better minutes per big chance ratio away from home this season than at home this season (as shown below) despite the fact that he has been shooting with greater frequency from inside the box at home:

Salah (Home 20/21) vs Salah (Away 20/21)

Mins per shot inside the box: 27.3 vs 42.4
Mins per big chance: 104.8 vs 90
Mins per big chance created: 314.5 vs 180
Mins per chance created: 52.4 vs 48

I now run a comparison to assess Salah’s recent numbers side by side with KDB:

Salah (Last 6 Home appearances) vs De Bruyne (Last 6 Home appearances)

Mins per shot inside the box: 36 vs 41.5
Mins per big chance: 134.75 vs 90
Mins per chance created: 67.4 vs 31.76
Mins per big chance created: 269.5 vs 90
Mins per baseline bonus: 12 v 7.5

Liverpool’s xG = 11 vs Man City’s xG= 13.2

Liverpool’s mins per big chance = 31.6 vs Man City’s mins per big chance = 21.7

The numbers are telling, extremely telling and highlight De Bruyne's form at home of late and Salah's lack of. As expected, De Bruyne fares far better...

... for chance creation and hence bonus potential but what is important to note is that De Bruyne is doing better in terms of recording big chances too. Man City are creating big chances at a faster clip than Liverpool, hence have the better xG, and with a better set...

... of fixtures on paper (AVL,CPL) than Liverpool (MUN,BUR), De Bruyne is likely to be the better option this week.

Q: Should the Triple Captain chip be used this GW?

A few weeks ago, I was bullish about using my triple captaincy on Salah this GW. Due to the concerns that I have raised above on Salah's form this season, I don't think I'm as confident as I was earlier despite the fact...

... that Salah does offer the security of successive starts having had twelve days of rest. If I knew that De Bruyne would play both the games, I'd triple captain him because I feel that he's more explosive than Salah but I guess I'm not as reasonably assured regarding his...

...security of back-to-back starts (even though there is nothing suggesting to the contrary other than him appearing to be tired at the end of the game) – I guess one never can be with Pep Guardiola. For now, I am going chip-less but De Bruyne triple captain is flirting with me.

Q: Should the Bench Boost chip be used this GW?

This is a very common question this week and one which I'll try and generalize even though it's hard to answer without seeing a team on paper. If in the prior weeks you have planned to Bench Boost, then I don't think the news...

... of the Leeds v Southampton fixture should put you off. I say that due to a number of reasons. Firstly, you may or may not get the opportunity to set your team as perfectly as you might plan to later, so it might be better to play what is in front of you...

... even if it's a 50/50 decision. Secondly, I think the likes of Raphinha, Bamford, Son, Dier, Holding, Smith Rowe and Saka are all decent, playable options on a bench boost this week so if you own them don't be hesitant to bench boost even if they don't have a double GW...

... If you own McCarthy but don't own Martinez, that's a hit I'd happily take this week because I think that is likely to pay off given the fact that Villa have more doubles to follow and Martinez has the better fixtures. I'd also sell Che Adams if you own, his numbers with...

... Danny Ings are far better and now that he has tested positive for COVID, I think Adams will suffer too. I'd sell for a double GWer. On the flip side of the coin, if your team isn't set for the bench boost...

... (for example, if you own the likes of a non-playable keeper or Burke/Bissouma/Brewster) I wouldn't forcibly take hits to play the bench boost. I'd save it up for later when the opportunity might present itself.

Q: Is it viable to use the Free Hit this GW?

As always, this is a team specific question. Having said that, I think this is one of those rare GWs where it is very hard to have a bad team on paper. I say that because almost all teams with highly owned...

... assets – Man City, Man United, Liverpool, Aston Villa, West Ham and Leicester have double GWs while even those teams with a single GW such as the likes of Spurs and Leeds have great fixtures on paper. Single GW assets from Spurs and Leeds could easily outscore some of the...

...double GWers you buy on Free Hit so I don't think the upside of playing the Free Hit is as big. Ideally, I'd save it till GW29.

Q: Heung Min Son and Harry Kane – keep or sell? Which one is worth keeping if at all?

I think it is very important to own the likes of Bruno Fernandes, Mohamed Salah and Kevin De Bruyne this week. I'm assuming it would be impossible for almost all FPL managers to own all...

... three together with Son and Kane in the same team so I would suggest selling at least one of Son or Kane, if not both, to make room for those three in your FPL squads. Spurs have a mixed bag of fixtures long term (shu LIV bha CHE) so I don't think the risk of selling...

... either is too high given the double GWs flying around.
If I had the luxury to choose whichever one to sell this week, I'd sell Kane over Son. I say that because Son is cheaper, presents more value long term and has the better numbers away from home which...

... is relevant as Spurs have an away fixture this week:

Son (Away) vs Kane (Away)

Mins per shot inside the box: 53.23 vs 42
Mins per big chance: 76.8 vs 142.8
Mins per chance created: 53.2 vs 47.6
Mins per big chance created: 230.7 vs 142.8

I wrote last week as to why Kane was a better option than Son due to his home numbers, and going by the same logic I think Son is likelier than Kane to notch against Sheffield United this week given that he carries the main goal threat away from home. Sheffield United are...

... in the bottom three for big chances conceded and xG conceded at home, so Son would be a very reluctant sell for me.

Q: What to do with Aston Villa's assets?

This is a fairly simple one. I don't think I'd be buying or selling. Yes, there is a concern that after the COVID outbreak, Villa's assets might be rusty this week but we don't have a model to reasonably estimate the extent...

... of such impact. What I like about Villa is that the more favorable fixture vs Newcastle in the double comes after the Man City game, so one can hope that any rustiness would be out of the way by then already. Villa offer cheap assets so the risk even if they don't score...

... big isn't as huge. Let's not forget that Villa stand second for chances created and big chances conceded over the season so there is potential at both ends of the pitch. Their fixtures after the double GW are favorable too (bur sou WHM), so I'd suggest keeping...

... I don't think I'd be buying a Villa asset right now though, partly due to the potential impact of the COVID outbreak and the Man City fixture.

Q: Who are the best Dominic Calvert Lewin replacements?

I mentioned last GW how DCL's numbers had dropped of late:

DCL (GW 1-11) v DCL (GW 12-17)

Mins per shot in the box 31.29 v 54.63
Mins per big chance 69.28 v 145.67

The news of an Everton blank being confirmed this GW is perhaps what is the final nail in the coffin for most FPL managers, who are unwilling to take the risk of having a dormant asset losing in value at their disposal...

... I look at three differential options with double GWs as his replacements:

In the premium category, there are Timo Werner and Jamie Vardy. Jamie Vardy is the old dog who's been there and done that. He currently sits top for big chances of all players this season...

... What I like about Vardy is not only that he's a safe, dependable option but he also has good fixtures (eve LEE) after the double GW. It's worth pointing out that Vardy scored 14 points against Leeds the last time he faced them this season. Werner is more of a punt, but...

... he scored in the cup game at the weekend, and I like the fact that he is likely to play as the central striker given that the Chelsea front four are all fit. Werner is averaging 103 minutes per big chance at home this season, compared to 161 minutes per big chance away...

... so he may be a better option for the fixtures to follow (WOL,BUR) than for the double itself. Michail Antonio is the option to go for if you're looking for someone cheaper. His numbers have always been good, the fixtures are there (BUR+WBA cpl LIV avl ful) but what worries...

... me is his match fitness. I liked the fact that he played 90 minutes in the cup though, which suggests that he should be good to go again for this GW...

... With Noble out of favor, he is likely to be on penalties too. I've discussed his impact on the West Ham team in a later section down below.

Q: Is switching to a back four a good idea given the emergence of a reliable Man City defence?

I think this could be a great strategy given the options at our disposal. Doubling up on the Man City defence is the gift which keeps on giving – Stones and Dias have now started...

... nine games together in which Man City have won eight and drawn one, having conceded just one goal in nine games which is incredible in itself. Meanwhile, João Cancelo has created 20 chances (including 4 big chances!) in his previous 10 Premier League appearances...

... for Man City, which is the second highest number of chances created of all Man City players after Kevin De Bruyne, yet has failed to register a single assist. I keep saying this every week but he has haul imminent written all over him. Liverpool have two home double GW...

...fixtures coming up and their numbers look better home than away:

Liverpool (Home 20/21) vs Liverpool (Away 20/21)

Shots conceded inside the box per game: 5.13 vs 5.44
Big chances conceded per game: 1.75 vs 2.33

Trent Alexander-Arnold (20/21) vs Andy Robertson (20/21):

Mins per big chance: 1219 vs 765
Mins per big chance created: 406.3 vs 218.6
Mins per chance created: 48.8 vs 47.8
Mins per touch in the final third: 2.6 vs 2.4
Mins per baseline bps: 6.2 vs 5.6

Robertson would be my defender of choice here. At this point I'd also like to talk about the forgotten man, Ben Chilwell. It's worth remembering that Chelsea have the second best expected goals conceded after Man City this season despite their recent loss of form...

... With James' fitness a concern, Chilwell remains the defender of choice for FPL managers having the best minutes per touch in the final third ratio of all defenders in the league this season after the Liverpool full backs...

...With favorable fixtures coming up (ful+lei WOL BUR), I'm confident that he'll do well.

Q: In this section, I talk about the West Ham attack.

First, I look at the influence Antonio has when he plays:

West Ham (GW 1-5 with Antonio) vs West Ham (GW 6-17 without Antonio)

Mins per shot inside the box: 8.65 vs 11.9
Mins per big chance: 45 vs 54

The numbers tell their own story. Needless to say, West Ham are a far different side with Antonio in it than without so I wouldn't read too much into their recent attacking numbers. When Antonio was fit from GW 1-5, West Ham were ranked second and fifth for shots inside the...

... box and big chances respectively, which was despite the fact that they started the season with difficult fixtures. However, since Antonio's injury, they are now ranked tenth for both shots inside the box and big chances which highlights the impact of his loss...

Now, I assess Sou■ek's recent numbers:

Sou■ek (GW 1-13) vs Sou■ek (GW 14-17)

Mins per shot inside the box: 65 vs 45
Mins per big chance: 234 vs 180
Mins per penalty area touch: 35 vs 18

Incredibly, ~38% of Sou■ek's penalty area touches in the opposition's box all season...

... have all come in the past four GWs. Moyes has definitely had a word with him giving him more license to attack. In his price bracket, I think he is easily the best midfielder to own for the double GW. At this point, I'd also like to point out @allaboutfpl 's stat who...

... pointed out that Sou■ek is top among midfielders for headed attempts this season, while West Brom have conceded the second highest number of headed attempts this season so the stars may be aligned in his favor.

Q: In this section, I talk about the West Ham defence.

Given the fact that West Ham have the standout double GW fixtures of all mid-priced defences, I analyze their full backs:

Cresswell (20/21) vs Coufal (20/21)

Mins per big chance: 1530 vs 1165
Mins per chance created: 61.2 vs 61.3
Mins per big chance created: 510 vs 582.5
Mins per touch in the final third: 6.02 vs 5.24
Mins per baseline bonus: 6.5 vs 6.9

By looking at the underlying stats over the season, both defenders have been providing approximately the same level of goal threat and chance creation. Cresswell has created the highest number of chances of all West Ham players this season so he tends to do slightly...

... better overall for bonus. I further dissect these numbers from GW12 onwards to assess the impact of Masuaku's injury on Cresswell's numbers:

Cresswell (GW 12-17) vs Coufal (GW 12-17)

Mins per big chance: 540 vs 450
Mins per chance created: 108 vs 50
Mins per big chance created: 540 vs 450
Mins per touch in the final third: 4.7 v 4.6
Mins per baseline bonus: 8.6 v 5.2

What is telling is that despite the fact that Cresswell has been playing as a natural left back of late rather than as a third centre back in a back three, his numbers pale in comparison to Coufal over the recent weeks who out-stats him for both chance creation and bonus...

... potential by a distance. Coufal is cheaper as well and with good fixtures to follow even after the double GW (BUR + WBA cry LIV avl ful), he would be my pick.

Here is my Fantasy5 team for the week! I'm confident Cancelo and Antonio will beat their fantasy targets of 7.5 and 6.5 points this week. Cancelo has been due big points for a while, while West Brom have conceded 13 in the past four so chances should be a plenty for Antonio.



This brings me to the end of the article. Pardon any glaring omissions/mistakes as I have been up all night writing this due to the quick turnaround. I would like to thank @SFK7 for helping me as well. It would be nice if you could offer him some encouragement too!

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I await your feedback with anticipation!