

Technical performance analysis in six game areas

Drs Raffaele Poli, Loïc Ravenel and Roger Besson

1. Introduction

This report presents the CIES Football Observatory's approach to assessing the level of performance of out-field players in six different areas of the game: ground defence, distribution, take on, chance creation, finishing and aerial play. For each of these areas, indices have been created by considering players' related actions, both in terms of their frequency in relation to the minutes played and, where relevant, their success rate.

For greater comparability, in certain cases and as detailed below, the values for frequency or success have been related to those measured for the teams of employment and players in the same position. For footballers who played in more than one position, the ratio is calculated on the basis of the minutes played in each one according to the following categories: centre backs, full or wing backs, defensive or central midfielders, attacking midfielders, wingers and centre forwards.

All the data used was collected by our partners Wyscout and refers to domestic league matches played by footballers for their current club between the beginning of April 2023 and the end of March 2024. Only footballers who have played at least 1,000 domestic league minutes during this period for their current employer are included in the rankings. The sample of 'eligible' footballers therefore includes 13,132 players from 73 leagues around the world.

2. Ground defence

The ground defence index is calculated by adding up the defensive duels won by players below elbow height, pass interceptions and anticipations on loose balls (without clear possession) in relation to the average values measured at team and position level (on a pro rata basis of the different positions played). The value obtained is corrected by the success rate of ground duels undertaken and the sporting level of the matches played, according to the method explained in [this note](#).

On a scale of 100 and by position, the highest average values for the ground defence index are recorded for centre backs, followed closely by full/wing backs and defensive/central midfielders. Figures below identify the players who performed best over the last year in this area for these three positions. Alessandro Buongiorno (big-5) and Daihachi Okamura (non-big-5) top the table for centre backs, Marc Cucurella and Mehmet Aydin for full/wing backs, as well as Nicolò Rovella and Florentino Luís for defensive/central midfielders.

Figure 1: ground defence, best centre backs*

(a) Big-5

100.0		Alessandro Buongiorno	2'785 min
		Torino FC (ITA) / 24 years	100% cb
89.8		Maximilian Wöber	1'799 min
		Borussia M'gladbach (GER) / 26 years	89% cb
85.4		Mats Hummels	1'849 min
		Borussia Dortmund (GER) / 35 years	100% cb
85.1		Diego Coppola	1'184 min
		Hellas Verona (ITA) / 20 years	99% cb
84.1		Nikola Milenković	2'586 min
		ACF Fiorentina (ITA) / 26 years	100% cb

(b) Non big-5

90.4		Daihachi Okamura	2'547 min
		Consadole Sapporo (JPN) / 27 years	99% cb
84.3		Volodymyr Salyuk	2'250 min
		FK Chornomorets (UKR) / 21 years	100% cb
83.4		Liam Cooper	1'014 min
		Leeds United (ENG/2) / 32 years	99% cb
81.7		Ousseynou Ba	1'355 min
		Başakşehir FK (TUR) / 28 years	100% cb
81.4		Renato Gojković	1'980 min
		FK Orenburg (RUS) / 28 years	100% cb

Figure 2: ground defence, best full/wing backs

(a) Big-5

96.7		Marc Cucurella	1'023 min
		Chelsea FC (ENG) / 25 years	91% fb
95.1		Alfonso Espino	2'210 min
		Rayo Vallecano (ESP) / 32 years	96% fb
93.9		Juanlu Sánchez	1'060 min
		Sevilla FC (ESP) / 20 years	100% fb
93.9		Kenny Tete	1'503 min
		Fulham FC (ENG) / 28 years	100% fb
88.9		Ramy Bensebaini	1'045 min
		Borussia Dortmund (GER) / 29 years	88% fb

(b) Non big-5

87.3		Mehmet Aydin	1'279 min
		Trabzonspor (TUR) / 22 years	99% fb
87.1		Igor Formiga	1'202 min
		Portimonense SC (POR) / 25 years	100% fb
83.4		Saeed Al-Basisi	1'299 min
		Al-Fateh SC (KSA) / 23 years	100% fb
82.8		Rubens Dias	1'320 min
		Atlético Mineiro (BRA) / 22 years	63% fb
81.2		Ali Majrashi	1'762 min
		Al-Ahli SFC (KSA) / 24 years	100% fb

Figure 3: ground defence, best defensive/central midfielders

(a) Big-5

91.7		Nicolò Rovella	1'149 min
		SS Lazio (ITA) / 22 years	100% dm
91.7		Carlos Casemiro	1'967 min
		Manchester United (ENG) / 32 years	99% dm
90.7		Anton Stach	1'883 min
		TSG Hoffenheim (GER) / 25 years	95% dm
90.3		Pablo Gavi	1'613 min
		FC Barcelona (ESP) / 19 years	74% dm
88.1		Beñat Prados	1'008 min
		Athletic Club (ESP) / 23 years	85% dm

(b) Non big-5

90.0		Florentino Luís	1'496 min
		SL Benfica (POR) / 24 years	100% dm
87.1		Wílmur Barrios	2'249 min
		FK Zenit (RUS) / 30 years	96% dm
86.6		Yvo Calleros	1'214 min
		CA Banfield (ARG) / 26 years	100% dm
86.5		Mats Wieffer	2'822 min
		Feyenoord (NED) / 24 years	95% dm
85.3		Rubén González	2'089 min
		Chivas Guadalajara (MEX) / 30 years	99% dm

* All the tables in the report show for each footballer the index value, the domestic league minutes played in the last year for the current employer, and the percentage of these minutes played in the main position: centre back (cb), full back (fb), defensive midfielder (dm), attacking midfielder (am), winger (wi) or centre forward (cf).

3. Distribution

The distribution index takes into account players' passes received by a teammate in the opponent third, compared with the average recorded for the employer team in order to control, at least to some extent, the effect of the level of collective domination on individual performances. The result is corrected by the success rate of the passes made by players into the opposing third and the sporting level of the matches played, using the same method as above.

By position, the highest values for distribution were observed for defensive/central midfielders, followed by centre backs, full/wing backs and attacking midfielders in similar proportions. Across these four positions, the best distribution indices were recorded for Toni Kroos, Granit Xhaka (big-5) and Álvaro Fidalgo (non-big-5) for defensive/central midfielders, Daley Blind and Olivier Boscagli for centre backs, Oleksandr Zinchenko and Liam Scyles for full/wing backs, as well as Téli Savanier and Ganso for attacking midfielders.

Figure 4: distribution, best def./central midfielders

(a) Big-5

100.0		Toni Kroos Real Madrid (ESP) / 34 years	2'350 min 97% dm
100.0		Granit Xhaka Bayer Leverkusen (GER) / 31 years	2'381 min 99% dm
96.4		Frenkie de Jong FC Barcelona (ESP) / 26 years	2'272 min 93% dm
93.9		Rodri Hernández Manchester City (ENG) / 27 years	2'836 min 96% dm
93.2		Yacine Adli Milan AC (ITA) / 23 years	1'084 min 98% dm

(b) Non big-5

93.1		Álvaro Fidalgo CF América (MEX) / 27 years	3'191 min 98% dm
92.4		Rúben Neves Al-Hilal SFC (KSA) / 27 years	2'076 min 100% dm
88.3		Florentino Luis SL Benfica (POR) / 24 years	1'496 min 100% dm
87.4		Rafael Carrascal Cerro Porteño (PAR) / 31 years	1'531 min 89% dm
86.4		Rubén Pérez Panathinaikos FC (GRE) / 34 years	1'875 min 100% dm

Figure 5: distribution, best centre backs

(a) Big-5

87.7		Daley Blind Girona FC (ESP) / 34 years	2'253 min 91% cb
87.4		Eric García Girona FC (ESP) / 23 years	1'932 min 83% cb
87.3		Rúben Dias Manchester City (ENG) / 26 years	2'564 min 100% cb
86.1		Adam Webster Brighton & Hove (ENG) / 29 years	1'246 min 93% cb
85.1		Nico Schlotterbeck Borussia Dortmund (GER) / 24 years	2'312 min 100% cb

(b) Non big-5

90.8		Olivier Boscagli PSV Eindhoven (NED) / 26 years	2'467 min 98% cb
90.0		Brede Moe FK Bodø/Glimt (NOR) / 32 years	1'980 min 100% cb
90.0		Odin Bjørtuft FK Bodø/Glimt (NOR) / 25 years	1'926 min 100% cb
87.9		Liam Scyles Celtic FC (SCO) / 25 years	2'520 min 100% cb
86.1		Matheus Reis Sporting CP (POR) / 29 years	1'781 min 63% cb

Figure 6: distribution, best full/wing backs

(a) Big-5

87.9		Oleksandr Zinchenko Arsenal FC (ENG) / 27 years	1'800 min 100% fb
86.5		Trent Alexander-Arnold Liverpool FC (ENG) / 25 years	2'503 min 96% fb
81.7		Kyle Walker Manchester City (ENG) / 33 years	3'053 min 94% fb
81.6		Jules Koundé FC Barcelona (ESP) / 25 years	2'999 min 61% fb
80.4		Noussair Mazraoui Bayern München (GER) / 26 years	1'514 min 95% fb

(b) Non big-5

88.1		Márcio Rafinha São Paulo FC (BRA) / 38 years	2'015 min 96% fb
83.7		Renê Rodrigues SC Internacional (BRA) / 31 years	2'278 min 98% fb
82.8		Gwang-hoon Shin Pohang Steelers (KOR) / 37 years	1'115 min 69% fb
82.5		Omar Jerrari MAS de Fès (MAR) / 29 years	2'254 min 54% fb
80.8		Marcelo Vieira Fluminense FC (BRA) / 35 years	1'268 min 94% fb

Figure 7: distribution, best attacking midfielders

(a) Big-5

78.1		Téli Savanier Montpellier HSC (FRA) / 32 years	2'796 min 50% am
75.4		Isco Alarcón Real Betis (ESP) / 32 years	1'940 min 77% am
75.4		James Maddison Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) / 27 years	1'504 min 90% am
72.5		Óscar Trejo Rayo Vallecano (ESP) / 35 years	1'510 min 68% am
64.6		Oihan Sancet Athletic Club (ESP) / 23 years	2'464 min 76% am

(b) Non big-5

80.9		Ganso Chagas Fluminense FC (BRA) / 34 years	1'689 min 69% am
76.8		Yeison Guzmán Deportes Tolima (COL) / 26 years	3'503 min 78% am
75.0		Carles Gil New England (USA) / 31 years	2'852 min 88% am
74.9		David Silva Millonarios FC (COL) / 37 years	2'947 min 61% am
74.1		Thiago Almada Atlanta United (USA) / 22 years	2'805 min 83% am

4. Take on

The take on index is computed from the frequency of successful dribbles achieved by players, corrected by their success rate. A dribble is considered successful when the team of the player who attempted it maintains possession by approaching the opponent's goal or when the dribbler is fouled. Here too, values obtained are weighted according to the sporting level of the matches in which players have taken part.

The highest average take on values per position were recorded for wingers, followed by attacking midfielders, centre forwards and full/wing backs. For each of these positions, the best indices were measured for Jérémy Doku (big-5) and Francisco Conceição (non-big-5) for wingers, Isco and Emanuel Reynoso for attacking midfielders, Vinícius Júnior and Mohamed Amoura for centre forwards, as well as Noah Weisshaupt and Luca Zanimacchia for full/wing backs.

Figure 8: take on, best wingers

(a) Big-5

100.0		Jérémy Doku Manchester City (ENG) / 21 years	1'218 min 94% wi
92.4		Michael Olise Crystal Palace (ENG) / 22 years	1'564 min 99% wi
89.8		Kingsley Coman Bayern München (GER) / 27 years	1'430 min 99% wi
89.5		Ousmane Dembélé Paris St-Germain (FRA) / 26 years	1'321 min 96% wi
89.2		Mattia Zaccagni SS Lazio (ITA) / 28 years	2'376 min 100% wi

(b) Non big-5

93.6		Francisco Conceição FC Porto (POR) / 21 years	1'273 min 100% wi
89.4		Haïsssem Hassan Sporting Gijón (ESP/2) / 22 years	1'996 min 85% wi
88.5		Jack Clarke Sunderland AFC (ENG/2) / 23 years	3'747 min 90% wi
88.4		Yacine Brahimi Al-Gharafa SC (QAT) / 34 years	1'740 min 99% wi
87.9		Johan Bakayoko PSV Eindhoven (NED) / 21 years	2'318 min 100% wi

Figure 9: take on, best attacking midfielders

(a) Big-5

78.0		Isco Alarcón Real Betis (ESP) / 32 years	1'940 min 77% am
76.7		Florian Wirtz Bayer Leverkusen (GER) / 20 years	2'604 min 62% am
75.8		James Maddison Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) / 27 years	1'504 min 90% am
73.6		Justin Kluivert Bournemouth AFC (ENG) / 24 years	1'231 min 71% am
72.5		Ruben Loftus-Cheek Milan AC (ITA) / 28 years	1'844 min 53% am

(b) Non big-5

84.7		Emanuel Reynoso Minnesota United (USA) / 28 years	1'379 min 91% am
78.2		Rafinha Alcântara Al-Arabi SC (QAT) / 31 years	1'352 min 59% am
78.1		Carles Gil New England (USA) / 31 years	2'852 min 88% am
78.0		Hernán López CD Godoy Cruz (ARG) / 23 years	2'996 min 81% am
76.4		Thiago Almada Atlanta United (USA) / 22 years	2'805 min 83% am

Figure 10: take on, best centre forwards

(a) Big-5

90.6		Vinícius Júnior Real Madrid (ESP) / 23 years	1'940 min 53% cf
83.2		Rodrygo Goes Real Madrid (ESP) / 23 years	2'716 min 63% cf
81.7		Florian Thauvin Udinese Calcio (ITA) / 31 years	1'894 min 82% cf
79.9		Federico Chiesa Juventus FC (ITA) / 26 years	2'096 min 65% cf
77.9		Gabriel Jesus Arsenal FC (ENG) / 27 years	1'926 min 83% cf

(b) Non big-5

80.8		Mohamed Amoura Union SG (BEL) / 23 years	1'403 min 94% cf
79.9		Georginio Rutter Leeds United (ENG/2) / 22 years	3'287 min 60% cf
79.5		Hulk Givanildo Atlético Mineiro (BRA) / 37 years	2'910 min 98% cf
79.5		Cryzhan da Cruz Shandong Taishan (CHN) / 27 years	1'728 min 53% cf
78.8		Liam Delap Hull City AFC (ENG/2) / 21 years	1'936 min 70% cf

Figure 11: take on, best full/wing backs

(a) Big-5

84.0		Noah Weisshaupt SC Freiburg (GER) / 22 years	1'008 min 54% fb
82.8		Leonardo Spinazzola AS Roma (ITA) / 31 years	1'499 min 91% fb
81.3		Festy Ebosele Udinese Calcio (ITA) / 21 years	1'821 min 85% fb
79.7		Fabiano Parisi ACF Fiorentina (ITA) / 23 years	1'015 min 98% fb
78.3		Nicola Zalewski AS Roma (ITA) / 22 years	1'447 min 73% fb

(b) Non big-5

81.3		Luca Zanimacchia US Cremonese (ITA/2) / 25 years	1'925 min 81% fb
80.6		Lars Ranger Lillestrøm SK (NOR) / 25 years	1'110 min 100% fb
79.3		Sergiño Dest PSV Eindhoven (NED) / 23 years	1'923 min 100% fb
78.8		Archie Brown KAA Gent (BEL) / 21 years	1'725 min 87% fb
78.6		Liam Millar Preston North End (ENG/2) / 24 years	2'263 min 68% fb

5. Chance creation

The chance creation index is calculated by adding the frequency of passes leading to a goal or a clear chance, passes made to the assistman (second assist), as well as passes breaking the opposition's defensive line received by a teammate. As in previous cases, the result is weighted by the sporting level of the matches in which footballers have participated, in proportion to the minutes played in each game.

By position, the top average values for chance creation were measured for attacking midfielders, followed by wingers and, further back, defensive/central midfielders, centre forwards and full/wing backs. The best players for each of these positions, in order of appearance, are Florian Wirtz (big-5) and Emanuel Reynoso (non-big-5), Ousmane Dembélé and Ángel Di María, Rodrigo de Paul and Joey Veerman, Deniz Undav and Alejandro Pozuelo, as well as Trent Alexander-Arnold and Marcelo Vieira.

Figure 13: chance creation, best wingers

(a) Big-5

100.0		Ousmane Dembélé Paris St-Germain (FRA) / 26 years	1'321 min 96% wi
92.0		Cole Palmer Chelsea FC (ENG) / 21 years	1'809 min 52% wi
91.1		Mohamed Salah Liverpool FC (ENG) / 31 years	2'792 min 91% wi
88.6		Matías Soulé Frosinone Calcio (ITA) / 21 years	2'375 min 81% wi
87.1		Dani Olmo RB Leipzig (GER) / 25 years	1'464 min 92% wi

(b) Non big-5

93.9		Ángel Di María SL Benfica (POR) / 36 years	1'746 min 98% wi
89.2		Steven Berghuis AFC Ajax (NED) / 32 years	1'644 min 81% wi
86.4		Iñigo Vicente Racing de Santander (ESP/2) / 26 years	3'154 min 89% wi
85.2		Jean Meneses Deportivo Toluca (MEX) / 31 years	2'230 min 93% wi
84.7		Nordin Amrabat AEK Athens (GRE) / 37 years	1'176 min 92% wi

Figure 15: chance creation, best centre forwards

(a) Big-5

85.9		Deniz Undav VfB Stuttgart (GER) / 27 years	1'496 min 85% cf
84.6		Antoine Griezmann Atlético Madrid (ESP) / 33 years	3'021 min 87% cf
84.1		Gerard Moreno Villarreal CF (ESP) / 32 years	2'143 min 70% cf
83.7		Iago Aspas Celta Vigo (ESP) / 36 years	2'626 min 90% cf
83.3		Vinícius Júnior Real Madrid (ESP) / 23 years	1'940 min 53% cf

(b) Non big-5

86.2		Alejandro Pozuelo Al-Jazira Club (UAE) / 32 years	1'150 min 51% cf
83.3		Georginio Rutter Leeds United (ENG/2) / 22 years	3'287 min 60% cf
80.8		Diego Valdés CF América (MEX) / 30 years	2'510 min 57% cf
78.6		Bruno Petković Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) / 29 years	1'873 min 98% cf
77.8		Tarik Tissoudali KAA Gent (BEL) / 31 years	1'908 min 85% cf

Figure 12: chance creation, best attacking midfielders

(a) Big-5

90.6		Florian Wirtz Bayer Leverkusen (GER) / 20 years	2'604 min 62% am
90.0		James Maddison Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) / 27 years	1'504 min 90% am
85.7		Isco Alarcón Real Betis (ESP) / 32 years	1'940 min 77% am
82.2		Thomas Müller Bayern München (GER) / 34 years	1'597 min 66% am
81.1		Andreas Pereira Fulham FC (ENG) / 28 years	2'417 min 81% am

(b) Non big-5

89.1		Emanuel Reynoso Minnesota United (USA) / 28 years	1'379 min 91% am
88.0		Luciano Acosta FC Cincinnati (USA) / 29 years	2'997 min 85% am
86.9		Carles Gil New England (USA) / 31 years	2'852 min 88% am
85.3		Thiago Almada Atlanta United (USA) / 22 years	2'805 min 83% am
84.3		Jorge Luna Deportes Copiapó (CHI) / 37 years	1'731 min 76% am

Figure 14: chance creation, best defensive/central midfielders

(a) Big-5

94.3		Rodrigo de Paul Atlético Madrid (ESP) / 29 years	2'303 min 98% dm
89.1		Martin Ødegaard Arsenal FC (ENG) / 25 years	2'979 min 88% dm
88.9		Frenkie de Jong FC Barcelona (ESP) / 26 years	2'272 min 93% dm
85.8		Luis Alberto SS Lazio (ITA) / 31 years	2'833 min 100% dm
83.5		Harvey Elliott Liverpool FC (ENG) / 21 years	1'030 min 64% dm

(b) Non big-5

91.3		Joey Veerman PSV Eindhoven (NED) / 25 years	2'508 min 98% dm
86.8		Mohamed Magdy Al-Ahly SC (EGY) / 28 years	1'053 min 88% dm
86.7		Rodri Zalazar SC Braga (POR) / 24 years	1'371 min 77% dm
85.5		Oscar dos Santos Shanghai Port (CHN) / 32 years	2'730 min 68% dm
84.4		Sergej Milinković-Savić Al-Hilal SFC (KSA) / 29 years	1'852 min 80% dm

Figure 16: chance creation, best full/wing backs

(a) Big-5

87.0		Trent Alexander-Arnold Liverpool FC (ENG) / 25 years	2'503 min 96% fb
81.0		Federico Dimarco Internazionale (ITA) / 26 years	1'993 min 98% fb
79.8		Kieran Trippier Newcastle United (ENG) / 33 years	3'116 min 100% fb
79.6		Giovanni Di Lorenzo SSC Napoli (ITA) / 30 years	3'272 min 99% fb
78.8		Álex Grimaldo Bayer Leverkusen (GER) / 28 years	2'407 min 95% fb

(b) Non big-5

83.3		Marcelo Vieira Fluminense FC (BRA) / 35 years	1'268 min 94% fb
77.6		Mohamed Chibi Pyramids FC (EGY) / 31 years	2'029 min 100% fb
76.7		Ali Maâloul Al-Ahly SC (EGY) / 34 years	1'325 min 100% fb
75.7		Jan Kopić Viktoria Plzeň (CZE) / 33 years	1'660 min 66% fb
75.1		Jordan Teze PSV Eindhoven (NED) / 24 years	2'480 min 97% fb

6. Finishing

The finishing index considers the shots taken by players and their success rate as a corrective factor in relationship to the average conversion rate observed for all players. As with all the other indices, the sporting level of the matches played by footballers is taken into account in order to ensure a better contextualisation of individual performances.

The highest average values for finishing per position were logically observed for centre forwards, followed by attacking midfielders, wingers, and, at a greater distance, defensive/central midfielders. Harry Kane (big-5) and Cristiano Ronaldo (non-big-5) top the list for centre forwards, Justin Kluivert and Sem Steijn for attacking midfielders, Mohamed Salah and Anderson Talisca for wingers, as well as Harvey Elliott and Kevin Castañeda for defensive/central midfielders.

Figure 17: finishing, best centre forwards

(a) Big-5

93.6		Harry Kane Bayern München (GER) / 30 years	2'276 min 97% cf
93.4		Deniz Undav VfB Stuttgart (GER) / 27 years	1'496 min 85% cf
92.9		Kylian Mbappé Paris St-Germain (FRA) / 25 years	2'713 min 73% cf
92.6		Victor Boniface Bayer Leverkusen (GER) / 23 years	1'239 min 94% cf
91.6		Lautaro Martínez Internazionale (ITA) / 26 years	2'576 min 98% cf

(b) Non big-5

91.5		Cristiano Ronaldo Al-Nassr FC (KSA) / 39 years	2'810 min 99% cf
91.4		Mohamed Amoura Union SG (BEL) / 23 years	1'403 min 94% cf
89.6		Fo-Doh Laba Al-Ain FC (UAE) / 32 years	1'527 min 97% cf
88.8		Aleksandar Mitrović Al-Hilal SFC (KSA) / 29 years	1'824 min 100% cf
88.4		Simon Banza SC Braga (POR) / 27 years	1'772 min 100% cf

Figure 18: finishing, best attacking midfielders

(a) Big-5

78.2		Justin Kluivert Bournemouth AFC (ENG) / 24 years	1'231 min 71% am
77.8		James Maddison Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) / 27 years	1'504 min 90% am
77.3		Jonas Hofmann Bayer Leverkusen (GER) / 31 years	1'715 min 68% am
77.1		Isco Alarcón Real Betis (ESP) / 32 years	1'940 min 77% am
75.5		Giacomo Bonaventura ACF Fiorentina (ITA) / 34 years	2'143 min 71% am

(b) Non big-5

80.7		Sem Steijn FC Twente (NED) / 22 years	2'200 min 74% am
80.1		Sergio Canales CF Monterrey (MEX) / 33 years	1'117 min 53% am
79.8		Robert Žulj LASK (AUT) / 32 years	2'077 min 74% am
79.8		Rafa Silva SL Benfica (POR) / 30 years	2'803 min 76% am
79.4		Luciano da Rocha São Paulo FC (BRA) / 30 years	2'065 min 59% am

Figure 19: finishing, best wingers

(a) Big-5

89.3		Mohamed Salah Liverpool FC (ENG) / 31 years	2'792 min 91% wi
88.8		Diogo Jota Liverpool FC (ENG) / 27 years	1'637 min 72% wi
88.2		Donyell Malen Borussia Dortmund (GER) / 25 years	2'172 min 95% wi
85.5		Nicolas González ACF Fiorentina (ITA) / 26 years	1'896 min 98% wi
85.4		Antoine Semenyo Bournemouth AFC (ENG) / 24 years	1'537 min 95% wi

(b) Non big-5

89.9		Anderson Talisca Al-Nassr FC (KSA) / 30 years	2'132 min 61% wi
86.1		Denis Bouanga Los Angeles FC (USA) / 29 years	3'126 min 85% wi
84.4		Trézéguet Hassan Trabzonspor (TUR) / 29 years	1'576 min 96% wi
83.6		Semih Kılıçsoy Beşiktaş JK (TUR) / 18 years	1'172 min 64% wi
82.9		Akram Afif Al-Sadd SC (QAT) / 27 years	1'851 min 75% wi

Figure 20: finishing, best defensive/central midfielders

(a) Big-5

80.0		Harvey Elliott Liverpool FC (ENG) / 21 years	1'030 min 64% dm
78.5		Lorenzo Pellegrini AS Roma (ITA) / 27 years	1'935 min 67% dm
77.4		Scott McTominay Manchester United (ENG) / 27 years	1'834 min 75% dm
76.9		Martin Ødegaard Arsenal FC (ENG) / 25 years	2'979 min 88% dm
76.2		Andrej Kramarić TSG Hoffenheim (GER) / 32 years	2'246 min 54% dm

(b) Non big-5

79.9		Kevin Castañeda Club Tijuana (MEX) / 24 years	1'390 min 67% dm
77.4		Richard Calderón Orense SC (ECU) / 30 years	1'238 min 92% dm
77.3		Ramiro Vaca Club Bolívar (BOL) / 24 years	1'693 min 73% dm
76.8		Sergej Milinković-Savić Al-Hilal SFC (KSA) / 29 years	1'852 min 80% dm
76.5		Volodymyr Brazhko Dynamo Kyiv (UKR) / 22 years	1'405 min 99% dm

7. Aerial play

The aerial play index is calculated from the ratio between the frequency of duels above elbow height won by the player and the average frequency of aerial duels for the team as a whole. This makes it possible to mitigate, at least in part, the effect of the differences in playing styles between leagues and clubs of employment. The result is corrected by the success rate of aerial duels performed by the footballers and the sporting level of the matches played.

The aerial play index highlights footballers who play as centre backs and centre forwards. In the first case, Juanmi Latasa tops the list for players in the European big-5 leagues and Lucas Jutkiewicz for those outside these competitions. In the second case, Virgil van Dijk heads the rankings for the big-5 and Antonio Briseño at the level of the other leagues surveyed.

Figure 19: aerial play, best centre backs

(a) Big-5

92.3		Virgil van Dijk Liverpool FC (ENG) / 32 years	3'176 min 100% cb
90.6		Dan-Axel Zagadou VfB Stuttgart (GER) / 24 years	1'985 min 100% cb
88.1		Matthijs de Ligt Bayern München (GER) / 24 years	1'818 min 99% cb
87.6		Jamaal Lascelles Newcastle United (ENG) / 30 years	1'102 min 100% cb
87.5		Joël Matip Liverpool FC (ENG) / 32 years	1'046 min 100% cb

(b) Non big-5

89.4		Antonio Briseño Chivas Guadalajara (MEX) / 30 years	2'528 min 99% cb
87.9		Marc-Oliver Kempf Hertha BSC (GER/2) / 29 years	1'950 min 100% cb
87.8		Henrique Trevisan FC Tokyo (JPN) / 27 years	1'616 min 100% cb
87.7		Joaquim Henrique Santos FC (BRA/2) / 25 years	2'725 min 98% cb
87.6		Willyan Rocha CSKA Moskva (RUS) / 29 years	2'018 min 100% cb

Figure 20: aerial play, best centre forwards

(a) Big-5

100.0		Juanmi Latasa Getafe CF (ESP) / 23 years	1'561 min 97% cf
93.3		Steve Mounié Stade Brestois (FRA) / 29 years	1'971 min 100% cf
90.5		Chris Ramos Cádiz CF (ESP) / 27 years	2'640 min 90% cf
90.2		Dominic Calvert-Lewin Everton FC (ENG) / 27 years	2'057 min 100% cf
87.6		Vedat Muriqi RCD Mallorca (ESP) / 29 years	2'623 min 99% cf

(b) Non big-5

97.0		Lucas Jutkiewicz Birmingham City (ENG/2) / 35 years	1'154 min 89% cf
96.2		Luis Wellington Avispa Fukuoka (JPN) / 36 years	1'021 min 97% cf
94.5		Christian Benteke D.C. United (USA) / 33 years	2'604 min 95% cf
89.9		Júlio Tavares Al-Raed SFC (KSA) / 35 years	2'150 min 100% cf
87.7		Abdulla Yusuf Helal Mladá Boleslav (CZE) / 30 years	1'425 min 100% cf

8. Conclusion

A great deal of care needs to be taken when analysing players' technical performance. In addition to productivity values (frequency), it is necessary to consider the effectiveness of the actions made (success), as well as the context in which the footballers are playing, whether in terms of the position(s) occupied, the employer team's style of play or the sporting level of the matches in which footballers have taken part.

By taking all these factors into account, the method explained in this report makes it possible to compare players' performances in the six principal areas of the game in a robust, transparent and objective manner. This approach is an invaluable tool for identifying players whose technical profile and level of performance allows envisaging an advantageous recruitment process, while greatly reducing the risk of error.