

Post-Match Performance Analysis Report

Manchester United vs. Manchester City



Old Trafford, Manchester

Sunday 23rd October 2011

Produced by David Willoughby

Index

The titles on this page are Hyperlinked. To jump to any part of this report straight away hold down CTRL on the Keyboard and left click the mouse over the section you want to jump to.

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>Page 3</u>
<u>Pre-Match</u>	<u>Page 4</u>
<u>Line Ups</u>	<u>Page 4</u>
<u>Build Up</u>	<u>Page 6</u>
<u>The Match</u>	<u>Page 8</u>
<u>1st Half</u>	<u>Page 8</u>
<u>2nd Half</u>	<u>Page 11</u>
<u>Conclusion</u>	<u>Page 14</u>
<u>Aftermath</u>	<u>Page 18</u>
<u>Contact Details</u>	<u>Page 19</u>

Introduction

This report was done as an example of my performance analysis skills and abilities. I have been interested in getting a job in Performance Analysis for some time and although I missed the boat somewhat in not doing a related degree at University, I have experience of performance analysis from my professional career and voluntary work.

To showcase my skills I thought it best to choose a game and analyse it from start to finish, picking out areas for both sides and why things turned out the way they did.

I recorded the game from Sky Sports HD1, transferred this to my laptop and used several different tools to help me analyse the game.

I used Longomatch to log key incidents within the game and map out the various things that happened in the match.

I set up a Microsoft Excel table to capture each individual key action so I could compare and analyse the different players.

I used Microsoft Movie Maker to clip and edit the game to pick out particular parts so I could better show the actions from within the game. I then uploaded these to YouTube so I could embed them within this report.

I chose the Manchester United vs. Manchester City game for a variety of reasons. The first reason was due to timing. I had been planning on analysing a game for a short while and when I looked at the fixture calendar as to when I would be ready to do it the 2 games which stood out were this one and Chelsea vs. Arsenal (played on 29th October 2011). Due to the Manchester United vs. Manchester City game being a local derby and between the top 2 teams in terms of league position at the time, as well as being on the back of the fiercely contested Charity Shield game 2 months before, I thought this would be the better option.

Any feedback on this report is greatly appreciated, contact details can be found at the bottom.

[Return to top](#)

Pre Match

Line Ups

Manchester United



As shown, Manchester United lined up in a conventional 4-4-2 formation; although the way Rooney plays he would drop in behind Welbeck to go looking for the ball and make it a 4-4-1-1 formation at times.

Due to injuries the Manchester United team more or less picked itself. Vidic was ruled out so Evans partnered Ferdinand in the centre of defence and Chris Smalling got the nod over Phil Jones at right back. Nani and Ashley Young provided the threat out wide with two out-and-out wingers, while the midfield was anchored with Darren Fletcher and Anderson. Due to these 2 in the middle the onus would be on the wide players and Wayne Rooney to create chances and worry the Manchester City defensive line.



The substitutes bench for Man Utd does not boast the same strength in depth they once had but still manages to be full of internationals. Park Ji-Sung was the notable exemption from the starting line up and Sir Alex Ferguson almost always uses him in big games so his absence was a surprise. Welbeck getting the nod over Javier Hernandez was the other main area of debate, but Welbeck has proved by his form this season he is worthy of a starting place. Ryan Giggs misses out completely along with Tom Cleverley.

Manchester City



Manchester City made several changes to their line up from the previous game against Villarreal in the Champions League, bringing back Micah Richards and Gael Clichy at full back in place of Zabaleta and Kolarov. The addition of their pace provided a way to counteract Ashley Young and Nani but also give them further attacking options. James Milner was brought in on the right side as a solid wide midfielder to provide cover for Richards and Gareth Barry played in place of Nigel De Jong in a defensive shield role. Dzeko was replaced by the mercurial Mario Balotelli who played more as the front man with Aguero playing in the hole in behind in the 4-2-3-1 formation. This formation, used to great effect on the continent, allows the full backs to get forward and with 2 defensive midfield players provides for cover. The 3 in behind the main striker are interchangeable and it is likely only James Milner would stay in that area of the pitch to provide help to Richards, with David Silva and Sergio Aguero allowed to roam around to look for the ball.



In contrast to the Manchester United bench, the Manchester City bench is full of superstar players who could all potentially have started this game. Kolo Toure is now back after a 6 month ban for testing positive for a banned substance, Zabaleta and Kolarov are both experienced internationals, Nasri could easily have slotted in in place of either David Silva or Aguero and Edin Dzeko has finally started to prove himself in England and justify his large price tag. Ample available options should Roberto Mancini need to change things.

From the way both teams were set up it was clear that Manchester United aimed to use the width of the pitch and get Ashley Young and Nani on the ball as much as possible. This would provide width and plenty of opportunity to get the ball in with Fletcher and Anderson pushing to the edge of the box to pick up any pieces. Man City decided the best way to counteract this was to use Richards and Clichy as the full backs, with defensive cover on the right hand side from James Milner if necessary. With no discernable target man playing for Man City, short passes and quick counter attacks would be the way they would break through the Man Utd back line.

[Return to top](#)

Build Up

Like any game between top of the table sides this one had a lot of build up in the week before. The added spice of it being a derby would have brought it into the national limelight anyway but the mind games and bravado came from both camps thick and fast.

In the week before the derby, both teams had to contend with tricky Champions League Group Stage matches. Both had had reasonably poor starts to their group stages with Manchester United drawing both their opening games in a group they were expected to win comfortably, whilst Man City had drawn and lost in the supposed “group of death”.

Manchester United faced a trip into the unknown by travelling to Romania to face Otelul Galati, newcomers to the Champions League. A difficult tie ended with two Wayne Rooney penalties giving the Red Devils a 2-0 victory although it wasn't without it's hardships as Nemanja Vidic was sent off early in the 2nd half. United started against City with only 5 of the players who started in Romania, allowing experienced pros like Ferdinand to be rested.

Manchester City had a tough tie at home to Villarreal; the yellow submarine had a reasonable start to the Spanish season but had lost both Champions League games. Man City needed the win to get their European campaign back on track and achieved this thanks to a 93rd minute Sergio Aguero

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winner. The positivity from scoring in the last minute could not be underestimated as Man City went into the derby on a high. In direct comparison to Man Utd, Man City also started with 5 of the team who would begin at Old Trafford, showing their considerable strength in depth.

How much influence does the travelling for a midweek European tie have on the subsequent game? In 2010/11 Manchester United had won 4 drawn 1 and lost 1 of their games directly after playing away in Europe. As seasoned European competitors they are well used to the rigours of travelling in-between games.

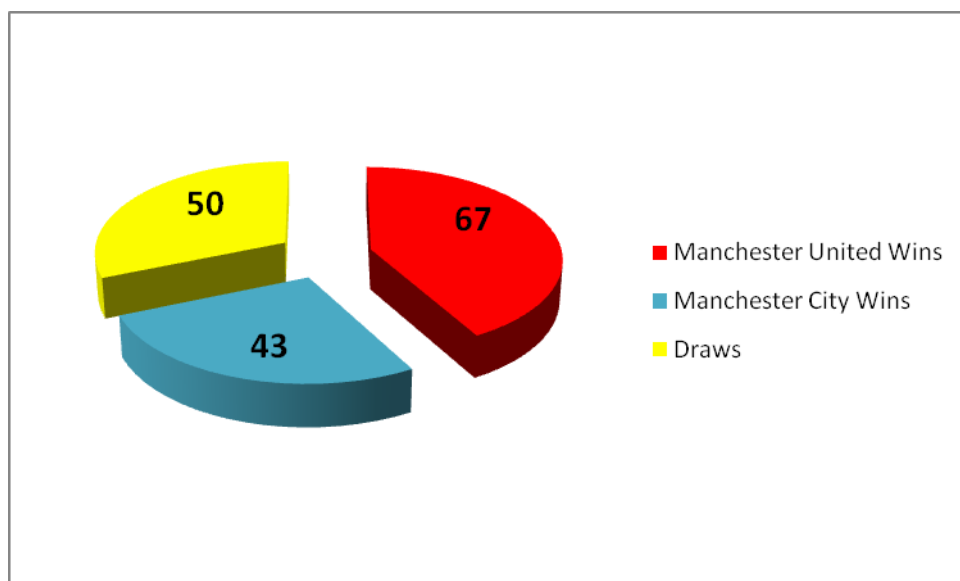
Comments in the week before the games came from players all confident of getting a result. Nani was quoted as saying *"We should not forget we are United. When we play at home it is very hard to beat us. That is why we are so confident"*.

Nigel De Jong, City's combative midfielder, had this to say *"Of course everyone believes we can win. The pressure is always there because of how this Manchester City team are growing. We have shown our quality throughout the season. We don't need a game against United to show how good we are."*

Both standard quotes you would expect, with all teams believing they can win no matter who they are playing. De Jong's comments about the Manchester City team "growing" is very apt as many people expected them to self destruct due to the ego's in the squad. They have been built in a very similar way to Real Madrid's Galacticos of the early 2000's and it is very hard to gel a squad of superstar players together and pander to their personalities. Mancini appears to be doing an excellent job of this.

Manchester United's home record that Nani speaks of is outstanding, with 24 wins from the previous 25 games. Old Trafford has always been a formidable place to go and that has not changed.

The Head to Head record between the 2 teams makes interesting reading, although what happened 100 years ago has no significance as to what the result would be in this game.



Manchester United historically have the upper hand winning 42% (67 games) of the previous encounters to Manchester City's 27% (43 games), with 31% ending in draws (50 games).

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To add further spice to the pre-match build up Manchester United were crowned the most “detested” club in England thanks to an online survey by bookmakers 888sport. The survey found almost 1/3 of the responses they received had Manchester United as the club they hated most with Manchester City voted 5th behind Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool.

The fact that the two teams were the top two teams in the country going into the game with Man City taking 22 points to Manchester United’s 20 from 8 games each meant that if Man City won they would open up a 5 point lead at the top if they got the victory.

The fact the game was a derby added its own edge to proceedings, derby games are notoriously tight and fractious affairs, usually resulting in the football being played at 100mph and littered with yellow and red cards. Would the fact that the top 2 in country are local rivals potentially hinder them in the long term? I believe not, the higher up the league you go you are used to playing massive games every week and every team wants to take points off you. Although both teams want to win for bragging rights, they will want to win more to go or remain top of the league.

Both teams took good form into the game. For the previous six games in all competitions Manchester United had won 3 and drawn 3, with away games at Liverpool and Benfica included whilst Manchester City had won 5 with their only defeat coming away to Bayern Munich.

In fact comparing the home and away records this season, Manchester United had won 4 of their 5 games, including beating Chelsea and Arsenal with Manchester City winning 3 of their 5 games on their travels including victories by big margins at Blackburn and Tottenham.

[Return to top](#)

The Match

1st Half

Manchester United began the game strongly. This was evidenced after 10 minutes when the stats showed they had 70% of possession in their favour.

A lot of this possession came through Darren Fletcher who was proving to be the lynch pin in midfield, receiving the ball short from the back line or goalkeeper and keeping play moving with short tidy passes. At every opportunity he was giving the ball to Nani and Ashley Young and they were being asked to run at the full backs and get crosses in. In the first half Young and Nani attempted 17 crosses (including corners) between them with only 3 finding their teammates. Kompany and Lescott are both towering in the air and although Welbeck and Rooney are no slouches the better options would have been low crosses to put them facing their own goal.

This was not possible on most occasions’ thanks to the defensive strength of Man City’s full backs. Clichy and Richards were both excellent. On several occasions Clichy showed Nani to the line and shielded the ball out or got an interception or tackle in to prevent the cross. Richards, after struggling for the first 10 minutes against Young, grew into the game and got several excellent blocks in to prevent crosses coming in. With help from James Milner they controlled the Manchester United

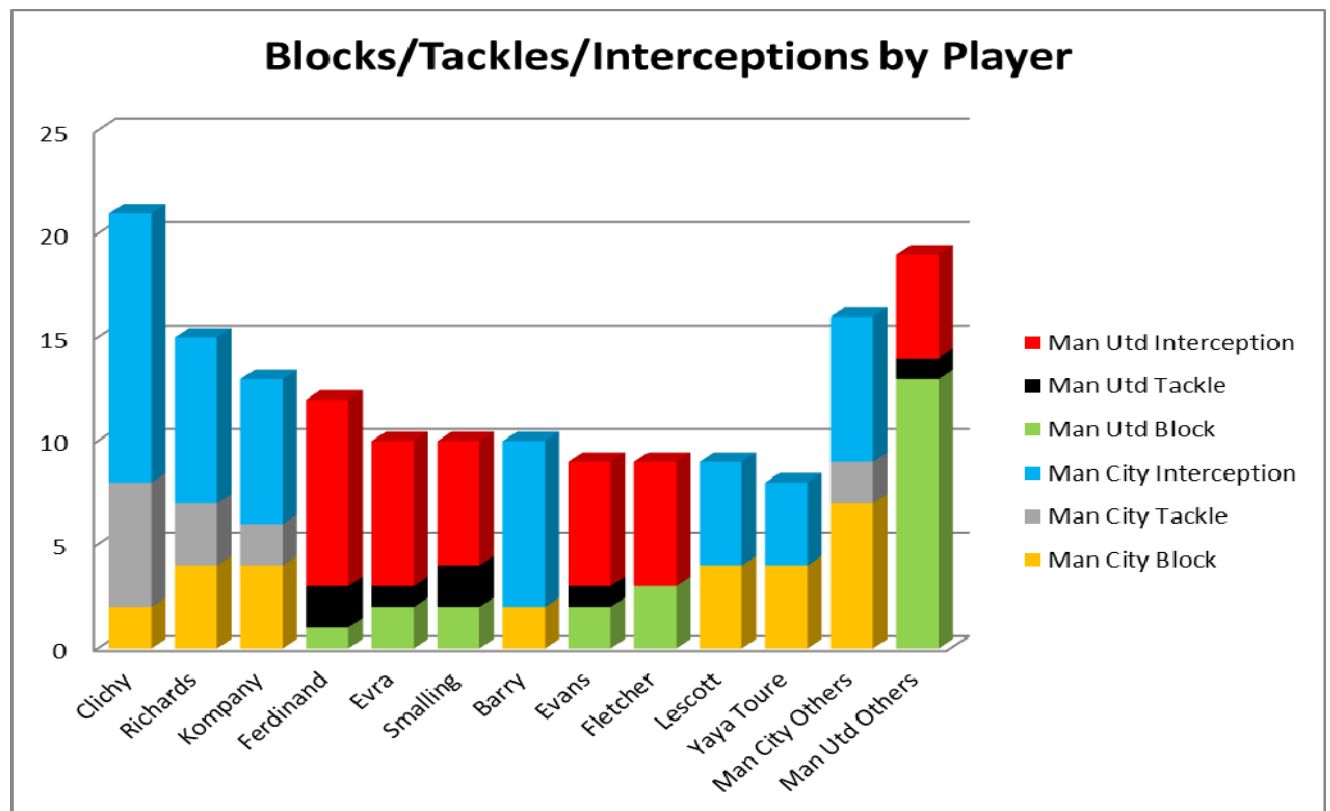
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wingers and forced them to play inside. Even David Silva tracked back to help Clichy. Each player knew their role.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing examples of this good full back play

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0RozPMvWN4>

The Chart below shows the number of blocks, tackles and interceptions made by player. As you can see the Manchester City players dominate this chart with both full backs making several key interceptions, preventing Manchester United from getting their wide players into play. Clichy & Richards also made the highest amount of tackles in the game.



By being forced to play through Man City in the centre this put the onus on Fletcher and Anderson to create something, although Fletcher kept the play moving with short neat passes Anderson did not fare as well and was guilty on several occasions of giving the ball away. In fact, of all the Manchester United players Anderson gifted possession to Man City 7 times in the first half through unsuccessful passes. The Man City defensive midfielders of Gareth Barry and Yaya Toure were proving an effective shield in front of the central defenders, and this allowed David Silva and Sergio Aguero to float around in front and pick up the ball. When Man City did counter attack it was usually at pace and several excellent runs by David Silva were only stopped by last ditch tackles.

When the first goal came, Man City had grown into the match and it was not against the run of play. Milner had drifted across to the left hand side and made a good run, David Silva enticed the 2 players in towards him and slipped the ball into Milner who cut it diagonally back across goal to find Mario Balotelli who side-footed expertly into the corner.

The goal owed as much to movement as any you will see, when Yaya Toure gives the ball to David Silva he has Rooney chasing back and Fletcher coming at him. Milner's drifting onto the left hand side had left Chris Smalling with a two on one and he needed help from Nani to cover. However unlike Man City playing Milner to aid Richards in a defensive role, Nani is rarely one for tracking back and helping out and allowed Milner to run unchecked into the space. In the middle Aguero ran across Ferdinand and drew him towards the line and Jonny Evans followed, with Balotelli seeing this and waiting on the edge of the box. Evans also slips which doesn't help him but Balotelli created the space for himself by allowing others to move away from him. Sometimes in a game it's what you don't do, not what you do do.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing Mario Balotelli's goal

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gLysuGE2ws>

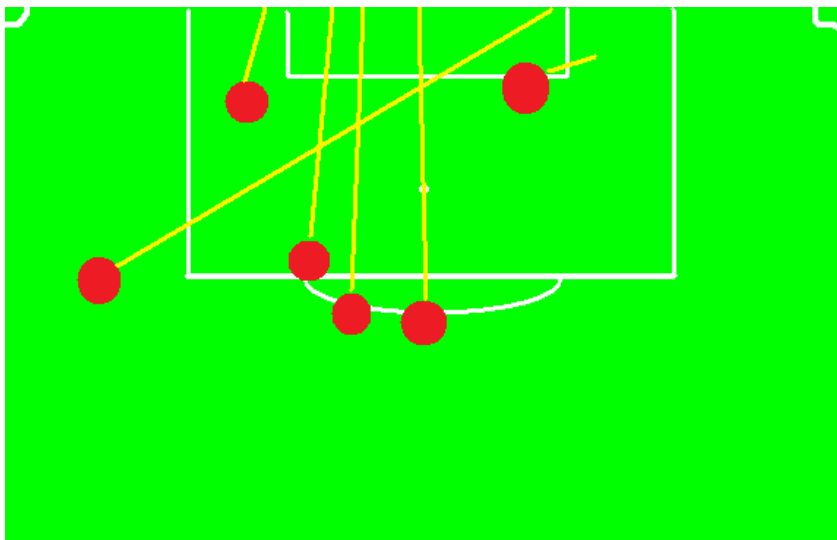
The goal allowed the game to open up just a little, as Manchester United had to then take the impetus which allowed Manchester City a little more room going forward.

Manchester United had the only 2 other shots on target in the half, Anderson and Rooney both shooting from the edge of the area. Anderson pulling the ball down as it was knocked loose from a corner and Rooney dropping deep to receive the ball and sidestep a man to make some room for himself. Both were straight at Joe Hart, but more importantly Man City had 3 players closing down the player striking the ball on both occasions.

They also had 4 more shots off target, again all from range, but with considerable closing down from the Man City defenders. By not allowing them to play through them Man City were saying to Man Utd if you think you can score from there then try it. Joe Hart was never unduly troubled and in all situations looked to have the shot covered.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing shooting positions Manchester United had and the graphic below shows the range they were shooting from.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvWTAUcgda4>



After the goal Manchester City allowed themselves to come out slightly more, and they had a couple of shots from range, although Balotelli and Aguero saw very little of the ball. In fact of all the passes Man City completed only 13% of them came from either Balotelli or Aguero. In fact the Manchester United midfield quarter actually saw almost 40% more of the ball than Manchester City's midfield 4.

Manchester City put in 9 crosses to the Man Utd box compared to 21 in total at the other end. While Man Utd crosses came in from deep positions around the corner of the box, Man City managed to get much closer to the by-line and get a much more shallow crossing position, forcing the Manchester United defenders into much more difficult clearances. This would be significant in the second half.

[Return to top](#)

HALF TIME – MANCHESTER UNITED 0 – 1 MANCHESTER CITY

2nd Half

The turning point of the game came just 1 minute and 3 seconds into the 2nd half. After a poor headed clearance from Rio Ferdinand, James Milner headed the loose ball forward to Balotelli who laid it off to Aguero, span into space and as Aguero returned the ball Jonny Evans hauled down Balotelli when he was through on goal.

It was a straight forward decision for referee Mark Clattenburg to make; Evans was the last man and denied Balotelli a clear goal scoring opportunity. Once again Balotelli's movement had made him the opportunity, as Aguero returns the ball Evans is caught in two minds which way to turn which gives Balotelli the space to run into, leaving Evans a yard behind. It demonstrates Manchester City's excellent link up play, with one touch passing and moving as Ferdinand immediately went to head back into his natural central defensive position, whilst Aguero stayed where he was allowing him the time and space to weight the ball through for Balotelli.

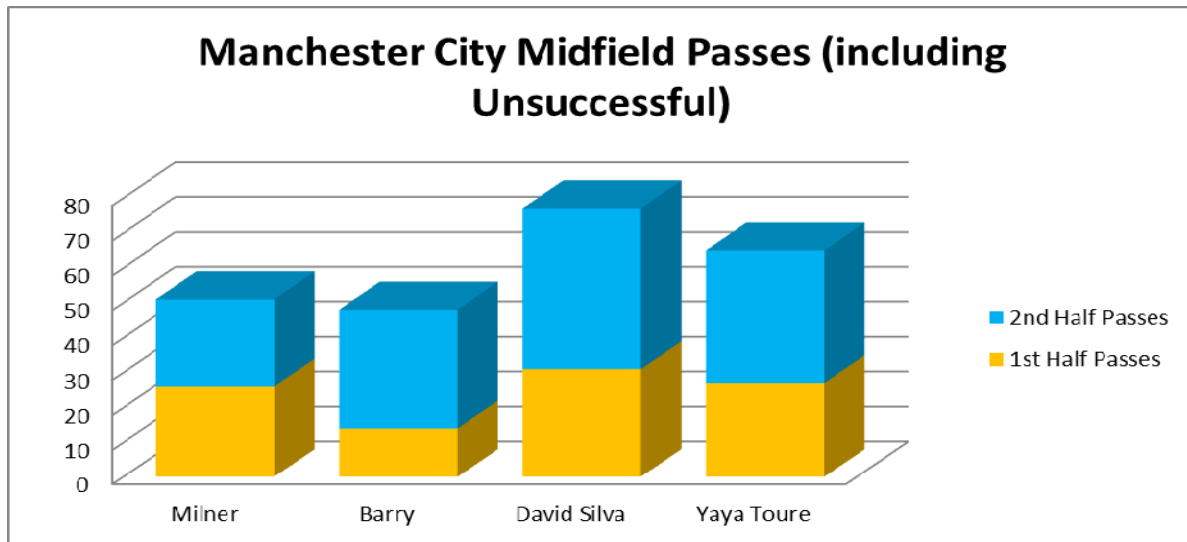
The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing Jonny Evans Red Card

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7RYwZ_oD-M

The red card resulted in Manchester United having to reshuffle their team. Chris Smalling went into centre back with Darren Fletcher, who had been pivotal in controlling the game for United in the first half, slotted into the right back spot. Wayne Rooney dropped much deeper into the central midfield vacancy left by Fletcher.

Manchester United left it this way until the 65th minute when they brought on Phil Jones to replace Nani, with Jones going into right back to replace Fletcher who pushed in as part of a midfield 3 with Rooney and Young as Hernandez came on to replace Anderson making a 4-3-2 formation.

Manchester City altered their style of play after the sending off. From fast counter attacking moves they were much more methodical in their build up, shown by the amount of successful passes the midfielders completed in the 2nd half. This increased from 76 to 128 (a 68% increase).



This allowed them to control the game much more comfortably and pull the Manchester United midfield and defence out of position. The red card also allowed Micah Richards & Gael Clichy to push further forward creating an extra option for the pass. This eventually resulted in the 2nd and 3rd goals.

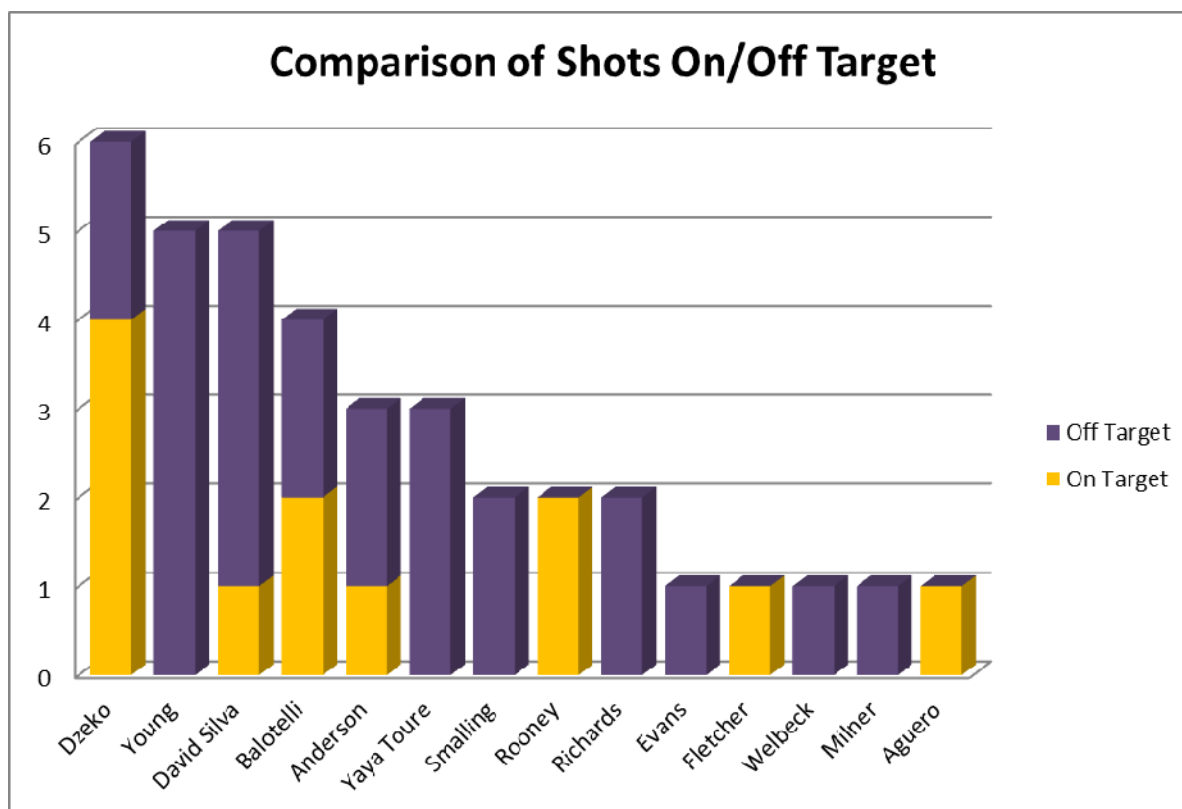
In both situations triangles of passes pulled Patrice Evra out of position and with little cover from Ashley Young, this allowed first Richards and then James Milner to play key crosses in which resulted in simple goals for Balotelli & Aguero. This continued for the rest of the match and with Manchester United chasing the game Evra was repeatedly caught up the pitch which allowed the space at the back for Manchester City to exploit this.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing excellent examples of Manchester City's exploitation of their right wing

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYGjzhp-cTE>

Manchester City's next move after going 3 goals up was to utilise their substitutions. The strength in depth of the City squad is formidable and after 69 minutes Balotelli was replaced by Edin Dzeko, while on 75 minutes Aguero was replaced by Samir Nasri.

Dzeko instantly gave Manchester United problems. He is a different style of player to Balotelli, playing very much in a target man role and is very capable of holding the ball up and bringing others into play as well as having good movement and very good strike on him. In fact despite being on the pitch for only 24 minutes Dzeko actually had the most shots on goal from both teams.



His instant impact almost resulted in a goal within a minute of him entering the pitch and late on his predatory instinct and fresh legs saw him score 2 goals. As Phil Jones pushed up the pitch and defensive cover from central midfield lessened as Manchester United chased the game this allowed Dzeko time and space to get the ball under control with David Silva pushing further forward and Nasri combining to make a front 3. Ferdinand and Smalling struggled to pick them up.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing the scoring opportunities Edin Dzeko had

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMDLmVQWjFM>

When Manchester United did score it was an excellently taken goal but it had come from nothing, a 1-2 between Fletcher and Hernandez allowed the Scottish midfielder to curl an excellent strike into the top corner from 25 yards. The introduction of Hernandez was designed to give Manchester United a focal point up front as Welbeck and Rooney were drifting wide or deep to look for the ball. However, despite being on the pitch for 29 minutes, Hernandez only touched the ball 6 times and gave the ball away 3 times from this. He was well marshalled by Kompany and Lescott and unable to make an impact.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing Darren Fletcher's goal

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSEdX1k2BoY>

The Manchester United goal gave them optimism and with only 9 minutes left they pushed for an equaliser. This impetuosity from a relatively young team actually resulted in Manchester City's 4th goal. David De Gea had not had the best time when kicking with distance, often being met by the aerial power of Kompany and Lescott. When kicking towards Rooney & Welbeck they were being

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dominated in the air so De Gea often looked short for one of the centre backs or Fletcher dropping out from midfield to receive the ball. In the 88th minute De Gea took a goal kick short to Ferdinand when he wasn't ready and he immediately came under pressure from Samir Nasri which resulted in a Manchester City corner. From this, Manchester United pulled men back but they did not pick up their runners and Barry's flick found 2 unmarked players at the far post, played on by Danny Welbeck and Lescott pulled the ball back for Dzeko to score an easy tap in.

After this Manchester United's heads had dropped considerably and Manchester City had 3 excellent chances in injury time, taking 2 of them. First David Silva raced clear on the breakaway from Dzeko's pass and played the ball through De Gea who had spread himself, and then Dzeko had a great chance but blasted it over the bar. As Evra pushed up the pitch he gave the ball away on Manchester City's by-line, the ball was cleared and Smalling's header fell to David Silva who played an outstanding technical pass putting Dzeko through to get his second with a very similar chance to the one he had just missed.

The link below redirects to a YouTube video showing Manchester City's 3 chances in stoppage time, 2 of which resulted in goals.

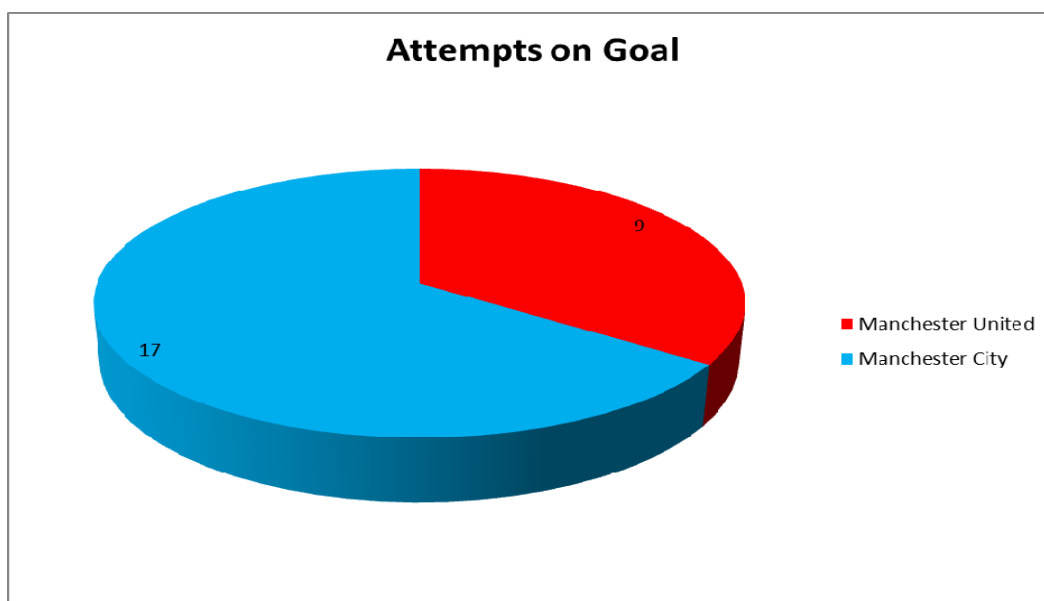
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-gNDtODEWg>

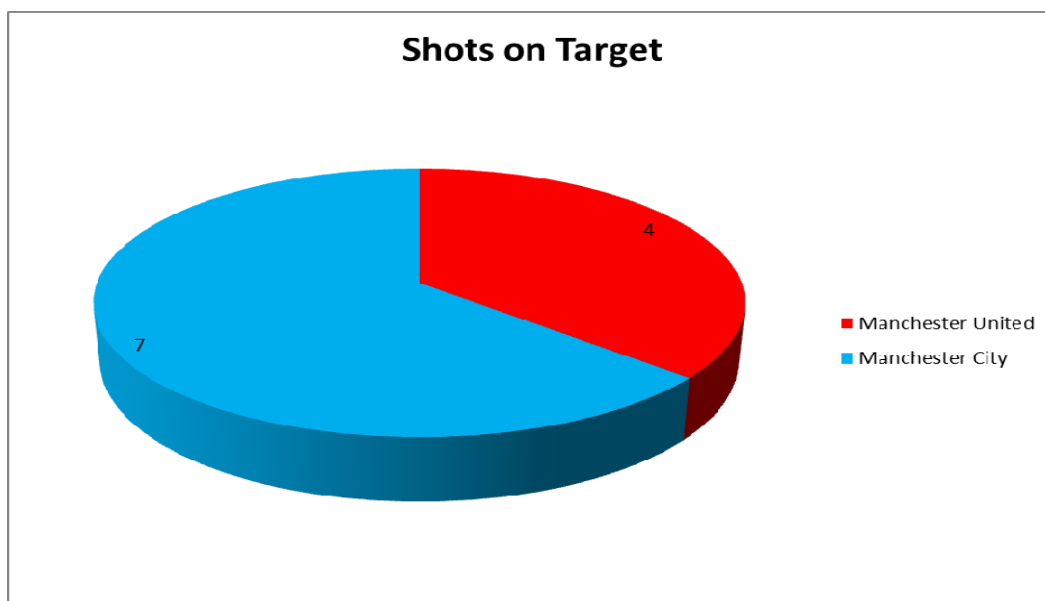
When the 6th goal went in the referee mercifully blew for full time ending Manchester United's derby day blues

[Return to top](#)

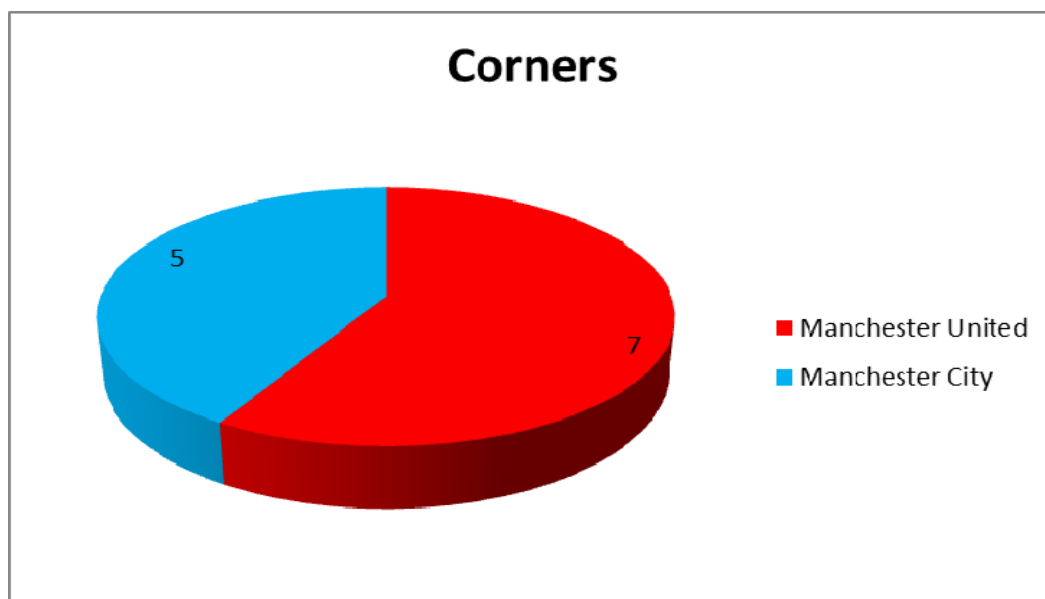
Conclusion

Below are the overall stats for the game

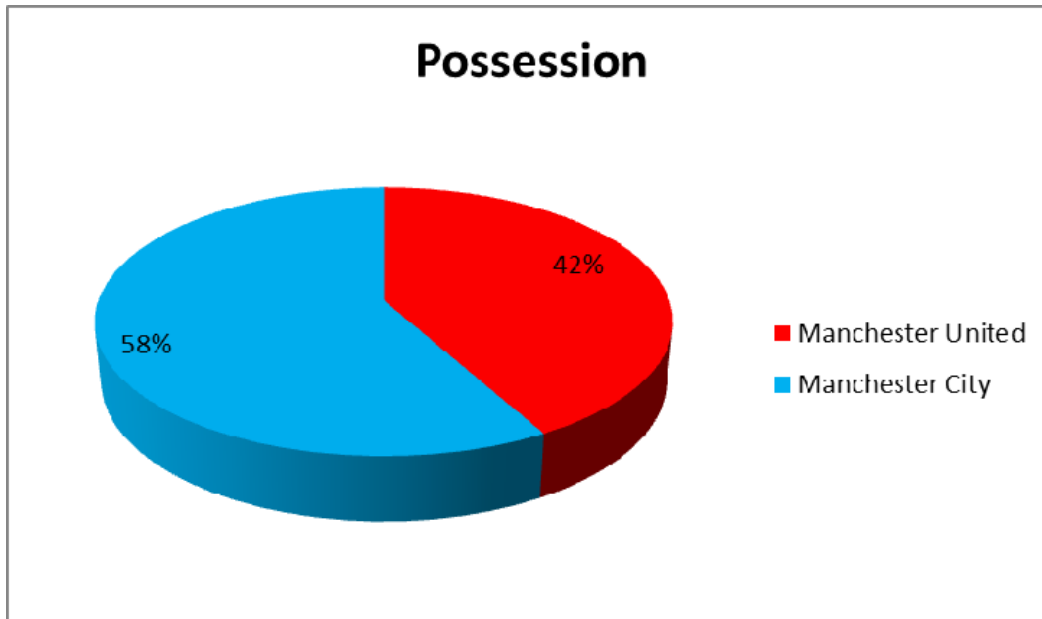




Manchester City had almost double the attempts on goal that Manchester United had, however only 7 of these hit the target (41%). Despite this they scored from 6 of their 7 shots on target, a conversion rate of almost 86%. Manchester United got almost half of their shots on target but scored only one of them, a conversion rate of 25%.



Manchester United had more corners, but only by 2. However Manchester City scored directly from one of their corners (Dzeko's first goal), with Manchester United failing to make any of their corners count, although they did get 2 shots on targets as a result of them.



In the early exchanges Manchester United dominated possession and even at half time were in front on the possession count. Once Jonny Evans had been sent off the game swung in Manchester City's favour and as demonstrated above the midfield was able to retain the ball much more comfortably and eventually controlled the possession stats.

Before the game kicked off it already had massive significance. All this result serves to highlight is that Manchester City will not be going away anytime soon and will be realistic title challengers for the 2011/12 FA Premier League crown. To win so handsomely against their local rivals and the current league champions away from home shows their quality.

Not only this but for Roberto Mancini and his backroom team to get their tactics so right against Sir Alex Ferguson who has managed at the top level for over 25 years is incredible.

Although the sending off had a huge bearing on the margin of the result, Manchester City had nullified much of Manchester United's attacking threat during the first half. By bringing in Micah Richards & Gael Clichy and using their pace to counteract the speed and trickery of Nani & Ashley Young, they forced Manchester United to go through the middle and use their less creative players who ran into the 2 shielding defensive midfielders.

This then allowed their gifted front 3 of Balotelli, Aguero & David Silva to counterattack at pace against Manchester United's defence which showed signs of being vulnerable against quick passing and movement.

The sending off contributed massively to the 6-1 score line, by having to use Darren Fletcher as an emergency right back and pulling Wayne Rooney into midfield, Manchester United had very little in the way of a sustained attacking threat. By asking Ashley Young to get forward in support of Welbeck this left Evra exposed at left back and allowed Richards to get forward from right back and link up with Manchester City's midfielders to play short passes and create space for some key crosses.

The gaps left at the back late on resulting in 3 further goals can be judged to be combination of lack of concentration, tiredness and pushing too far up the pitch in search of a way back into the game. Manchester City punished these mistakes ruthlessly.

Although this game took place in October, the significance in terms of the title race can not be downplayed. This win opened up a 5 point gap and Manchester City had now won 8 of their 9 games, including away trips to Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United. The strength of the squad is immeasurable and shows that Manchester City had evolved from a bunch of exceptional players into a well organised and disciplined team. Beating their local rivals has massive repercussions for morale and bragging rights.

A few historic facts about the result:-

- Manchester United have conceded 6 goals at home in the league for the first time since September 1930 (4-7 vs. Newcastle United)
- Manchester United conceded 5 goals at home in the league for the first time since December 1978 (3-5 vs. West Bromwich Albion)
- Jonny Evans has become only the 2nd player to be sent off twice for Manchester United in the Premier League at Old Trafford, after Roy Keane.
- Manchester City have now won each of the last 6 Premier League Manchester derbies that they have taken the lead in.
- The first time Manchester City have scored 6 goals at Old Trafford since 1926 (also finished 6-1). Manchester United have never scored 6 against Manchester City in any league game or major cup competition.

Despite all this, it would be foolish to write Manchester United off. Many of their team have experience of winning titles, which Manchester city's team do not have in abundance. Manchester United know what it is like to sustain a run of form to win the title and have many quality players capable of getting result after result. With Manchester City's nucleus of foreign talent will they have the right mentality to play game after game at places like Wigan and Bolton in January?

Nobody ever won a title in October, so although the game is a massive stepping stone for Manchester City there are still 29 games left to play.

[Return to top](#)

Aftermath

The big question was how both teams would react to this game. Both sides had League Cup 4th round ties to play in the midweek and fielded heavily changed teams. Manchester City rotated all 11 players still fielding proven international quality away at Wolverhampton Wanderers and running out 5-2 winners.

Manchester United were away at Aldershot and also changed their entire starting 11 before winning comfortably 3-0.

The real test would be in the league. On Saturday 29th October Manchester United had an early kick off at Goodison Park away at Everton. They made 5 changes to the team that started against Manchester City and rode their luck at times with Javier Hernandez scoring the only goal of the game in a 1-0 win. David De Gea pulled off several great saves to claim a vital 3 points. That's what Manchester United are used to doing and how they regularly win titles, they get the 3 points even when they aren't playing well.

Manchester City were at home to Wolves, who they had beaten convincingly with a reserve team away in midweek. They made 3 changes to the team which beat Manchester United, including resting Balotelli, and struggled to make a breakthrough against a dogged Wolves team. Wayne Hennessey pulled off 3 great saves in the first half and a growing sense of frustration around the Etihad Stadium was eventually broken by a mistake by the young Welsh goalkeeper early in the second half, Dzeko pouncing on his poor kick out. Kolarov added a second with a tap in before Kompany was sent off for bundling over Kevin Doyle as the striker tried to get to a parry from Hart. Stephen Hunt scored the penalty and Manchester City withstood 16 minutes of pressure before substitute Adam Johnson scored a great 25 yard curler on the break to seal the win.

This game highlights exactly what Manchester City will face for the remaining 28 games of the season with many teams trying to frustrate them and potentially create a negative atmosphere from the fans which have come to see them steamroller teams. They will also have to get used to being the leader instead of one of the chasing pack, the mentality changes considerably when you are hunting somebody down instead of trying to stay in front.

Manchester City have proven they have the quality and Mancini has the tactical nous to take on the best in the game. Only time will tell if they can maintain this throughout the season.

[Return to top](#)

Contact

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any comments, feedback or criticism I would be happy to hear it and take it on board. If you have a contact within a club please feel free to pass this on to them.

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