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Friday May 30th, 2025

Match Report of Manchester City U19 vs Hoffenheim U19 UEFA Youth League

Hoffenheim U19

Luca Erlein #4 - Foot(R) - July 5th 2007 - 190cm

Match Performance - B

Potential Level - B

Follow Up Recommendations - Normal track

Player Description:

Physicality: Luca Erlein is a right footed central defender, he is 190cm tall which is quite tall for a defender, despite his size he is very quick and agile. He looks a bit slim for a defender, so I would like to see him add some more size/muscle. It does look like he has featured for the first team, so I would like to see how he sizes up against bigger and stronger players.

Offensively: Erlein looked very comfortable on the ball, he was used as the first man in the build up quite often and he has a good range of passing, he make a few line breaking passes into midfield which I like to see from a ball playing defender, looks very confident with the ball at his feet and likes to make an occasional risky pass. Although his short passing was strong, his long passing was quite poor, a few inaccurate passes mixed with his #9 being unable to trap a ball.

Defensively: Erlein looks to be quite the central defender, due to his size, he is good in the air and he has a good sense of anticipation when trying to clear the ball. He is fast for a defender and as the last man he has good covering depth. He was a bit unlucky for the first goal, his positioning wasn't that bad but the keeper parried the ball right to the striker. He looks strong as a 1v1 defender, he angles his body well and is strong in his tackles. I need to see more of his box defending, but in open spaces he fared well due to his size and speed.

Conclusion: Erlein is an interesting player due to his physical attributes, he is very quick for a defender and he may continue to grow. He was comfortable with the ball at his feet, often looking to be the first player in the build up, excellent short/medium passes but room to improve in his longer passes. He looks very good at the youth level, I would like to watch his games for the first team to see how he matches up vs more established players.

Diren Dagdeviren #6 - Foot(R) - March 8th 2005 - 175cm

Match Performance - C

Potential Level - D

Follow Up Recommendations - No follow up

<u>Player Description:</u>

Physicality: Dagdeviren is 175cm and is very small for a defensive midfielder, it is quite evident as well when you compare him to his peers. He looks to have a "stocky" build so he is quite strong and he isn't shy to get stuck into a tackle. He doesn't look to have much top speed, but due to his body type he does well shielding the ball and using his body. He stands out due to his lively presence around the pitch and

also his size compared to his peers. He is also much older than most players in his age group yet he still looks behind the levels of those around him.

Offensively: Dagdeviren was very tidy with the ball, only misplacing one of his passes, but most passes were very basic sideways passes. He was constantly scanning around trying to get on the ball, however when he received it he just made the simple pass, never looking to break the lines or drive with the ball from deep. He spent very little time in the opposition half so he had very little impact going forwards and although he is quite small he doesn't look to be confident with the ball at his feet, he was consistently looking for the quick and easy pass, effective but did not accomplish much.

Defensively: Defensively Dagdeviren was better than I expected, he completed 10/13 ground duels and 2/2 in his aerial duels, he did well to anticipate his opponents passes and break up play, in open space be seemed quite good, but due to his size he got outmuscled a few times by the bigger players on the pitch. He was confident going into tackles, but quite aggressive, his yellow card before half seemed a bit unnecessary and was a negative reaction to losing the ball prior. He looks like a "busy" player, but ultimately he did not accomplish all that much good.

Conclusion: I was very disappointed with this performance, he managed to get the 2nd highest match rating according to Sofascore and I was surprised at this. Going forward he offers very little, and although he didn't make many mistakes, he didn't do enough to set himself apart from the other players. As he was born in 2005 and was one of the older players, physically and technically he looks to be a level behind his peers and I don't see the need to scout him again.

Marlon Faß #9 - Foot(R) - May 16th 2006 - 189cm

Match Performance - E

Potential Level - E

Follow Up Recommendations - No follow up

<u>Player Description</u>:

Physicality: Marlon Faß is a #9 who is 189cm tall, despite his height, I would class him as quite poor in the air, he only managed to win 1 / 4 of his aerial duels. He is quite strong, he has a wide frame and his burst of pace seems to be about average. Due to his size he is a bit clunky and he looks a bit awkward with the ball at his feet.

Offensively: Faß was very underwhelming this game, he had little to no impact on the build up and was only useful for runs in behind. He was aggressive in his deep runs, consistently looking to be played in behind when he got the chance, he did well managing to stay onside vs a high backline. One of his first runs in behind gave him a great opportunity to take the lead, but it was a poor attempt at a finish and he made it easy for the keeper. When they tried to play it long he struggled to control the ball and pin his defender, resulting in a difficult attempt to play out the back, he didn't do a good job providing a forward option for his team.

Defensively: Faß only played minutes and ultimately did not show a lot of work off the ball. It looked like Hoffenheim played in a low press, so he spent a lot of time in his own half waiting for City to enter his half until he applied any sort of pressure. Due to his size, I was dissatisfied by how aggressive he was, I would have liked to see him attempt to “bully” his defender a bit more.

Conclusion: Only playing 60 minutes was an accurate representation of his ability in this match, he didn’t offer a forward outlet for his team and could hold the ball up to play his wide midfielders/wingers in behind. Personally I would like to see a bit more hunger from my #9 with and without the ball, I was

surprised to see he has a successful goal return in the league as he didn't show that in this match. I would label him as a poacher or a target man as he doesn't offer much else in his game, even as a target man he didn't execute many successful actions, his big chance in the first half which resulted in a save from the keeper, was Faß most notable highlight from the match.

Manchester City U19

Oliver Whatmuff #1 - Foot(R) - November 6th 2007 - 185cm

Match Performance - A

Potential Level - C

Follow Up Recommendations - Follow up later

Player Description:

Physicality: Oliver Whatmuff stands at 185cm which is below the average height of a goalkeeper. He doesn't have a particularly big frame and I would class most of his physical attributes in the average category. I would like to see more of his aerial abilities as he didn't need to claim any major crosses in the air.

Offensively: Whatmuff was very calm and comfortable with the ball, his defenders seemed confident when he had the ball at his feet, he made mostly short passes and they were accurate, however there is room for improvement on his longer passes as they were not as accurate. He is also comfortable using both feet, albeit the passes with his weaker foot were very simple.

Defensively: Whatmuff made a few brilliant saves, the first being a 1v1 with Faß in the first half, he made himself as big as possible and made a strong save with his right foot. The second standout save came in the 71st minute, using a strong hand to push the ball wide. The goal he conceded was from a deflection and caught him wrong footed, not particularly his fault and an unlucky goal to concede, especially considering how good he was besides the goal. The only other mistake he made was when he struggled to claim a low cross as he parried it back into the danger zone, however it didn't result in a big chance for Hoffenheim.

Conclusion: Whatmuff is a good keeper at this level and despite having a good game, he didn't show enough to fast track him. Due to his height, if he doesn't grow he might be in trouble, but since he performed well and has room to improve, I think it's worth following up on Whatmuff later.

Stephen Mfuni #5 - Foot(L) - February 12th 2008 - 190cm

Match Performance - B

Potential Level - A

Follow Up Recommendations - Normal track

<u>Player Description</u>:

Physicality: Stephen Mfuni is a defender who stands out due to his height in comparison to his peers. I cannot find his exact height but he looks to be 185-190cm tall, which is very good for a central defender. Despite his height he is a little bit scrawny and I think he would benefit from gaining some muscle. His sprint speed and acceleration looked to be average, so there is some room to improve there as well.

Offensively: Mfuni impressed me with the ball at his feet, in buildup he acted like a LCB in a back 3, he consistently looked to receive the ball so he could play the ball wide to Heskey on the wing. However, he

didn't make any outstanding passes, his long passing was a little weak and he played some poor short passes. Despite being comfortable with the ball he looked awkward at times due to his body size. He made a few skillful and confident dribbles, ones you wouldn't typically see from a defender, so I believe he might also be capable of playing as a defensive midfielder as well as a defender.

Defensively: Defensively Mfuni impressed me, in the air he was brilliant, his size advantage helps him in that category. 1v1 he was good at defending in tight spaces, he uses his body well to win/shield the ball from the opponent, however he has room to improve in his deep spaces as he cannot use his pace to recover from his mistakes. He has experience on pre season tour with the first team, I believe his size is what really separates him from his age mates, giving him the confidence to be able to play amongst the first team.

Conclusion: Ultimately I am very intrigued by Mfuni, specifically because of his size, but as well as his ability to play multiple positions. He is very capable at playing as the LCB in a back 3, as well as a LCB in a back 4, particularly as a ball playing central defender. However he looked to be too big to play as a left back in a back 4, he doesn't offer much going forward and against a quick and direct winger, he might struggle defending spaces in behind. He really impressed me in the first half, but his levels dropped off in the second. Due to his profile and experience with the first team I think he is worth keeping an eye on as he is a few attributes away from being a very good young defender.

Divine Mukasa #10 - Foot(L) - August 22nd 2007 - 180cm

Match Performance - B

Potential Level - B

Follow Up Recommendations - Normal track

Player Description:

Physicality: Divine Mukasa is an attacking midfielder who stands at 180cm tall, which is quite tall for someone in his position. He stands out on the pitch due to his size but also his nice footwork and close control. He is quite strong, doing well in most of his duels, he is capable of winning the aerial duels as well as his ground duels. His speed doesn't stand out, but he is able to make some good runs in behind and his speed driving with the ball is quite good.

Offensively: Mukasa impressed me a lot with the ball at his feet, he is a very confident dribbler, very good in tight spaces and he isn't shy to take his man on. He was very unselfish, having a good connection with Heskey in the left half space quite a few times. But, his passing accuracy was below average, making some careless as well as poor passing attempts. He didn't attempt many take ons, but when he did, he was successful in his attempt, as well as in the second half, he showed good confidence in keeping the ball to himself, inviting the pressure so he could waste some time, ensuring the three points for his team. As a left footer, I would like to see how he operates from the right, this way he can use his size to attack defenders and cut in on to his favoured foot.

Defensively: Mukasa was very aggressive without the ball, he was seen pressing frequently and aggressively, looked like more of a threat than his #9. He was strong in his tackles as well, never backing away from the chance to get stuck in. He spent much more time pressing than sitting back and defending, so I would like to see how he does in a game where he isn't on the front foot as much, due to his body shape I'm struggling to figure out where his best position is.

Conclusion: Divine Mukasa has some similarities to Mfuni in the sense that they both have very unique body types and they are both left footed. Although Mukasa played the full 90, I found it difficult to accurately assess him, as I believe he doesn't suit being LCM in a 433. I would like to see him as an

actual 10, playing behind the striker and allowing him to operate in the tight spaces, therefore I think he should be tracked like normal and assessed in 6-12 months time.

Reigan Heskey #11 - Foot(R) - January 19th 2008 - 184cm

Match Performance - A

Potential Level - A

Follow Up Recommendations - Skip the line

Player Description:

Physicality: Heskey is a winger who is 184cm, typical size and body shape for a winger. He is very "twitchy" and "snappy" so he actually looks to be faster with the ball than without it. He is very skillful with the ball and without the ball he does well considering the gap in age and size to some of his peers. He doesn't look to be particularly strong but he does a good job shielding the ball and uses his size to his advantage.

Offensively: Lots of play was focused down his left hand side, particularly the first half. He showed lots of confidence taking his man on, whether that was down the byline or cutting in on his favoured right foot. He had a good linkup with Mukasa and Mfuni, he was successful in both of his dribble attempts but was also very unselfish with the ball. He took his goal well, immediately getting the ball and attacking his defender, he cut in onto his stronger foot and executed a strong and low finish into the bottom corner. He didn't have many crosses as they prioritized working the ball into the box, I would like to see his impact with less of the ball, I can see how well he plays against a low block, I want to see how he does with more deep run actions.

Defensively: Heskey didn't show enough defensively to give an accurate representation of his defensive ability. He tracked back well and looked to win the ball back, so he doesn't have that "lazy" mindset that some wingers have. His pressing was good, nothing particularly good or bad about it, he looked much hungrier to win the ball back than the winger on the other side.

Conclusion: Even as one of the youngest players on the pitch, Heskey stood out as one of the star players. He has the confidence you want in a winger to take his man on, but he also has the selflessness to support his teammates with passes. I recommend fast tracking the scouting process on Heskey as I truly believe with a bit more size and experience, he could be ready to play top level football in the next year or two, one of the standout players of this match and a very exciting player to watch.