

Scouting report

Stephen Mfuni

**Match Report from UEFA Youth
League vs Villarreal U19**

23-11-2025

By Willam Rees

Stephen Mfuni

Current club

Best position

Date of birth (age)

Height

Manchester City

Center back

12/02/2008 (17)

185cm



Current level

PL2

Potential level

Top 4 Premier League

Defending space in behind - *Recognizing (potential) through passes, adjusting the body position, and using acceleration speed to reduce space in behind before the pass is released.*

- His long legs and anticipation give him a real advantage when dealing with balls played in behind. He read the weight and angle early enough to step in and win duels other defenders simply wouldn't reach.
- When he's caught higher due to City's possession dominance, he recovers well and uses long strides to close the gap quickly, showing good awareness of how much space needs to be managed.
- There were a few moments where he could have stepped up earlier to compress the space before the pass was played, but overall his recognition of danger and ability to react were strong.

Defending crosses - *Taking optimal positions in the box, organizing teammates, making contact with the opponent before the cross/duel, winning the duel and clearing the ball cleanly.*

- In the box he was very secure, showing good body orientation and timing when defending aerial balls. His positioning was consistently solid by taking up smart starting spots before the ball was delivered.
- He won several first contacts on 50/50 balls, using both his frame and timing to get up early and attack the ball.
- His size advantage at this age level is noticeable, and it gives him real presence when dealing with anything lofted into the area.

Report by Willam Rees

Leaving position (forwards or sideways) – *Recognizing moments to press into midfield or towards the wing, and positioning/approaching with the correct speed, body position, etc.*

- Comfortable stepping into midfield with the ball, especially when space opens in front of him. He recognises these moments early and carries with ball with confidence, breaking the first line and creating new passing angles.
- At times I thought he was slightly over-aggressive with his starting positions because City had so much of the ball, which left open space in behind him in quick transitions. He recovered well, but it's something to monitor.
- Defensively he is quick to close attackers as they receive, getting tight immediately and preventing them from turning. He initiates contact early and makes the duel uncomfortable for forwards.

Defensive dueling – *Winning different types of defensive duels, such as aerial duels, frontal 1v1's, side-to-side duels and (sliding) tackles.*

- Engaged in every type of duel throughout the match — frontal 1v1s, shoulder-to-shoulder duels, aerial contests and loose-ball 50/50s. He approached each one with a high level confidence and aggression.
- His upper-body strength and frame give him a real advantage vs his current age group. He shields the ball effectively and uses his body intelligently to win contact moments without fouling.
- Very quick to close the gap when an attacker receives to feet, getting on their back early and making it extremely difficult for them to turn. His timing in these actions was one of his best defensive qualities.

Report by Willam Rees

Build-up against high pressure – *Taking smart positions and seeing and finding the correct solutions against high pressure with dribbles, short passes and long passes.*

- Under pressure he remained calm and used his body shape well to protect the ball and create new passing lanes. His confidence in possession stands out, he didn't even seem to panic even when pressed from multiple angles.
- His decision-making in these situations was generally strong overall. He knew when to play short, when to switch, and when to carry. There were only small moments where he could have recognised a step-up or a release earlier.
- Shows unusual confidence for a centre-back by engaging his man 1v1 when he has the ball, using his agility and close control to shift past pressure before playing the next pass.

Build-up against low block – *Seeing and finding the right solutions against a low block with dribbles, short passes, passes between the lines, switch passes and passes over the top.*

- He frequently looked to break lines with his passes, successfully finding midfielders between the lines and progressing the attack with positive intent. His passing technique was clean and reliable across all ranges.
- Comfortable carrying forward into midfield when Villarreal dropped off, creating overloads and forcing their block to reorganise.
- Demonstrated the ability to play diagonal switches as well as simple circulation, showing a good variety of passes and a clear willingness to take responsibility in possession.

Conclusion

Mfuni comes across as a modern left-sided centre-back with an extensive range of passes and physical presence. He plays with a calmness that settles the back line, shows confidence stepping into midfield, and handles pressure in a way that makes City's build-up look smoother. What stands out is how naturally he blends his size with good technique — he's comfortable rotating positions, engaging in every type of duel, and progressing the ball without forcing actions. This is a player who has all the tools to succeed in the modern game, it will be interesting to see how he develops as he steps into senior football.