

Scouting report

Jayce Fitzgerald

18-11-2025

By Willam Rees

Jayce Fitzgerald



Current club

Manchester United

Best position

Central midfielder

Date of birth (age)

May 9th 2007 (18)

Height

180cm

Current level

PL2

Potential level

Top 6 Championship

Movement and positioning to receive - *The ability to take up positions to be able to receive the ball by finding spaces and adapting to an open body position.*

- Drops into deep pockets closer to the CBs to start build-up, always showing early and giving them a clean outlet, ensuring he times his movement to arrive *into* space rather than standing and waiting for the ball to come to him.
- Excels at losing his marker with little body feints and drops of the shoulder.
- Receives on good angles — open body shape, minimal extra touches, and already set up to play forward as soon as the ball arrives. Jayce does lots of scanning, he doesn't rush his actions, and uses his positioning to control the tempo of the game from deep.

Ball retention - *The ability to keep the ball in the team and escape high pressure situations by finding teammates in open spaces or dribbling away from the pressure.*

- Very secure under pressure — strong upper body for his size and protects possession well, even when bodies crowd around him.
- Uses small touches, ball rolls, and subtle shifts to stay in control in tight spaces, rarely panicking or giving the ball away cheaply.
- He takes minimal, effective touches, but he is also capable of taking multiple touches to draw in pressure and release once the angle opens.

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Ball progression - *The ability to enter higher-value zones on the pitch with dribbles, short passes and longer passes with the objective of getting closer to the opposition goal.*

- Outstanding range of passes — constantly looking to switch play, hits diagonals from deep, and breaks lines with firm, accurate forward passes.
- Progresses play mostly with his distribution from deeper, but he is also capable of carrying the ball out of pressure with his close control, he is a very good ball carrier and a strong runner with the ball.
- Doesn't settle for sideways passes and recycling of possession; consistently looking to move the team up the pitch through purposeful, progressive passes.

Infiltration - *The ability to push up to link with the forwards, to make runs in behind the defensive line, and to enter the box when crosses come in.*

- Naturally plays as the “sitter”, so he rarely makes runs beyond the ball or arrives into the box.
- Prefers to stay positioned behind the play as the stabilizing midfielder, allowing others to push higher.

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

- Strong in the tackle — relentless runner, and wins a high volume of 50/50s and close-contact duels.
- Comfortable going to ground when necessary; doesn't slide recklessly and times his challenges very well.
- Uses his body to shield and disrupt despite not having standout physical traits; very hard to knock off balance or play through.
- Aerial ability looks manageable, no clear red flags, nothing exceptional, generally competes fine.

Dynamic pressing - *The ability to correctly decide when to apply pressure and to correctly do so with a high approach speed, good deceleration and correct use of the body.*

- Works extremely hard out of possession, presses with real intent, and always tracks back when the ball goes past him.
- Closes ground quickly and aggressively, using his ball winning abilities to disrupt possession. When he steps up to press, he arrives under control: doesn't dive in, stays on his feet, and forces the opponent into safer passes.

Positional defending - *Defending the most dangerous zones and players in the midfield by showing spatial awareness, blocking passing lanes, and maintaining defensive compactness.*

- Clearly has experience as a central defender — excellent body positioning, calm when defending space, and reads the game well from deeper zones.
- Holds good defensive angles, adjusts laterally with control, and blocks central progression by sitting in passing lanes.
- Tracks midfield runners well, staying touch-tight without overcommitting, which helps prevent open passes between the lines and keeps the midfield unit compact.

Conclusion

Jayce Fitzgerald is an 18-year-old midfielder in Manchester United's academy who stands out for how clean and mature his game already looks. He's a deep-lying midfielder who dictates play with his extensive range of passes, ability to control the tempo, and constant availability, dropping into pockets to connect phases before playing progressive passes through the lines or by switching play through diags. Out of possession he's committed, well positioned, strong in his duels, and quick to shut down space without losing discipline. Technically secure, physically stronger than he looks, and tactically sharp, he profiles as a modern No.6/8 hybrid who can build attacks, protect the midfield, and control games from deep.