

Scouting report

Ibrahim Rabbaj

**Match Report: U18 Premier
League Cup vs Crystal Palace**

26-11-2025

By Willam Rees

Ibrahim Rabbaj

Current club

Chelsea

Best position

Attacking midfielder

Date of birth (age)

01/03/2009 (16)

Height

166cm



Current level

U16 and U18

Potential level

Premier League

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.*

- Frequently drifted to find pockets between Palace's lines, scanning early and adjusting his angles so he could receive cleanly on his left. He was active in the right half-space and consistently looked for positions where he could face forward.
- Used sharp, nimble movements to slip away from his markers, especially when Chelsea were trying to evade pressure. Even in a team that struggled to keep the ball, he showed good awareness of where space would open.
- Worked well as a connector when Chelsea had spells of possession, timing his movement off others and showing a strong sense for when to stay between the lines.

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 light on his feet and technically clean, using delicate touches with the inside and outside his foot to adjust quickly in tight spaces.
- Showed the ability to turn away from pressure with small, sharp touches, keeping the ball close while accelerating into space.
- Lost a few physical duels purely due to his size, but his technique and control were clear. The foundation is strong; he just needs the physical growth and experience to better handle contact.

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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.*

- When Chelsea managed to establish possession, he progressed play with quick combinations and short, smart touches that helped shift the ball into the final third
- Used his agility to dribble out of congested zones, carrying the ball forward at speed with tight control. These actions were limited in this match due to Chelsea's struggles, but his quality was still evident.
- Found ways to connect attacks from the right half-space, often working onto his left foot to play forward passes and link with overlapping runners.

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.*

- Had one standout moment where he carried the ball from his own half into the final third with good ball control at top speed before releasing to a teammate, showing he can drive forward when the space opens up.
- Spent spells in and around the edge of the box during Chelsea's few attacking phases, mainly coming inside from the right half-space onto his left foot to look for crosses.
- Ultimately, Chelsea's lack of sustained possession meant he didn't have many chances to infiltrate the box or make repeated runs beyond the line in this match.

Creating and converting chances – *The ability to get into high-quality scoring positions and using different types of finishing techniques to convert chances relatively often.*

- Delivered a few well-shaped crosses from the right half-space using his left foot, trying to create chances even though Chelsea struggled to sustain attacks.
- Involved in one set-piece routine and attempted to link play in the final third, but the match context limited how much creativity he could show.
- No goals or assists in this performance, but his flashes of technical quality on the ball made it clear he has the tools to create.

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.*

- Pressed as one of the front two in a 4-4-2 out of possession, stepping high and closing down centre-backs with good energy and good deceleration when arriving.
- Didn't win many balls directly, but showed commitment and didn't switch off, his pressing actions looked coordinated and consistent.

Positional defending - *Defending more statically, e.g. in a low or middle block, shielding passes towards the most dangerous zones and players in midfield.*

- Not heavily involved defensively, which made sense for a highly technical and creative #10. He engaged when required but didn't play a major role in deeper defensive moments.
- Stepped in to apply pressure at the right times, particularly when Palace entered the inside channels, and tried to block passing lanes when Chelsea dropped off.
- Physical limitations showed at times, especially when trying to hold ground against bigger midfielders, which is normal for a smaller player still growing into his body.

Conclusion

Ibrahim Rabbaj had a fairly quiet game in a Chelsea side that struggled for long stretches without the ball, but even in a limited attacking performance, his technical brilliance was obvious. His movement between the lines, clean first touch, and sharp body adjustments stood out, and he found good spaces even when his team couldn't consistently connect play. He showed flashes of his ability to manipulate tight areas, carry the ball with control, and link actions in the half-spaces, but the match context restricted how much influence he could actually have. I don't think this was an accurate reflection of what he's capable of, his talent is clear, this is a very technical, agile attacking midfielder who will thrive more in a side where his team dominates possession.

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