

Manuel Mendonça

FIXTURE: Sporting CP U19 vs Manchester City U19

COMPETITION: UEFA Youth League

SCORE: 2-0

DATE: 05/11/24

PLAYER: Manuel Mendonça

CLUB: Sporting CP U19

AGE: 20

HEIGHT: 5'6

NATIONALITY: Portugal

POSITION(S) & FORMATION PLAYED IN: CM in a 4-3-3

CONTRACT EXP: 30/06/2028

LEADING FOOT: Left

LINE UPS



TECHNICAL – 8/10

On the ball:

- Excellent first touch, particularly when receiving on the half-turn.
- Comfortable spinning away from pressure; uses low centre of gravity effectively.
- Strong vision in advanced areas; consistently looks to play inside passes into dangerous pockets.
- Capable of creating high-quality chances with quick combinations around the box.
- Low-driven near-post shot (18') from the edge of the box showed clean striking technique and confidence.
- Occasionally slows attacking tempo by playing passes into feet rather than into space during transitions.
- More effective in final-third combinations than deeper build-up phases.

Positive Moments:

- Early half-turn and forward pass that set up a dangerous shot.
- Edge-of-box strike narrowly wide against the run of play.
- Excellent dribble (77') between three defenders under pressure before releasing wide while off balance.
- Multiple disguised inside passes in front of goal, narrowly missing out on assists.

TACTICAL – 7/10

- Operated as a box-to-box midfielder with clear leadership responsibility.
- Consistently covered the left central pocket when Manchester City stretched play.
- Often dropped deeper to support defensive structure, at times forming a fifth defender.
- Demonstrated strong positional awareness when tracking City's #8, limiting space intelligently.
- Maintained team structure well when Sporting were defending in shape.
- Fell out of the game between minutes 10'–16'; limited availability as a passing option.
- Not heavily involved in Sporting's counter-attacking goals; impact reduced during transitional moments.
- More comfortable in controlled possession than in chaotic build-up or recovery phases.
- Occasionally mistimed defensive engagement on the flank, leading to being dribbled past.

MENTAL - 7/10

- Clear leadership presence; constant communication and signalling from kickoff.
- Displays strong game understanding and spatial awareness. Confident taking responsibility in attacking areas.
- Pressing intensity inconsistent - extremely active after kick-offs but less proactive in extended phases.
- Unnecessary yellow card in a non-dangerous situation; avoidable decision.
- Can drift out of games for periods rather than demanding the ball.

PHYSICAL – 6/10

- Average height and build (approx. 5'6) with low centre of gravity.
- Agile and balanced; effective at turning under pressure.
- Competitive in aerial duels despite size (won early midfield header), however not an option on set-pieces.
- Can be outmuscled in direct physical battles.
- Energy levels fluctuate; not consistently dynamic across full phases of play. • Pace helps compensate when recovering defensively.

CONCLUSION COMMENTS

Manuel Mendonça delivered a technically impressive and tactically intelligent performance, defined by creativity in advanced areas and disciplined positional awareness defensively. His ability to receive on the half-turn, operate between the lines, and play incisive inside passes made him one of Sporting's more refined players in possession.

However, inconsistency in involvement and transitional tempo slightly limited his overall impact. Periods of low activity and conservative passing choices in counter situations prevented him from fully dictating the game. Physically, he compensates for lack of size with balance and intelligence, though he can be overpowered in direct duels.

Strengths:

- High technical level in tight spaces
- Excellent half-turn and ball reception
- Vision and creativity in final third
- Strong positional awareness defensively
- Leadership and communication

Areas For Improvement:

- Consistency of involvement throughout the match
- Passing tempo in transition (play into space earlier)
- Physical duels against stronger opponents
- Maintaining pressing intensity across full phases

PERFORMANCE GRADE: 7

SUITABILITY: Best suited as an advanced #8 in a possession-dominant side or as a free-roaming central midfielder in a structured 4-3-3 where he can operate between lines rather than during build-up phases.

CURRENT LEVEL: High U19/Youth League level performer with visible technical maturity.

LEAGUE POTENTIAL: Upper Championship / top-flight technical squad option profile if physical consistency and transitional intensity continue to develop. Ceiling depends on athletic progression and ability to influence games continuously.