

Reece Welch Report

FIXTURE: Manchester United U21 vs Everton U21

COMPETITION: Premier League 2, Playoffs, Round of 16

SCORE: 4-2

DATE: 25/04/2025

PLAYER: Reece Welch (5)

CLUB: Everton

AGE: 22

HEIGHT: 6'6

NATIONALITY: England

POSITION(S) & FORMATION PLAYED IN: CB in a 5-3-2

CONTRACT EXP: 30/06/2026

LEADING FOOT: Right

LINE UPS



TECHNICAL – 5/10

On the ball:

- Comfortable and composed in possession for a centre-back.
- Good first touch; generally clean when receiving under pressure.
- Confident carrying the ball forward, but only when space opens up.
- Passing range is limited and uncreative, with a strong preference for sideways passes.
- Forward passes were attempted but lacked disguise and quality; several were quickly intercepted when played under pressure.
- Rarely takes risks in build-up, prioritising safety over progression.
- Failed to time his jump when unmarked on a '60 corner, missing a clear aerial opportunity.

Positive Moments:

- Strong ball carry under pressure, nutmegging an opponent before calmly releasing the pass.
- Late long pass in behind under pressure showed composure and technical intent.
- Generally secure when recycling possession in the first phase.

TACTICAL – 3/10

- Appeared tasked with tight marking of Manchester United's #9, frequently stepping into midfield to engage.
- While occasionally effective, this role consistently disrupted the defensive line.
- Repeatedly vacated space in behind without cover or recovery positioning.
- Partly at fault for the conceded goal ('10): stepped out aggressively, failed to recover, and allowed a direct run in behind.
- Similar positional error around '16, attempting to intercept and opening a pocket that led to pressure.
- Clearly at fault for the third goal: broke the defensive line stepping out, allowing a simple pass in behind.
- Struggled to recognise when to hold the line versus when to engage, showing limited game management.
- Uses hands excessively when engaging attackers; physical approach lacks discretion and could lead to fouls at higher levels.
- Poorly timed challenge at the edge of the box ('27) - high-risk action that could easily have resulted in a penalty.

MENTAL - 4/10

- Generally calm and composed in possession.
- Defensive concentration dropped during key moments, particularly after stepping out of position.
- Poor reaction after being dribbled past late in the game ('86), jogging back while teammates defended - a concern. Decision-making defensively lacks consistency, particularly when managing risk.
- Not vocal/signalling enough to teammates

PHYSICAL – 6/10

- Tall, strong centre-back with good reach and recovery stride.
- Long legs help with speed over distance and effectiveness in slide tackles and blocks.
- Aerial presence is evident defensively, though not maximised offensively.
- Physically capable of competing at U21 level and above.

SET-PIECES

- Defensively effective at times, highlighted by a strong clearance from a corner ('27).
- Underutilised offensively despite strong physical profile and height.
- Timing and movement in the box were inconsistent.
- Draws attention from multiple defenders, suggesting potential value if used more deliberately.

CONCLUSION COMMENTS

Reece Welch delivered a mixed performance defined by solid physical and technical foundations but undermined by repeated positional errors and questionable defensive decision-making. While comfortable in possession and physically well-equipped for the role, his tendency to step out aggressively and leave space in behind repeatedly exposed Everton's defensive line. His performance suggests a defender with clear tools, but one who currently lacks game management, spatial discipline, and consistency at this level.

Strengths:

- Strong physical profile with aerial and recovery advantages
- Comfortable and composed in possession for a centre-back
- Confident ball carrying under pressure
- Capable of aggressive front-foot defending when timed correctly

Areas For Improvement:

- Positional discipline and understanding of defensive spacing
- Decision-making on when to step out versus hold the line
- Tracking runners after vacating position
- Defensive concentration and urgency, particularly late in games
- More discreet use of physicality in duels
- Becoming a true attacking option on set pieces

PERFORMANCE GRADE: 5

Undermined by repeated positional errors and direct involvement in conceding chances, despite solid technical moments and a strong physical presence.

SUITABILITY: Best suited as a right-sided centre-back in a back four or outside CB in a back three, where defensive responsibilities can be more clearly structured and cover is available when stepping out.

CURRENT LEVEL: Competitive at U21 / PL2 level, but currently not reliable enough for consistent senior football without further tactical development.

LEAGUE POTENTIAL: League One / lower Championship potential if defensive awareness, game management, and positional discipline improve. Physical and technical tools are present, but tactical understanding will determine his ceiling.