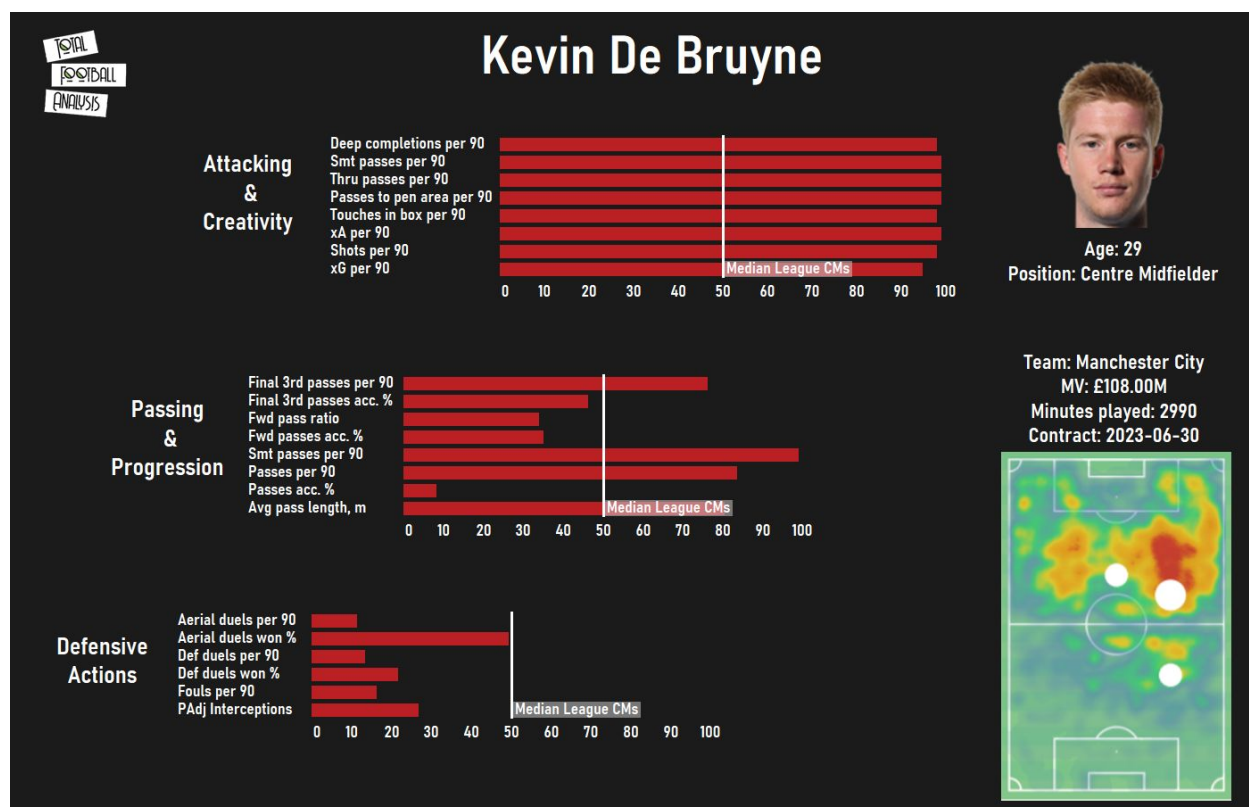




KEVIN DE BRUYNE

Manchester City



Player Overview

Kevin De Bruyne is a 29-year-old Belgian international who is currently contracted to Manchester City in the English Premier League.

De Bruyne has a relatively powerful build and is listed at 181cm | 6'0"













































From a positional standpoint, De Bruyne tends to play as a right-sided '8' in the 4-3-3 system that tends to be favoured by Pep Guardiola at Manchester City. With that said, however, De Bruyne is equally capable of playing deeper, as a controlling midfielder, or in more advanced areas of the pitch.

He receives the ball well and has the core strength to remain press resistant even when under significant pressure from opposition players. De Bruyne has the capacity to receive the ball and then turn to attack the opposition through driving the ball through the thirds but he also is intelligent enough to link play and bring others into the game as his side progress the ball through the thirds.

Perhaps the most developed and impressive aspect of De Bruyne's game from a tactical perspective is the way that he is able to use the ball when facing the opposition goal. His passing range and vision are second to none in World football and his capacity to perfectly weigh and judge the angle of passes are a true danger to opposition defensive structures.



Playing History

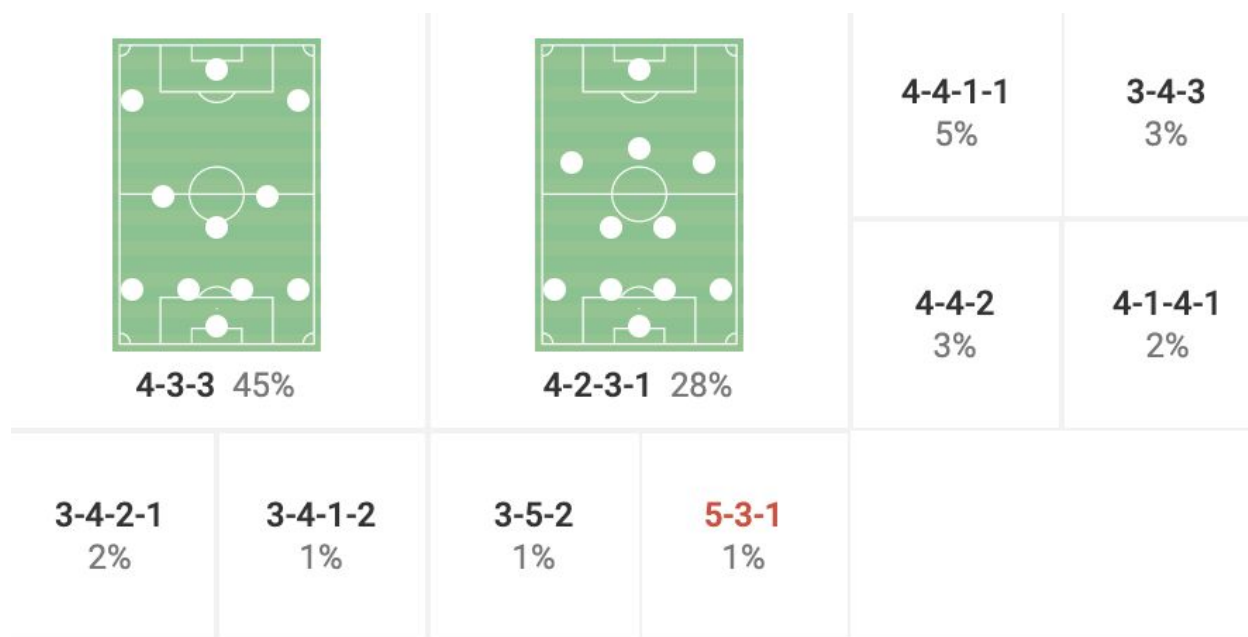
TRANSFER HISTORY						
Season	Date	Left	Joined	MV	Fee	
15/16	Aug 30, 2015	  VfL Wolfsburg	  Man City	£40.50m	£68.40m	>
13/14	Jan 18, 2014	  Chelsea	  VfL Wolfsburg	£13.50m	£19.80m	>
12/13	Jun 30, 2013	  Werder Bremen	  Chelsea	£9.00m	End of loan	>
12/13	Aug 2, 2012	  Chelsea	  Werder Bremen	£8.10m	Loan fee: £405Th.	>
11/12	Jun 30, 2012	  KRC Genk	  Chelsea	£8.10m	End of loan	>
11/12	Feb 1, 2012	  Chelsea	  KRC Genk	£8.10m	Loan	>
11/12	Jan 31, 2012	  KRC Genk	  Chelsea	£8.10m	£7.20m	>
08/09	Jul 1, 2008	  KRC Genk U19	  KRC Genk	-	-	>
07/08	Jul 1, 2007	  KRC Genk U17	  KRC Genk U19	-	-	>
06/07	Jul 1, 2006	  KRC Genk Youth	  KRC Genk U17	-	-	>
05/06	Jul 1, 2005	  KAA Gent Youth	  KRC Genk Youth	-	Free transfer	>
Total transfer fees :					£95.81m	

As we can see De Bruyne has had a relatively interesting playing career having earned a move at an early age from his boyhood club, Genk, to Chelsea. Unfortunately, he never made a serious impact for the London club at first-team level and he moved on loan to Werder Bremen and then to Wolfsburg on loan. Such was the pact that De Bruyne made in Germany that we saw Wolfsburg make the move permanent in 2014 for a reported 13.5M.

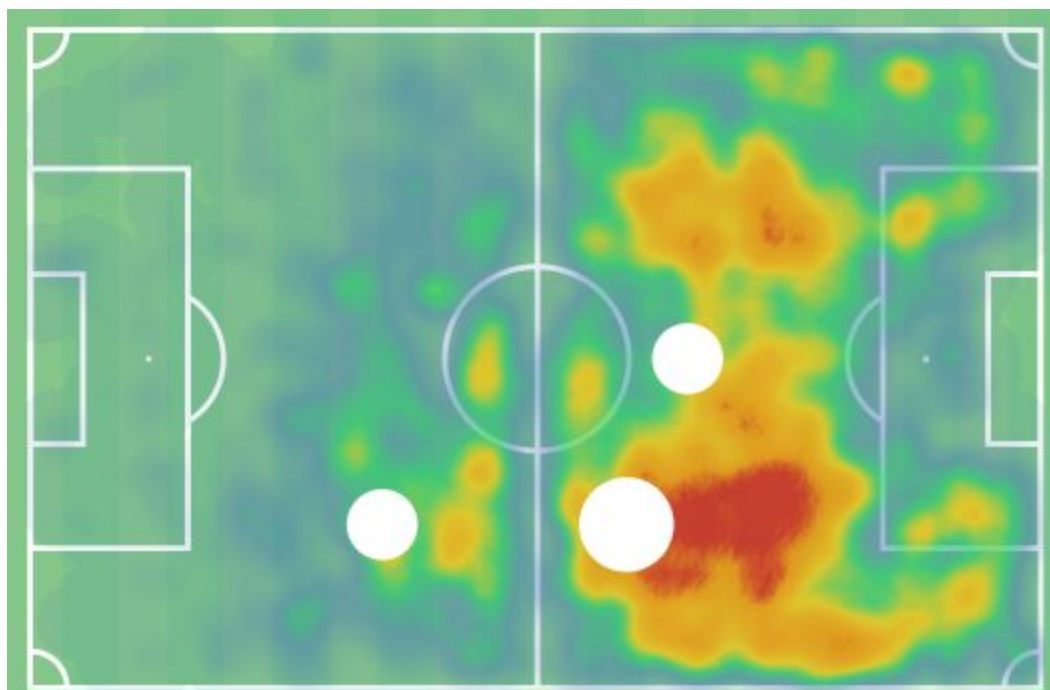
After just one season in Germany permanently, however, De Bruyne moved back to England to join Manchester City with the German side making a significant profit on the deal.



Tactical Profile



Over the course of the 2019/20 season, we saw Manchester City play, for the most part, in either a 4-3-3 or a 4-2-3-1 system. In the 4-3-3 De Bruyne would play as the right-sided '8' where he would operate mostly in the half-space on that side. In the 4-2-3-1, however, we saw Guardiola opt for a double pivot of sorts in Ilkay Gundogan and Rodri. This allowed De Bruyne to be released to play more as a 10 in advanced positions.

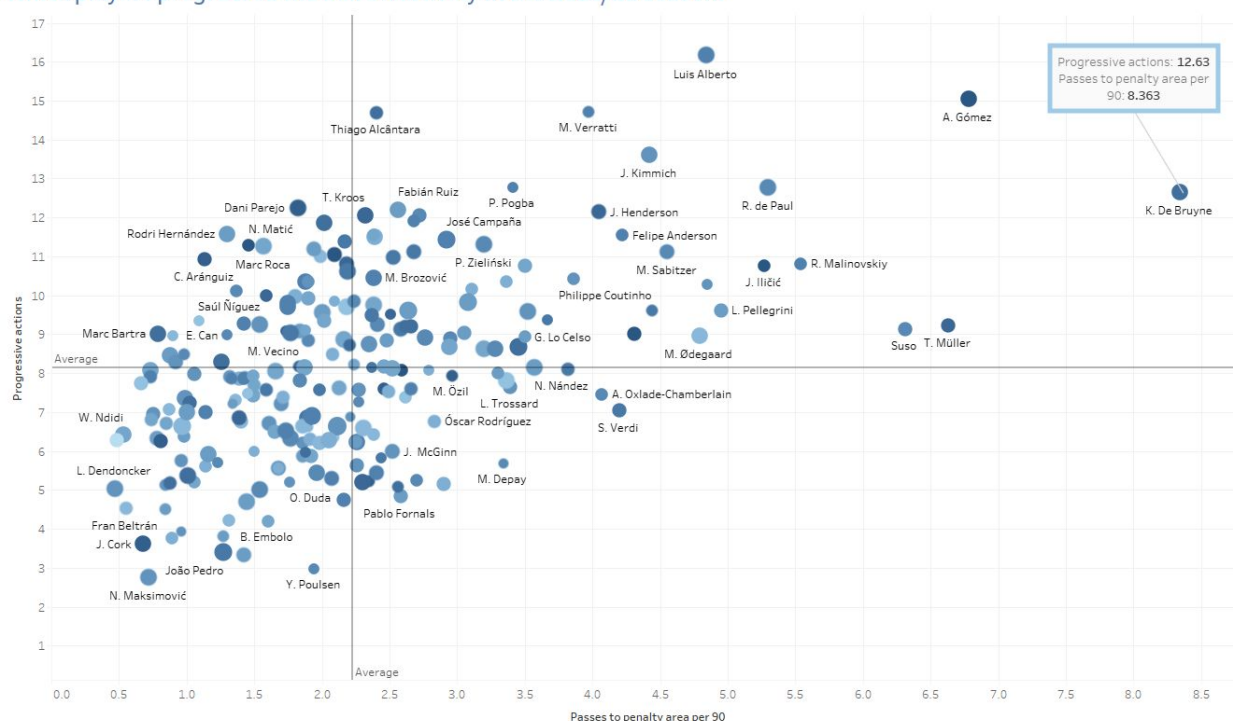


As you can see from the heat map above there was a clear preference from De Bruyne to play from the right-hand side. From here, though, he has the passing range and intelligence to access all areas of the field.



Ball progression

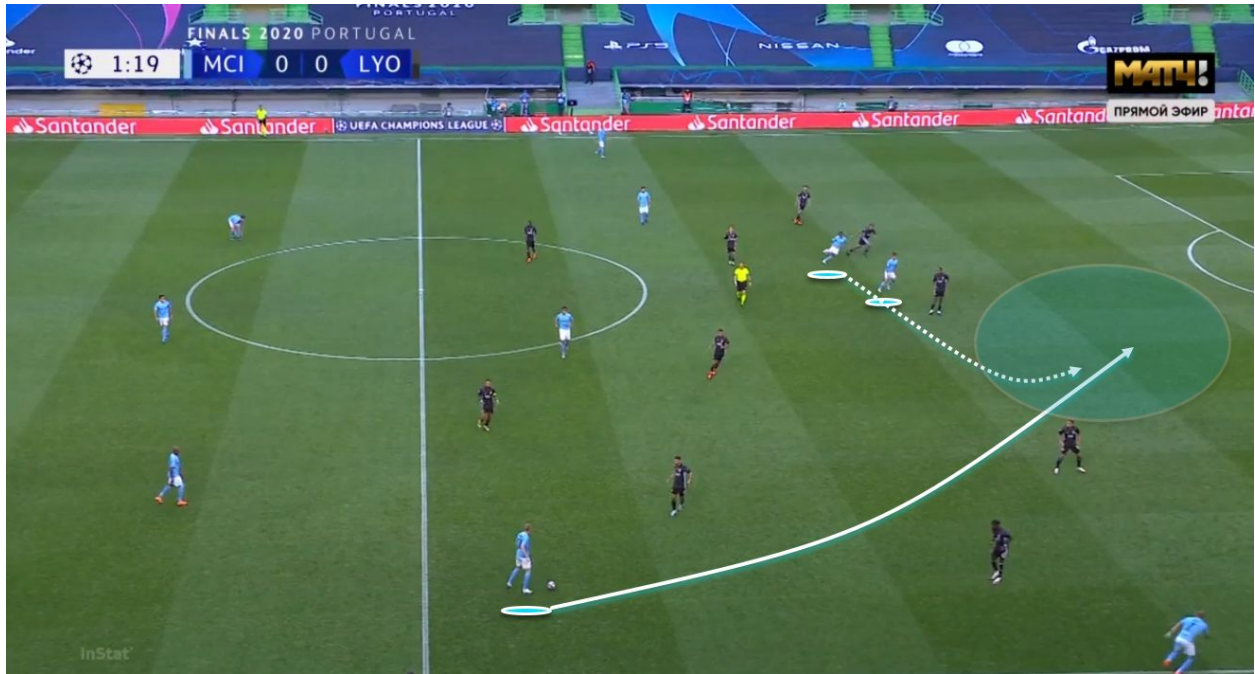
Which players progressed the ball effectively in the 2019/20 season?



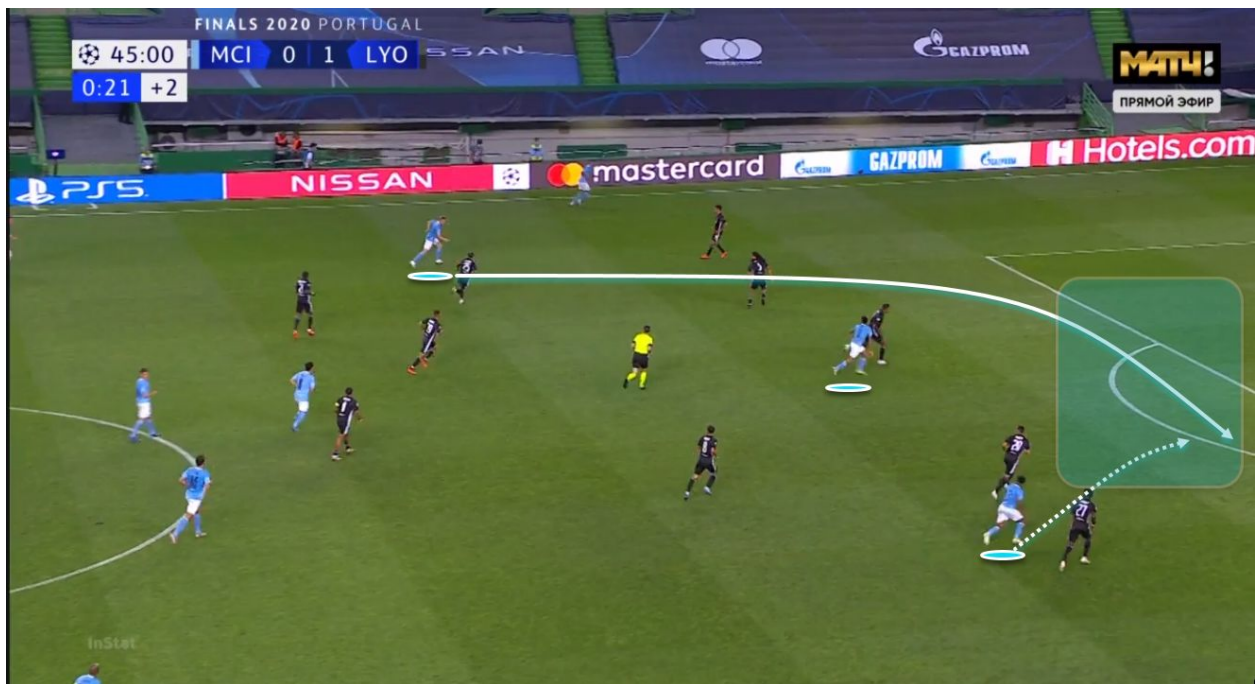
The above chart looks at data from across the 2019/20 season. We are looking at the number of progressive actions (progressive passes + progressive runs) a player makes and comparing that to the number of passes that each player makes to the penalty area.

As you can clearly see De Bruyne is a key progressor of the ball as well as being effective in helping his team to access the penalty area.





Above we see an example from the Champions League match between Manchester City and Lyon. As De Bruyne takes possession, deep inside his own half of the field, he is pressed but his teammates make immediate movements to access the space between the players in the defensive line. They are aware of the quality that the Belgian has on the ball. As soon as Raheem Sterling makes the movement across the defensive line De Bruyne weighs a perfect ball to access the space.



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This time see De Bruyne taking possession of the ball over on the left half-space, in this he played more as a 10, As he takes the ball we again see the movement from the far sided player to attack the space in the penalty area. In this instance, De Bruyne plays the pass perfectly with the outside of his right foot and he curls the ball perfectly to meet the run.

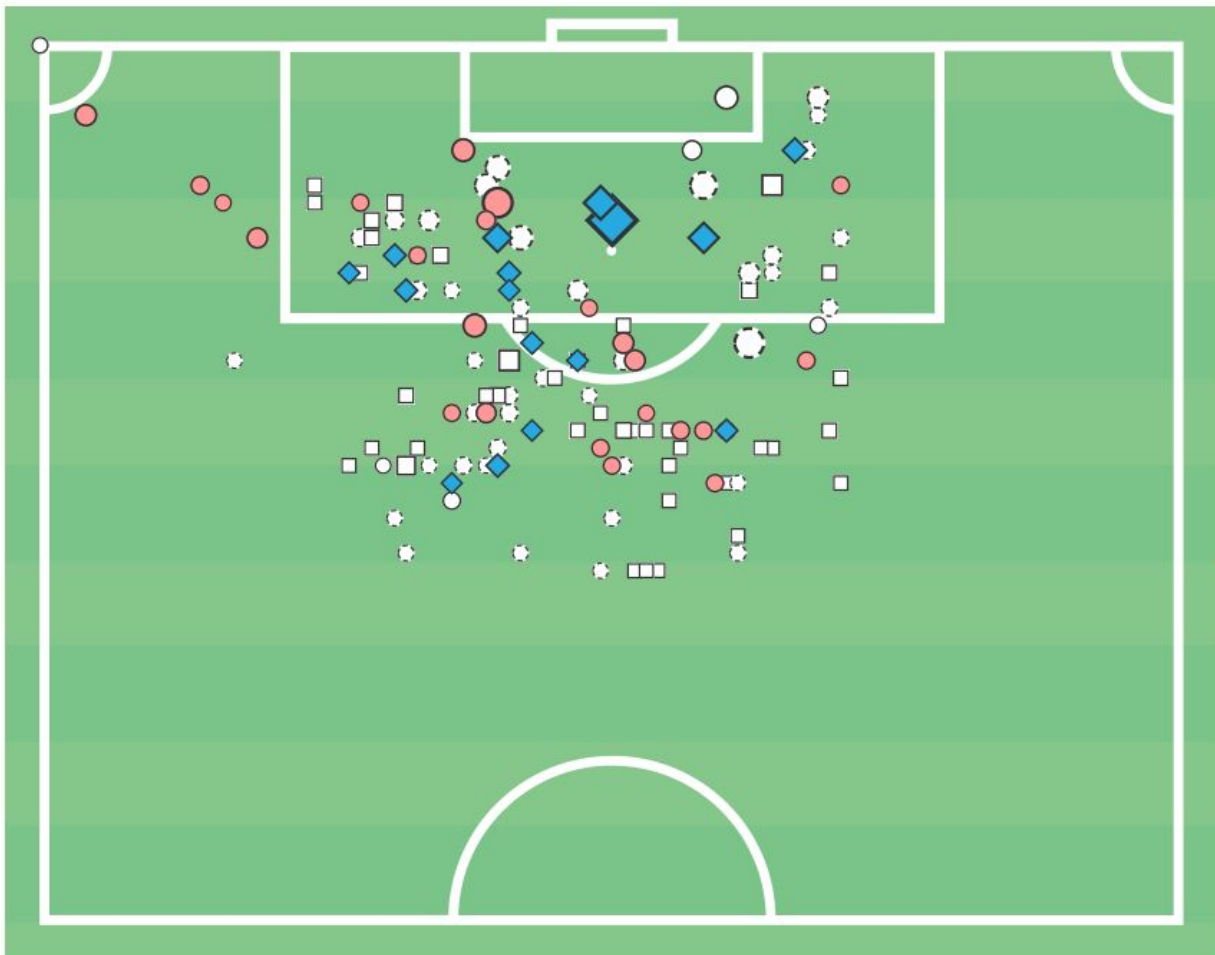


In the final third

As well as being a creative passer in the final third De Bruyne is also able to affect the game in this area for his side through driving with the ball or shooting from dangerous areas. The Belgian international has the ability to shoot with power and accuracy from distance but to also finish with finesse across the face of the goalkeeper.

Shots

◆ Goal ● On goal ○ Wide ○ On post □ Blocked

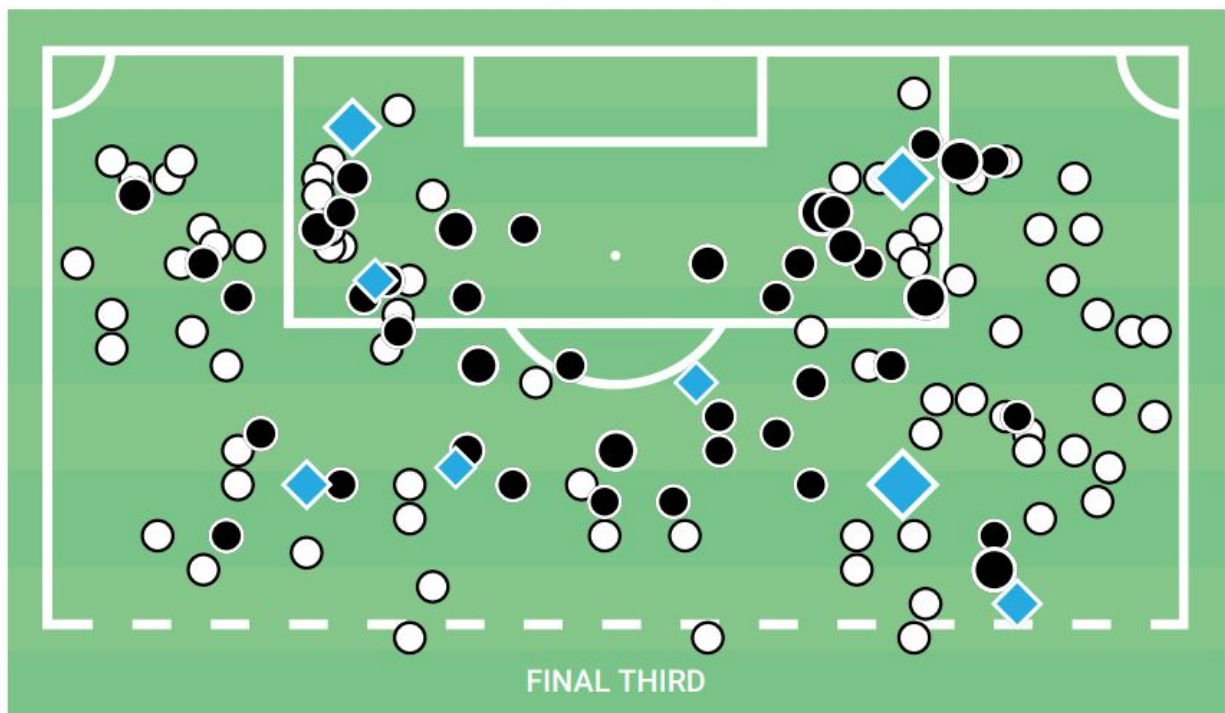


In the 2019/20 season, De Bruyne scored 19 goals from an xG of 12.85. As you can see from the shot map above the Belgian is not adverse to shooting from distance and he tends to hit the target when he does pull the trigger. Having a player with the threat from distance that De Bruyne possesses can be important as it stops opposition teams from dropping deep into a compact block. If they do so and De Bruyne has the ball in front of them then he can shoot accurately from range. This, in turn, forces opposition players to press out to engage the ball and this results in spaces being opened up in the penalty area.



Dribbles in final third

○ Kept possession ● Followed by a shot ◆ Followed by a goal



As well as being dangerous with accessing the penalty area through passes or when shooting from distance De Bruyne offers a third significant threat in his ability to carry the ball in the final third. We see on the dribble map above that De Bruyne is effective in central areas, the half-spaces or even the wide corridors when carrying the ball.



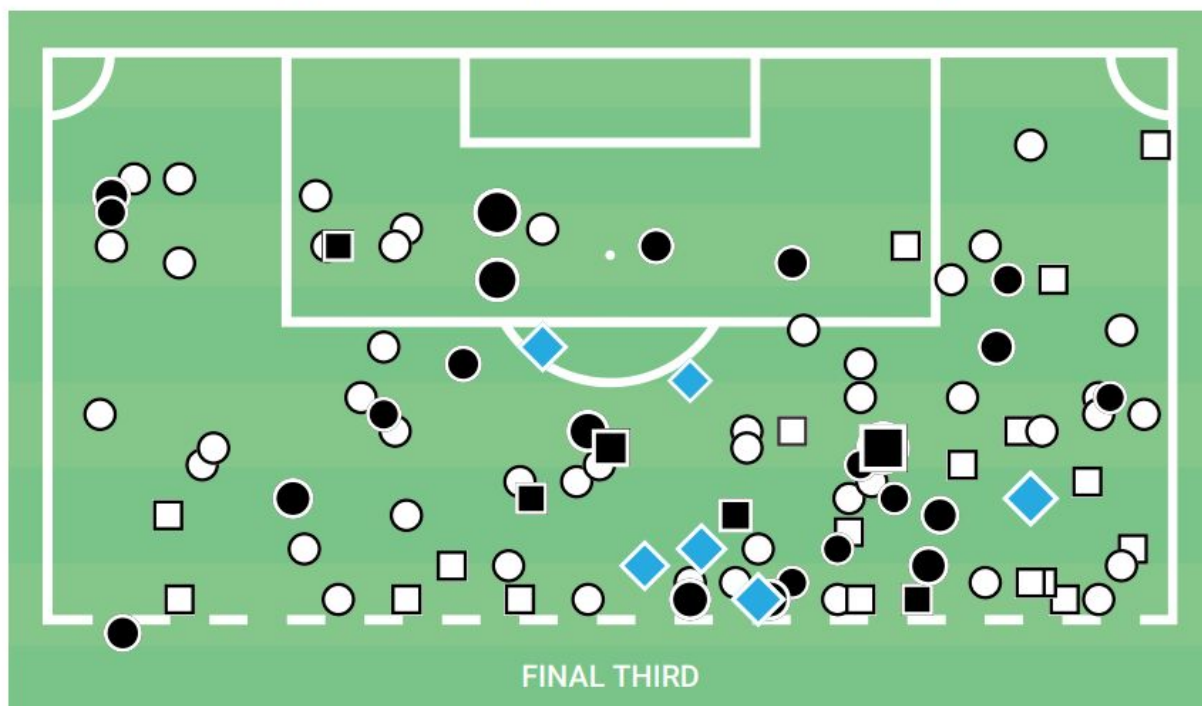
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Defensive Phase

In the defensive phase, De Bruyne does tend to be relatively active although mainly with the ball still in the opposition half of the field. He uses his physical profile and understanding of space and angles well in order to close down the opposition and cut off passing lanes and angles, especially when Manchester City are in a period of counter-pressing.

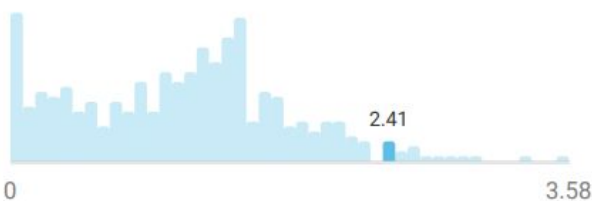
Recoveries in final third

○ Counterpressing □ Positional pressing ● With shot ◆ Goal

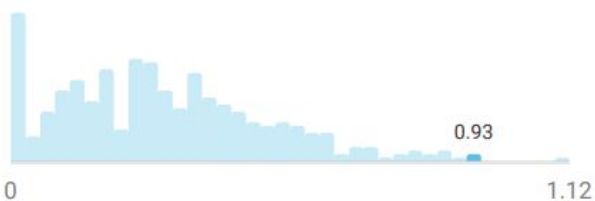


You can see from his recoveries in the final third that a great deal of them come from counter-pressing situations and in particular in the right side of the field, where we know that De Bruyne tends to be positioned. It is also telling how many of these end up either with a shot at goal or even a goal.

Recoveries in final third / 90



Dangerous recoveries / 90



K. De Bruyne stats compared to other field players in the last year in Premier League

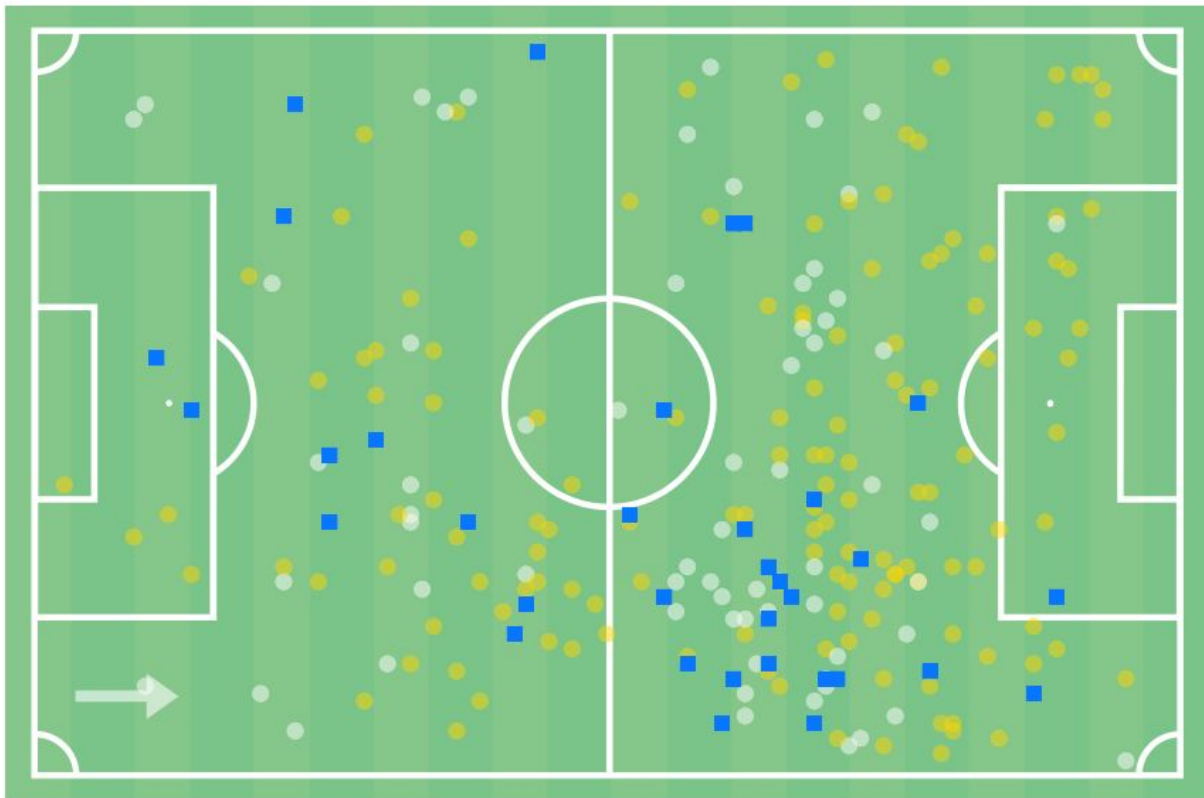
Zone	Recoveries	Shots after / on target	xG	Goals after
Zone 14	51	23 / 10	4.32	5
Right flank	25	4 / 2	0.52	1
Left flank	12	3 / 0	0.29	-
Penalty area	11	5 / 1	1.01	-
Total	99	35 / 13	6.14	6

In the final third, De Bruyne averages 2.41 recoveries per 90 and an impressive 0.93 ball recoveries per 90. His ability to regain possession in these areas can be key for his side in terms of keeping pressure on the opposition.



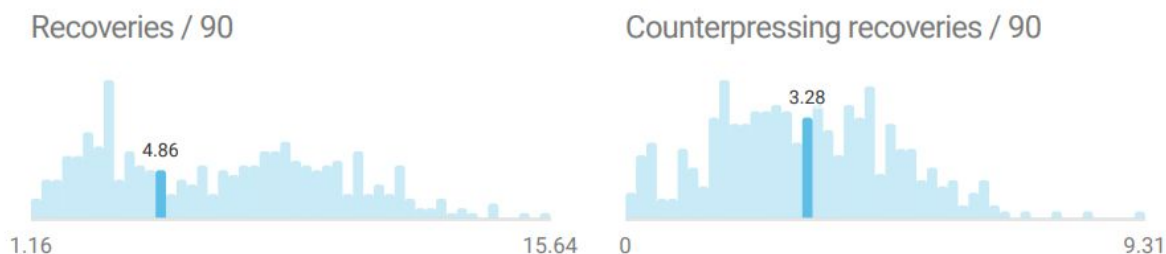
Recoveries

● Positioning ● Counterpressing ■ Interception



If we look at the recoveries map for the whole pitch for De Bruyne it is striking that so many of his recoveries do come from those counter-pressing situations. While they tend to be concentrated on the right-hand side it is worth noting that he also presses and regains possession well across the entire width of the field. Once again, however, De Bruyne is more likely to regain possession in the opposition half.





K. De Bruyne stats compared to other field players in the last year in Premier League

Third	Recoveries	Counterpressing	Interceptions	Sliding tackles
Own third	38	21	7	0
Central third	84	53	17	0
Final third	118	84	10	0
Total	240	158	34	0

Across the whole pitch, De Bruyne averages 4.86 recoveries per 90 and 3.28 counter-pressing recoveries per 90.



Conclusion

There is no doubt that Kevin De Bruyne is a world-class player who is firmly in his peak years. His ability to control the play and the sheer volume of ways that he can hurt the opposition in the final third make him a key player in the tactical game model of Pep Guardiola at Manchester City. The key, however, for a team like City is to have a progression plan in place to ensure that they are tracking the player or players that will be able to eventually replace De Bruyne once he does start to regress.



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