

How Chelsea snatched the glory: The best analysis

Chelsea average positions



The graphic reveals the average positions in which the busiest 11 Chelsea players touched the ball. Arjen Robben had more touches than Joe Cole, whom he replaced at half-time. In the absence of the injured Andriy Shevchenko, Chelsea adopted last season's 4-3-3 formation, with Shaun Wright-Phillips and Robben supporting Didier Drogba.

Sir Alex Ferguson would probably have played a 4-4-2 system for Manchester United had Louis Saha been fit to partner Wayne Rooney in the centre of the attack but instead opted for 4-3-3, as shown clearly by United's average touch position graphic.

Manchester United average positions



Drogba's winner



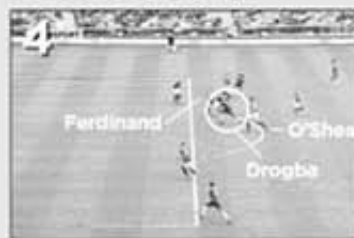
Didier Drogba, of Chelsea, has the ball just outside the Manchester United penalty area with four minutes of extra time to play.



Drogba passes to Frank Lampard while Rio Ferdinand, the United defender, is well positioned to track the striker.



As Lampard plays an excellent return pass, the ball-watching Ferdinand has allowed Drogba to escape.



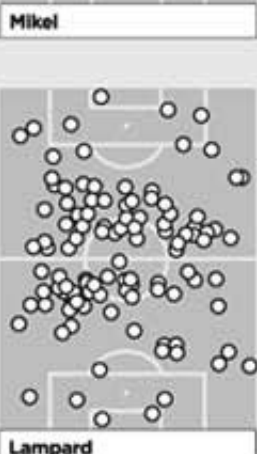
Drogba has stolen behind Ferdinand and prepares to meet the ball as the helpless John O'Shea watches on.



Drogba touches the ball past Edwin van der Sar, the onrushing goalkeeper, to win the FA Cup for Chelsea.



This shows the touches of John Obi Mikel, who has become an integral part of the Chelsea team at 20. The midfielder player can play as an anchor or in a more advanced role, and on Saturday he helped out in both regards.



Frank Lampard was fairly restrained in the Chelsea midfield although, unlike Paul Scholes, he did manage to make the occasional appearance in the opposition's penalty area.



Wayne Rooney enjoyed one of his best games of a below-par season for Manchester United. He lacked a strike partner for most of the match but still dropped deep a great deal to launch attacks.



Paul Scholes made plenty of fine long passes for Manchester United but was conspicuous by his absence in attack. A player once famed for bursting into the penalty area to score goals did not touch the ball anywhere near the Chelsea box.

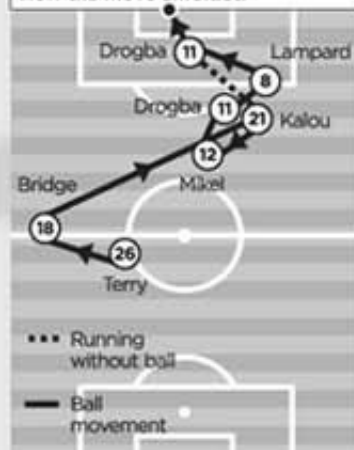
Getting defensive

The teams' lack of ability — or desire — to force their way into dangerous areas at Wembley is shown by the fact that Chelsea and Manchester United both made a far greater proportion of passes in their own third of the pitch than they had done in the semi-finals.

Proportion of passes

	defensive third	middle third	final third
Chelsea (semi-final v Blackburn Rovers)	18%	50%	32%
Chelsea (final v Manchester United)	26%	51%	23%
Manchester United (semi-final v Watford)	13%	55%	32%
Manchester United (final v Chelsea)	25%	48%	27%

How the move unfolded



Words Bill Edgar