

Have we ever had it so good?

Tony Cascarino selects his finest moments of a memorable night of Barclays Premier League action

Seeing Cristiano Ronaldo smile for the first time this season after his first goal. Perhaps now his body language and performances will get back to normal



How about Dimitar Berbatov's fantastic piece of skill? Worth the admission fee alone and up there with the best - worthy of Johan Cruyff



And good to see Andy Johnson on the scoresheet twice against Wigan, starting to repay some of the £10.5 million Fulham paid for him



Nine games taking place simultaneously created excitement and featured superb goals, such as Warnock's for Blackburn against Aston Villa



The number of goals on an exciting night

25

Words and analysis Bill Edgar



Almunia's long night



● Tottenham Hotspur seemed to try to exploit the vulnerability to long shots of Manuel Almunia, the Arsenal goalkeeper. Seven of their 12 attempts on goal came from outside the penalty area (whereas overall this season Tottenham have had more efforts from inside the box), with four of them leading to their four goals. David Bentley and Jermaine Jenas scored directly from outside the 18-yard box, while the team's other two goals came from rebounds after long-range attempts by Tom Huddlestone and Luka Modric, the first of which was parried out poorly by Almunia to Darren Bent, left

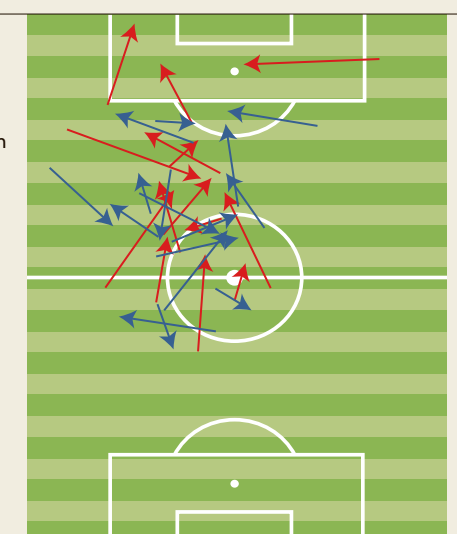
Goalkeepers who have conceded most goals from shots outside box this season



Chelsea pass test

Passing between Lampard and Malouda for Chelsea

● Frank Lampard has shone for Chelsea this season while Florent Malouda has started to find his feet after a poor first season. The pair were heavily involved in the 3-0 win away to Hull City, the 30 passes that they exchanged being seven more than the next highest between two Chelsea players



Ferguson rotates his triangle

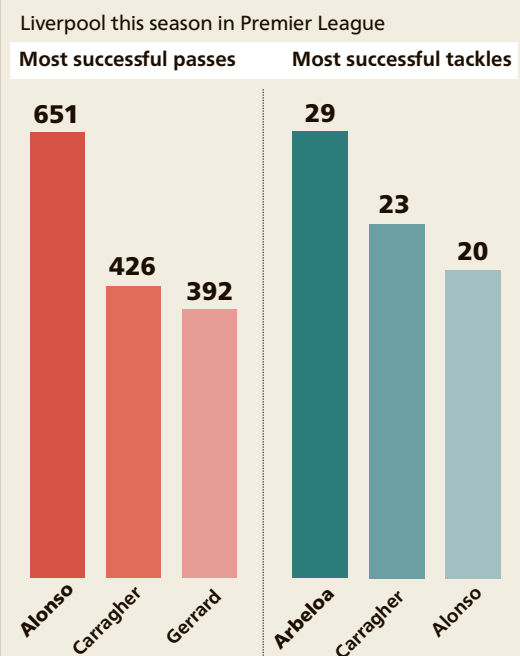
● Seemingly anxious to keep his three right backs active, Sir Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, has retained one of them for successive games on only two occasions in his team's 15 matches so far this season.



Neville v Portsmouth, Community Shield
Brown v Newcastle United (h), league
Brown v Portsmouth (a), league
Neville v Zenit St Petersburg, European Super Cup
Brown v Liverpool (a), league
Neville v Villarreal (h), Champions League
Neville v Chelsea (a), league
Rafael v Middlesbrough (h), Carling Cup
Neville v Bolton Wanderers (h), league
Rafael v Aalborg (a), Champions League
Brown v Blackburn Rovers (a), league
Rafael v West Bromwich Albion (h), league
Neville v Celtic (h), Champions League
Brown v Everton (a), league
Rafael v West Ham United (h), league

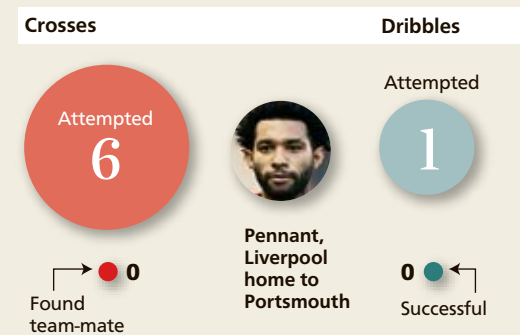
Alonso is Anfield ace

● Xabi Alonso was linked with a move away from Liverpool in the summer but he has been outstanding this season, recording by far the highest number of accurate passes and chipping in with plenty of tackles



Liverpool have little in reserve

● Liverpool arguably lack the depth of talent possessed by Manchester United and Chelsea. They rested four first-choice players against Portsmouth and one of the replacements, Jermaine Pennant, the right winger, was disappointing in the hour he was given



Stoke throw themselves a lifeline

● Stoke City, in fifteenth place in the Premier League, would instead be bottom without their goals from long throw-ins. They have provided half of the ten such goals this season

Goals from throw-ins this season in Premier League
Sidibe, Stoke City v Aston Villa
Olofinjana, Stoke City v Everton
Jagielka (og), Stoke City v Everton
Fuller, Stoke City v Portsmouth
Fuller, Stoke City v Sunderland
Zaki, Wigan Athletic v West Ham United
Defoe, Portsmouth v Everton
Defoe, Portsmouth v Middlesbrough
Fellaini, Everton v Manchester United
Alonso, Liverpool v Chelsea

Form guide for past five games

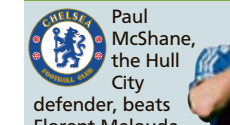
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	5	0	0	10	4	15
Man Utd	4	1	0	11	1	13
Chelsea	4	0	1	12	1	12
Hull City	4	0	1	7	4	12
Aston Villa	3	1	1	9	5	10
Arsenal	2	2	1	11	8	8
Portsmouth	2	2	1	5	3	8
Middlesbrough	2	1	2	4	7	7
Stoke City	2	0	3	4	8	6
West Brom	2	0	3	3	9	6
Fulham	1	2	2	4	4	5
Newcastle	1	2	2	8	9	5
Sunderland	1	2	2	4	5	5
Blackburn	1	2	2	5	7	5
Everton	1	2	2	4	9	5
Man City	1	1	3	8	9	4
Tottenham	1	1	3	7	9	4
Bolton	1	1	3	3	6	4
West Ham	1	0	4	3	9	3
Wigan	1	0	4	4	11	3

Barclays Premier League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	10	8	2	0	15	6	26
Chelsea	10	7	2	1	22	4	23
Arsenal	10	6	2	2	22	10	20
Aston Villa	10	6	2	2	19	12	20
Hull	10	6	2	2	14	14	20
Man Utd	9	5	3	1	15	5	18
Portsmouth	10	4	2	4	10	15	14
Man City	10	4	1	5	23	16	13
Middlesbrough	10	4	1	5	10	15	13
Sunderland	10	3	3	4	9	11	12
West Ham	10	4	0	6	14	18	12
Everton	10	3	3	4	14	19	12
Blackburn	10	3	3	4	11	18	12
Fulham	9	3	2	4	8	8	11
Stoke	10	3	1	6	11	18	10
West Brom	10	3	1	6	8	16	10
Newcastle	10	2	3	5	12	18	9
Wigan	10	2	2	6	11	15	8
Bolton	10	2	2	6	8	13	8
Tottenham	10	1	3	6	11	16	6

Blue heaven

Frank Lampard goal, Chelsea away to Hull City

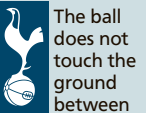


Paul McShane, the Hull City defender, beats Florent Malouda, of Chelsea, to Frank Lampard's pass but manages only to prod the ball back to the England midfielder player as he waits on the edge of the penalty area to the left of the D. Four defenders and the goalkeeper are blocking Lampard's path to goal, so, left-footed, he chips the ball delicately over them all into the far corner of the net

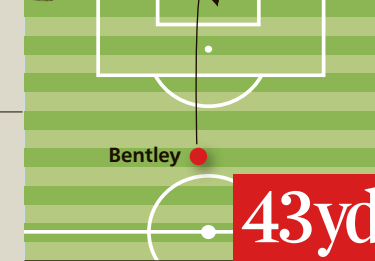


Tottenham hotshot

David Bentley goal, Tottenham Hotspur away to Arsenal



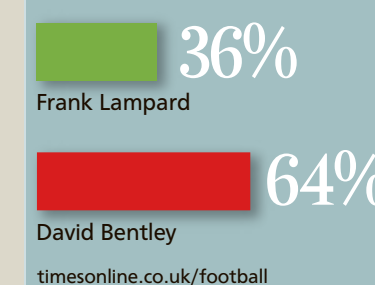
The ball does not touch the ground between Mikaël Silvestre's poke forward for Arsenal and David Bentley's long-range shot nestling in the net. Luka Modric, of Tottenham, hooks the ball back from Silvestre's mini-clearance, Jermaine Jenas chests it towards Bentley and the England winger controls it on his instep before executing a 43-yard volley that Manuel Almunia, the back-peddalling Arsenal goalkeeper, can only palm into his goal



Have your say in our online poll

Whose goal was better: David Bentley's or Frank Lampard's?

● The England midfielder player scored goals of contrasting beauty on Wednesday night, but which did you prefer: Bentley's belter or Lampard's delicate chip?



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