

Tactical Analysis

Sam's nod to his past

A fan of the 4-3-3 formation as Bolton Wanderers manager, Sam Allardyce adopted 4-4-2 for his first match in charge of Blackburn Rovers, at home to Stoke City, although there was a hint of his former system. While Brett Emerton, the right-sided midfielder player, kept close to the two central midfield players, Morten Gamst Pedersen, the left midfielder player, played much farther forward, alongside the two strikers



Rovers take longer route

Blackburn's long-ball percentage in the Premier League

This season

16.52%

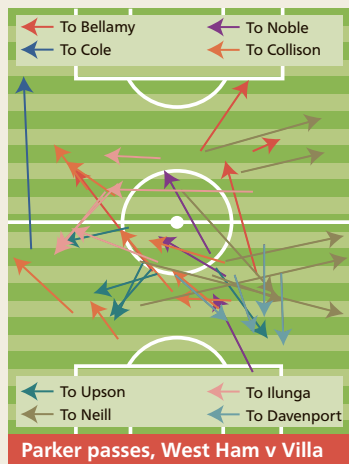
This weekend against Stoke City

18.24%

Allardyce was renowned as an adherent of the long-ball game at Bolton Wanderers and, on the evidence of his first game as Blackburn manager, he is pushing his new team in the same direction

Parker penned in

As a central midfielder and fine passer, Scott Parker has most responsibility for launching West Ham United attacks, but he struggled to be creative in the 1-0 defeat by Aston Villa. Of the 26 passes he made from inside his own half that reached a team-mate, only four crossed the halfway line. One of his back passes was intercepted by Ashley Young, the Villa forward, who hit the post. While West Ham were patient, attempting 222 passes in their own half, Villa got the ball into opposition territory much quicker, as befits a team with the fifth highest rate of long passes in the Premier League



Passes attempted in own half

West Ham

222

Aston Villa

83

Crouch is tops

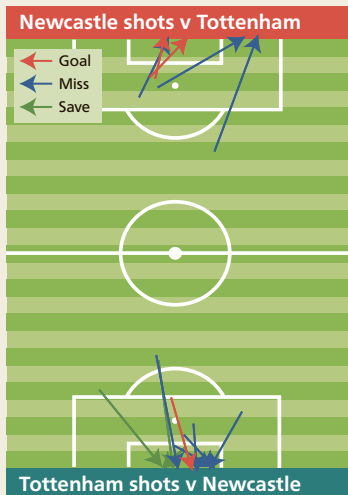
Portsmouth's keenness to use Peter Crouch's height means he has been involved in 51 more aerial duels than any other player in the Premier League this season. Despite the striker's ability in the air, Bolton left him unmarked when he headed home his team's goal in their 2-1 defeat at the Reebok Stadium

Contested most aerial duels in Premier League

Crouch	Portsmouth	227
Davies	Bolton	176
Sidibe	Stoke	171
Heskey	Wigan	167
Laursen	Aston Villa	159
Cousin	Hull	126

Tottenham blow their chance

Tottenham Hotspur suffered only their third loss in 15 games since Harry Redknapp became manager when they went down 2-1 away to Newcastle United but they had plenty of chances to avoid defeat. The graphic shows the visiting team had nine attempts on goal, four more than Newcastle, (quite apart from Tottenham's 6-2 advantage in blocked shots)



Steed feeds team-mates

Steed Malbranque moved clear of the field for assists when he set up two of Sunderland's goals in their 4-1 win away to Hull City. The Frenchman also recorded the most dribbles past an opponent by a Sunderland player on Saturday (three) and drew the most fouls (four)

Most Premier League assists this season

Malbranque	Sunderland	8
Arteta	Everton	6
A Young	Aston Villa	5
Berbatov	Man Utd	5
Malouda	Chelsea	5
Steinsson	Bolton	5

"Big four" pair off

The "big four" have split into two groups in their Premier League mini-league. Arsenal drew 1-1 with Liverpool yesterday after both had beaten Manchester United and Chelsea this season. The latter pair also drew 1-1

"Big four" mini-league

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Arsenal	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Liverpool	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Man Utd	3	0	1	2	3	5	1
Chelsea	3	0	1	2	2	4	1