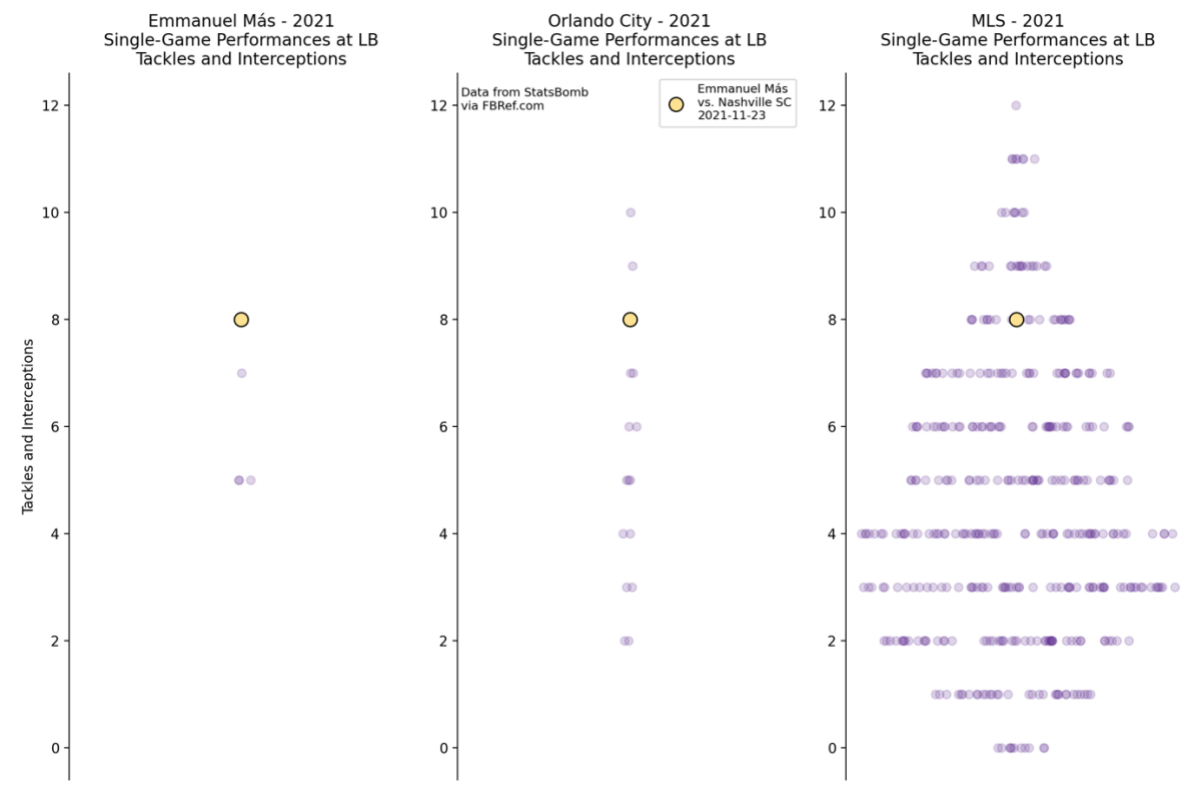# Exercise 1 – Match Reports

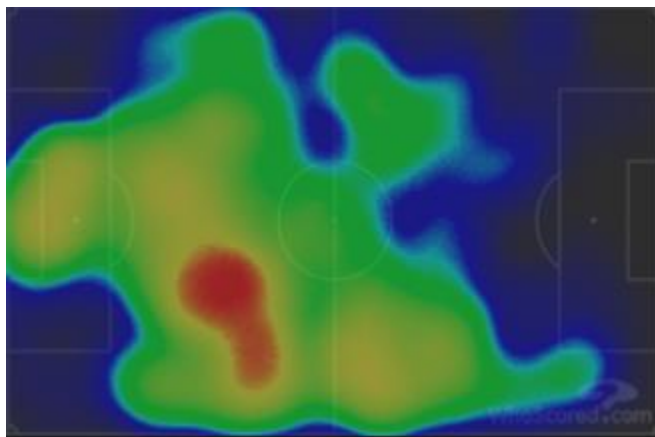**Addison Wood** | Nashville SC | Data Analyst - Application Project

Philadelphia Union @ Nashville SC, 11/23/21 – Match Review

- This game ran through the right side of the field for us.
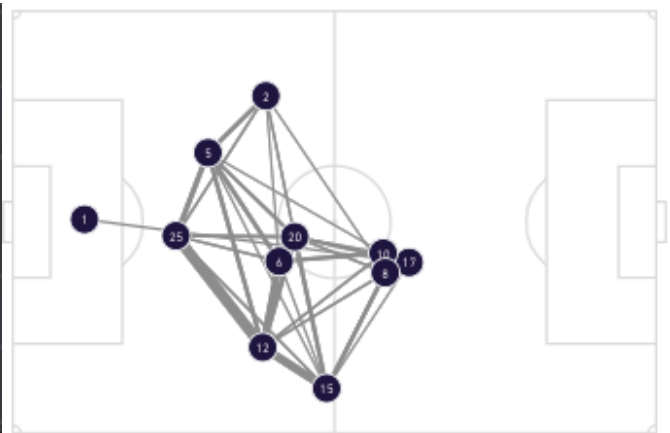   - We can tell by the abundance of tackles and interceptions by Orlando's left back (8 total).

Data from StatsBomb via FBRef

    - Emmanuel Mas had his biggest game by tackles & interceptions, and the third most by an Orlando City left back all season.
- This was due to our own offensive actions, as this heat map of touches lights up on our right side, and the pass map shows a triangle of Walker, Dax, and Alistair that we returned to quite a bit.
    - (With event data, I'd be able to make a heatmap in which the intensity is based on events in location above average)

Heatmap via WhoScored

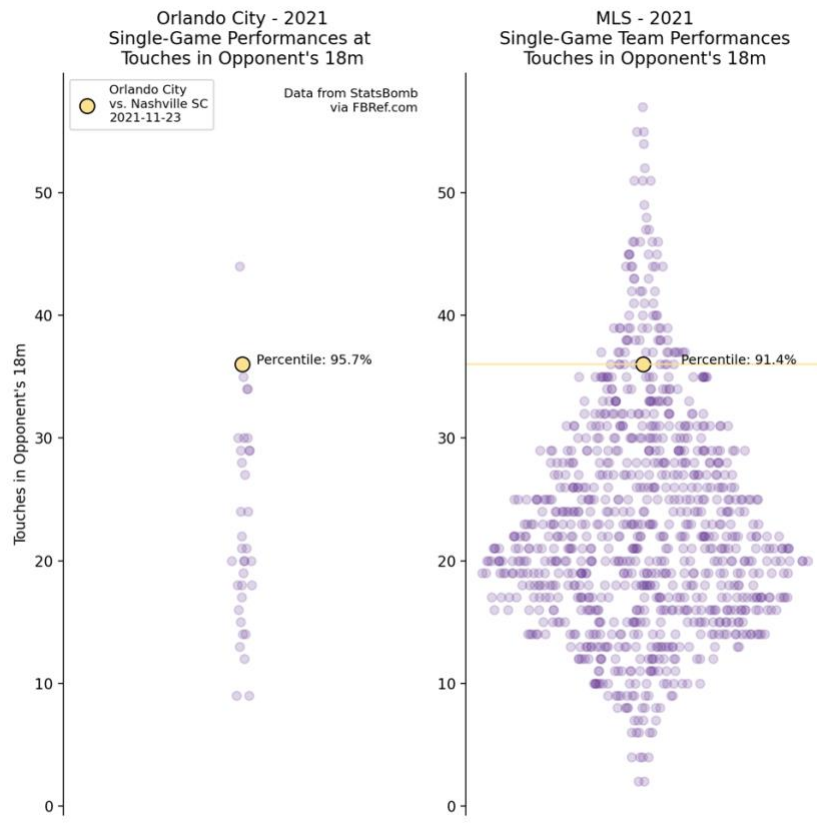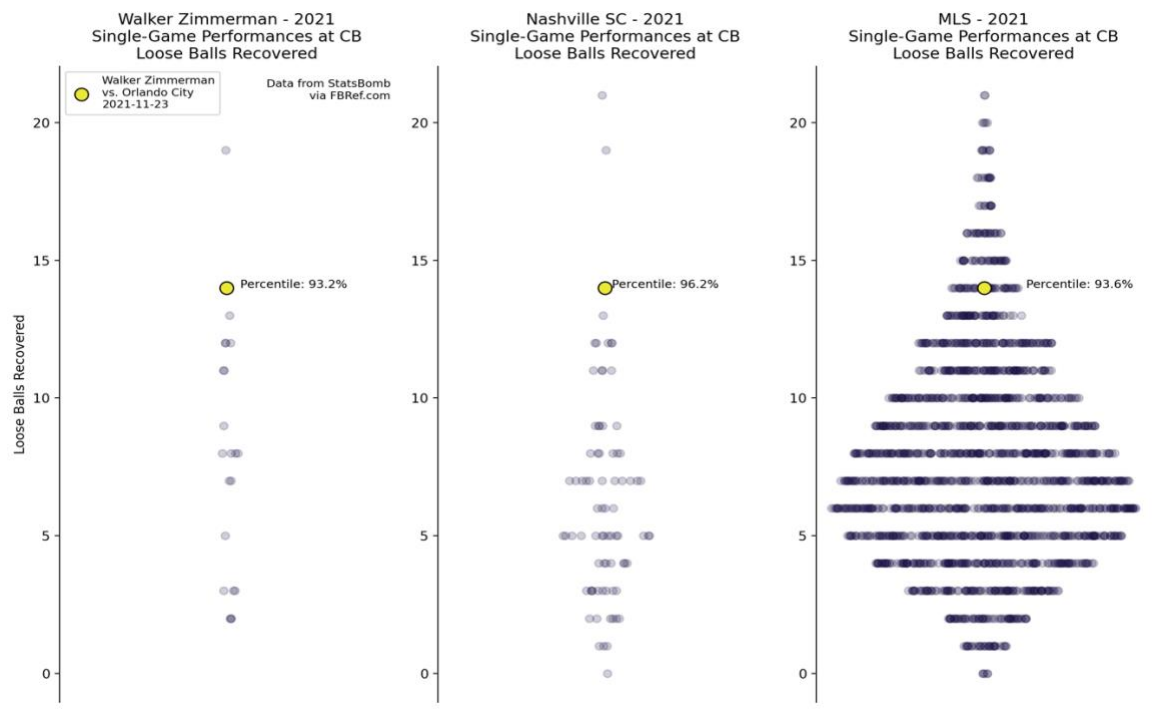*Passing Network via Major League Soccer*
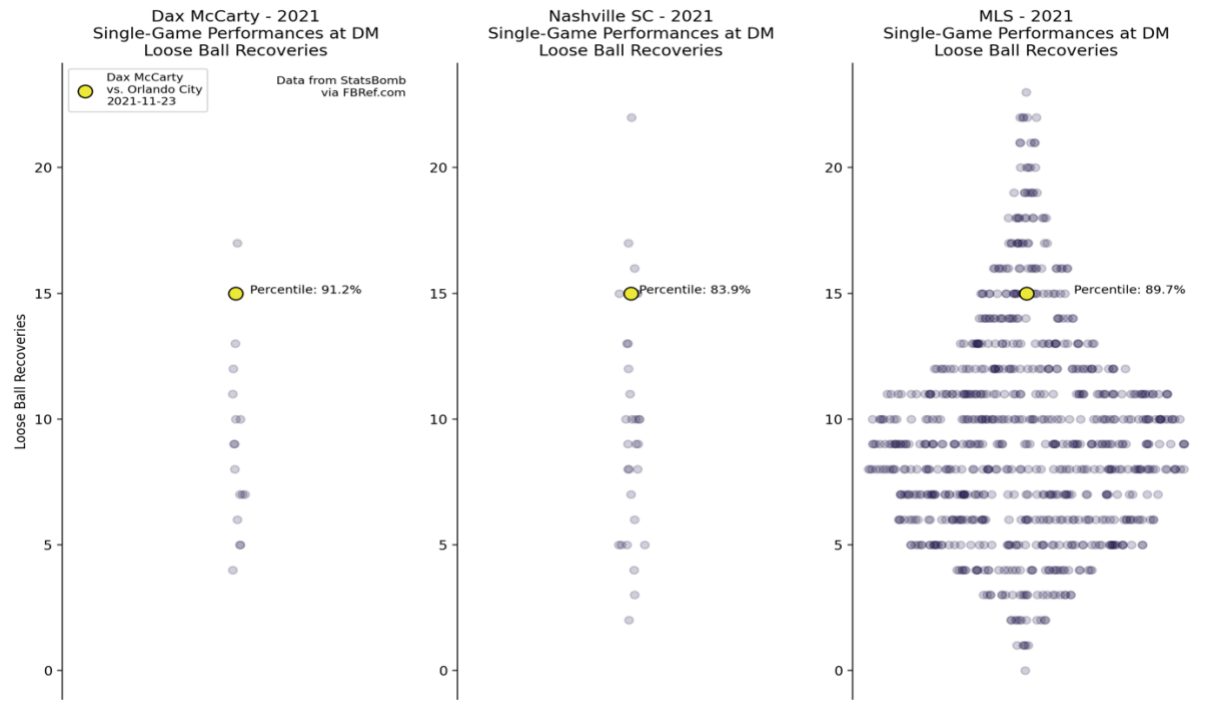
- Orlando was clearly trying to play through the middle. As such, we allowed Mauricio Pereyra to have one of his most active games of the season.

- In addition, and perhaps more concerningly, Orlando did a phenomenal job getting touches in our penalty box. It was their second most of their season, and one of the most prolific games for that metric in the MLS this season.
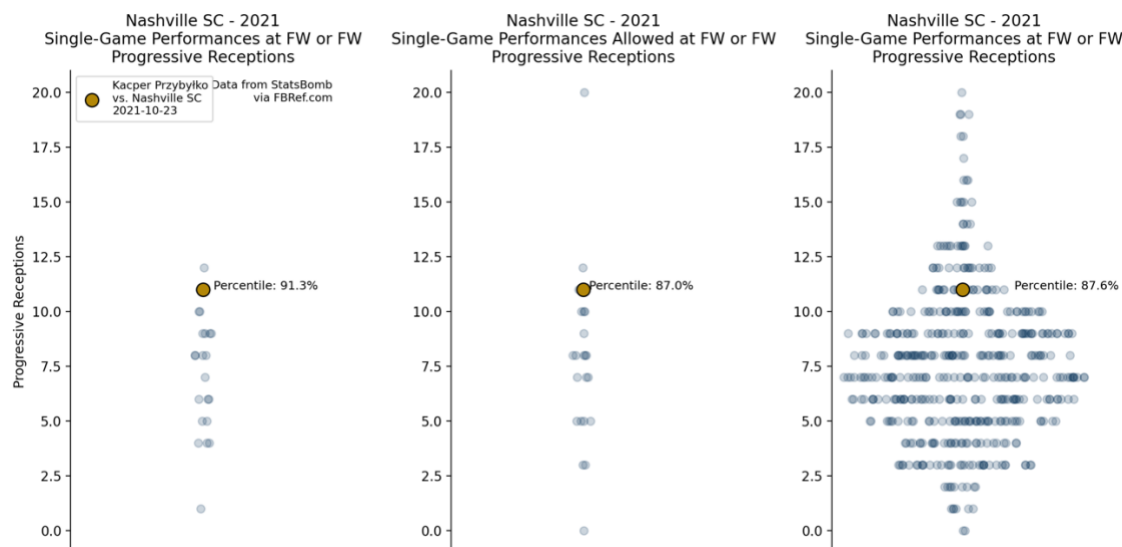
- In response, Walker and Dax did an incredible job putting out fires and cleaning up messes for us when Orlando was threatening. In terms of loose balls recovered, both had their second best games all season, and among the best in MLS all year.
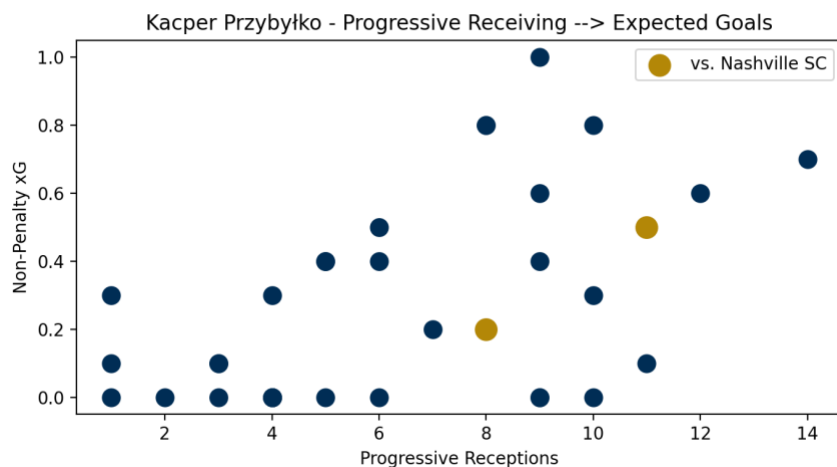
- "Bend don't break" while 3-1 up
  - In the 82nd minute, Jalil Anibaba came in for Eric Miller, and Alistair Johnston moved out to the wing back position. This was clearly a defensive move, and it is clear through xG and g+ that we did bend, but did not break defensively.
    - Our goals added (g+) after the substitution and before the Cádiz goal was around -0.5 (which is not fantastic for an 8 minute period).
      - Goals added is a metric similar to xG, but takes into account non-shot actions, like dribbles into dangerous areas and successful receptions around the box.
    - Our xG difference, however, was just -0.25.
    - This difference between metrics illustrates our good bend-don't-break performance here, as we let Orlando attack more than usual, but still did not let them get off good shots at goal.
  - Goals added (g+) numbers are from American Soccer Analysis, and xG numbers are from MLS.

Nashville SC @ Philadelphia Union – Opposition Report

- Just like this last game against Orlando, Philadelphia have an effective target receiver in Przybyłko. A big body up front, Przybyłko has caused trouble in the penalty box for us before.
- In our game against the Union in October, Przybyłko racked up 11 progressive receptions.
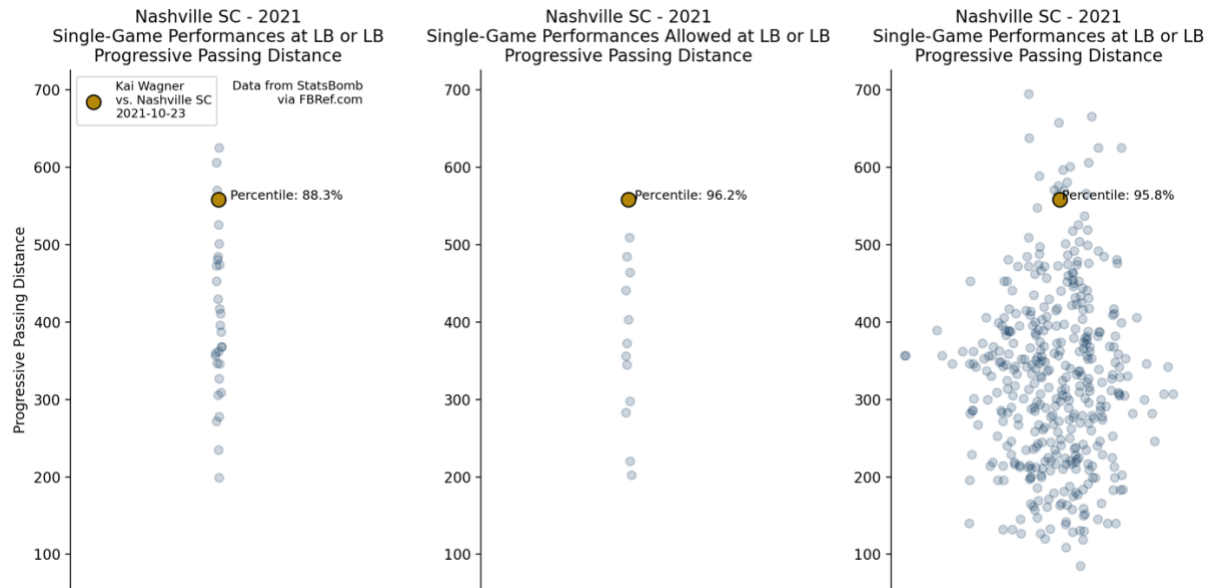- This was the third highest we've allowed by a striker, and his second highest all season.

- Obviously, this is problematic, as a ball received in the box is a dangerous one.
- It is especially dangerous at the feet of Przybyłko, however. As his progressive receptions rise, his expected goals tend to rise as well. Thus is the trend of a clinical striker.

- It's likely we'll need another disruptive game from Walker and Dax like we saw vs. Orlando.
- A majority of Philadelphia's xG against us in October came in the final few minutes (like last week against Orlando), so we'll need to ensure that our defensive tenacity does not wain down the stretch.

- Philadelphia tends to find a lot of success on the left side against us. In the game in October, Kai Wagner had one of the best passing games against us.

- He was above the 95th percentile among left backs that have played us in relevant forward and progressive passing statistics.
- We'll have to make an effort to break down the passing lanes between him and Leon Flach and Jamiro Monteiro – both popular targets for him on the left side.
- (If I could find publicly available event data, I would show the passing chains originating from Wagner, and how the xT increases).

Philadelphia Union Set Piece Report

- Oliver Mbaizo (RB) is able to take long throw ins, able to reach into the penalty box when throwing from the attacking third.
    - Long throw-ins into the penalty box have been found to be more dangerous than a short throw in, with the expected goal difference (xGD) from the next 10 passes doubling (0.009→0.017). (source)
    - Philadelphia's second goal of the season was scored this way: Long throw in into the box, 2 passes, and a goal taken from right outside the 6-yard box.
- Jakob Glesnes has the highest Goals-xG sum of any center back in the league (2.7), largely due to his ability to make a late run to the top of the box after a set piece and score from distance.
    - The G-xG metric being large and positive indicates that he is scoring more than expected, either through luck or finishing skill. Glesnes seems to have some above-average skill at scoring from range.
    - We've got to make sure he doesn't get a clean look at any balls that bounce to the top of the box after a set piece.
- Przyzbyłko tends to make last-minute runs to around the penalty spot, where he's usually free.
    - With tracking data, I'd be able to find where the timing lines up with the corner kick taker (usually Kai Wagner)
    - Cory Burke does this as well.
- With event data, I'd be able to figure out who is most likely to get their head on a corner based on the corner kick taker. I haven't been able to find that sort of passer/receiver data available publicly for MLS games, though.

G-xG Among Center Backs
Jakob Glesnes
Data from StatsBomb via FBRef.com