PREMIER LEAGUE 18/19

THE NECK & NECK RACE

DOWN MEMORY LANE

- Looking back at the previous season, we saw one of the closest races in the last 5 years.

- Manchester City after running away with it in the last two seasons, had a fierce competitor in Liverpool in the 2018/2019 season. The race went down to the wire on the last match day and Manchester City won by a mere point.

- We will look at the underlying factors of how Manchester City was able to pull ahead of Liverpool in order to win the league.

League Table

Squad (League ..	Position	Total Points	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals For	Goals Agai..
Manchester City	1	98	38	32	2	4	95	23
Liverpool	2	97	38	30	7	1	89	22
Chelsea	3	72	38	21	9	8	63	39
Tottenham	4	71	38	23	2	13	67	39
Arsenal	5	70	38	21	7	10	73	51
Manchester Utd	6	66	38	19	9	10	65	54
Wolves	7	57	38	16	9	13	47	46
Everton	8	54	38	15	9	14	54	46
Leicester City	9	52	38	15	7	16	51	48
West Ham	10	52	38	15	7	16	52	55
Watford	11	50	38	14	8	16	52	59
Crystal Palace	12	49	38	14	7	17	51	53
Newcastle Utd	13	45	38	12	9	17	42	48
Bournemouth	14	45	38	13	6	19	56	70
Burnley	15	40	38	11	7	20	45	68
Southampton	16	39	38	9	12	17	45	65
Brighton	17	36	38	9	9	20	35	60
Cardiff City	18	34	38	10	4	24	34	69
Fulham	19	26	38	7	5	26	34	81
Huddersfield	20	16	38	3	7	28	22	76

- 🟥 Relegated
- ⬛ Retaining
- 🟦 UEFA Champions League (Group Stage) Via League Finish
- 🟧 UEFA Europa League (Group Stage) Via League Finish
- 🟧 UEFA Europa League (Second Qualifying Round) Via League Finish

SLICING UP THE PITCH

- The pitch will be dissected into thirds and the performance of each squad will be analyzed respective to the positional players present.

- The fortitude, strength and resilience of the defense.

- The efficiency, control and creativity of the midfield.

- The effectiveness and ruthlessness of the attack.

Defensive Third   Middle Third   Attacking Third
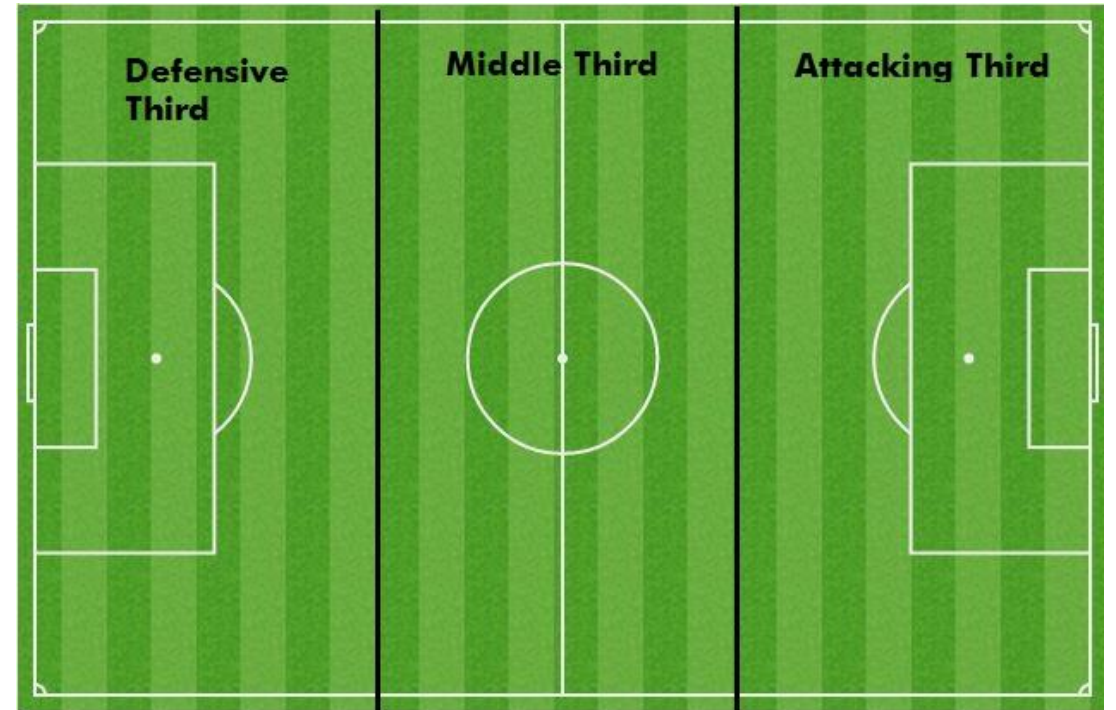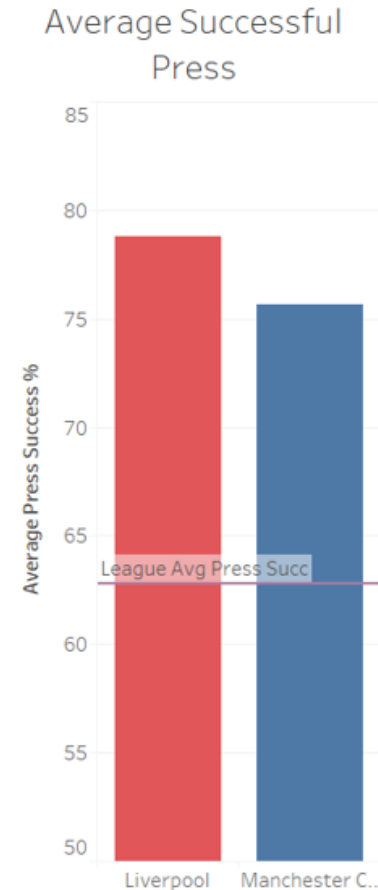
DEFENSE – SHOT BLOCKED

- Both teams were below the league average in blocking shots.

- An interesting discovery considering the number of goals conceded by each team were amongst the lowest in the league if not the lowest.

- In order to understand the performance of these two teams, a deeper analysis using more complex defense metrics must be performed.


Shots Blocked
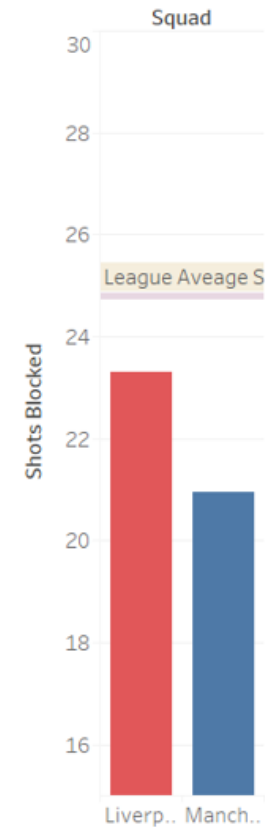
DEFENSE — PRESSING

- Successful Press (regaining possession within 5 seconds)

- The ability to successful pressure the opposing team is key to a team's defensive strategy

- Effective pressing limits options, disrupts rhythm and hinders creativity for play build up.

- It is clear these two teams performed above the league average and more successfully with regards to their pressing. This surely helped kept their opponents from penetrating their third of pitch and scoring against them.

Average Successful Press

Average Successful Press %

Liverpool
Manchester City
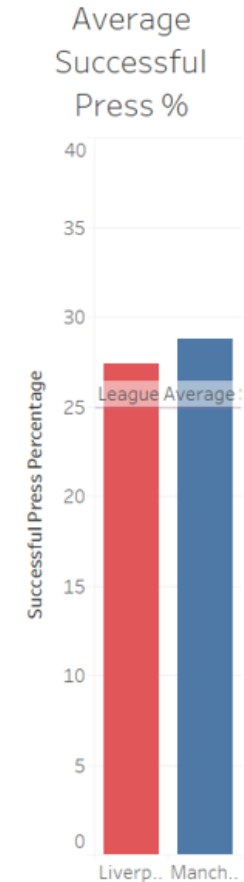
DEFENSE – TACKLING

- Both teams were efficient and effective in their tackling.

- Possible cause of less shots blocked (below average for both teams).

- Both teams have a strong defensive scheme which limited their opponents' time on the ball, creation (crosses, through balls, etc.) and opportunities to score.

- Combining with an effective pressing and group tackling is a great foundation for a strong defense.

Average Tackle Percent %

Liverpool
Manchester City
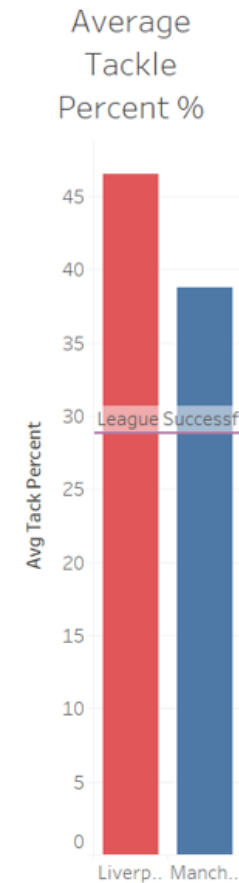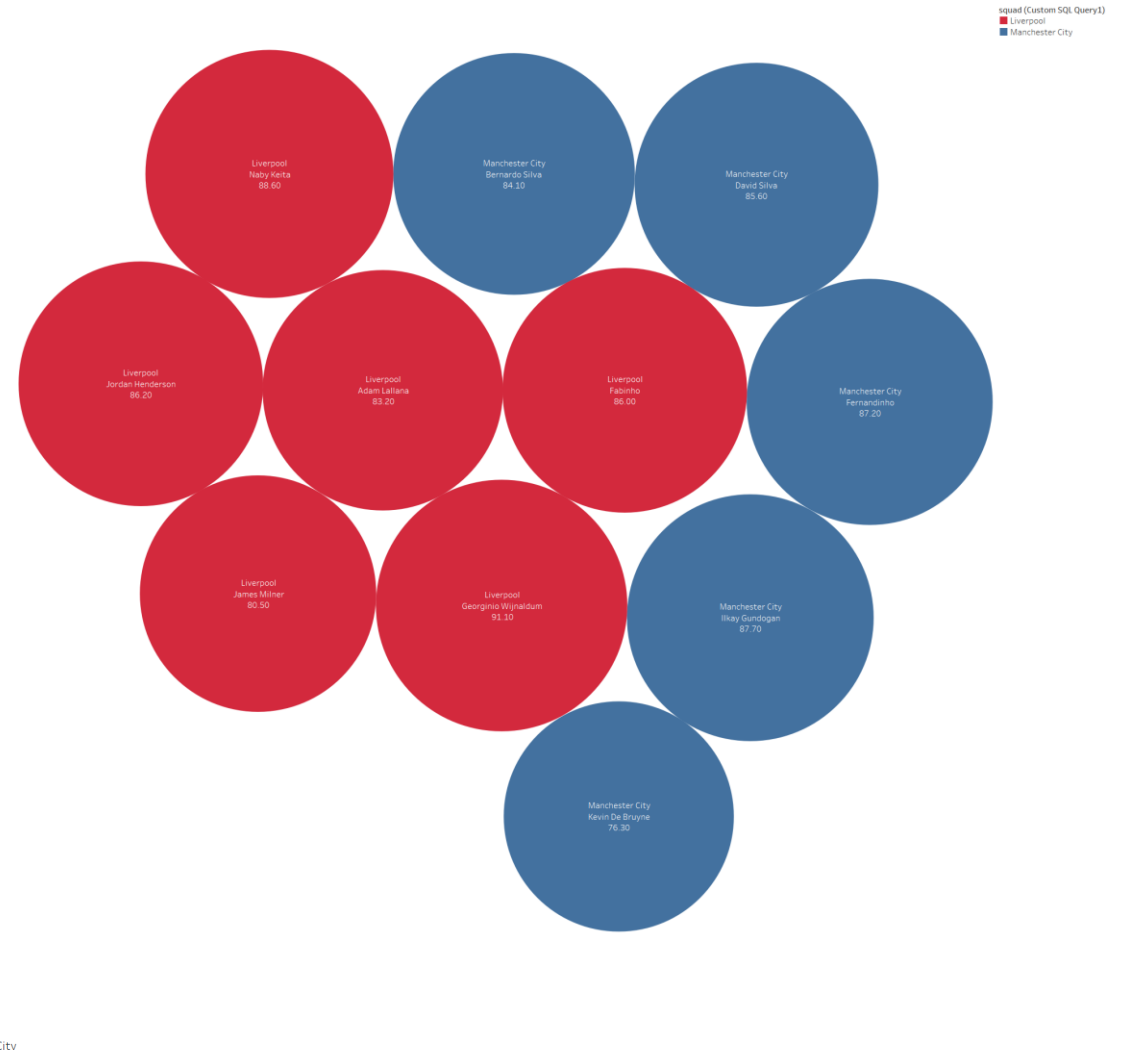
MIDFIELD – FITNESS & FORM

- Diving into the engine of the team, the midfield, it is important not to overwork it.

- Minutes should be spread throughout the midfield players the squad counts on, day in day out. Relying on individual(s) too much can burn them out resulting in them performing poorly.

- Though both Liverpool and Manchester City's spread of minutes is ideal, the minutes played per match is higher for Manchester City allowing

Player Fitness & Potential Form
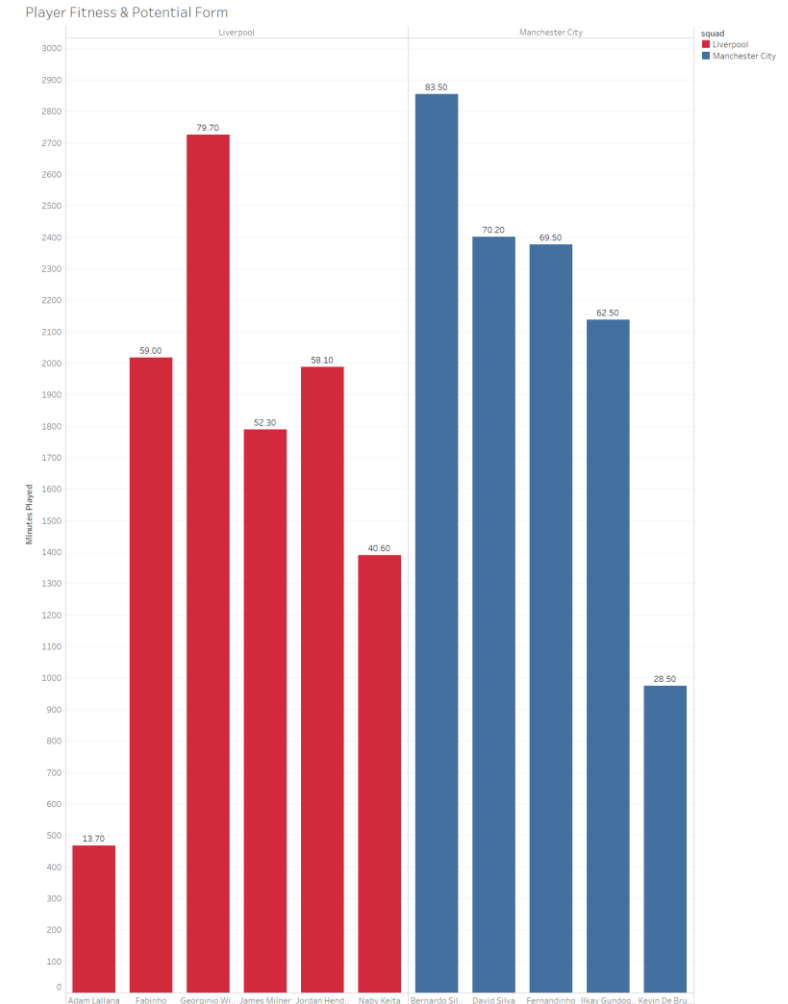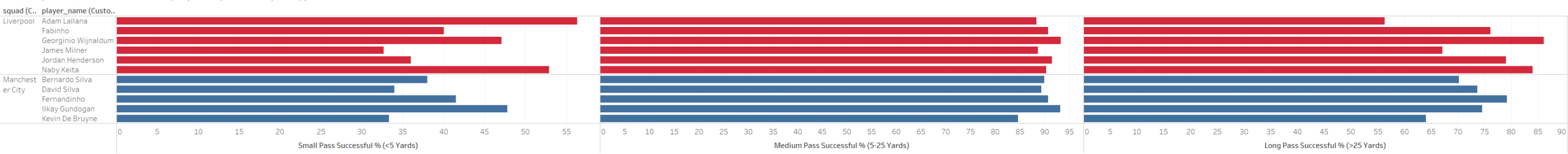
MIDFIELD — PASSING

- Passing is an important aspect of the game, especially in the midfield.

- Passing leads to more possession, more control, and down the line, opportunities to create chances; whether it is for shots or goals.

- Looking at the overall passing completion rate, it can be observed that both groups of midfielders have been accurate with their overall passing.

Passing Completion Percentage

squad (Custom SQL Query1)
- Liverpool
- Manchester City

Liverpool
Naby Keita
88.60

Manchester City
Bernardo Silva
84.10

Manchester City
David Silva
85.60

Liverpool
Jordan Henderson
86.20

Liverpool
Adam Lallana
83.20

Liverpool
Fabinho
86.00

Manchester City
Fernandinho
87.20

Liverpool
James Milner
80.50

Liverpool
Georginio Wijnaldum
91.10

Manchester City
Ilkay Gundogan
87.70

Manchester City
Kevin De Bruyne
76.30

- Liverpool
- Manchester City

MIDFIELD — PASSING

Passing Completion Percentage (Small/Medium/Long)

Diving deeper into passing stats, it can be observed that each team held their composure and had a strong presence in the midfield due to their strong passing

MIDFIELD – CREATIVITY

- Creativity is vital in order to break down the opposition.

- Playing the ball progressively needs to be down consistently, especially into the opposition penalty area. Key Passes (passes that lead to shots) are a must if the forwards are to score

- Both teams were active in bringing play into the final third and the opposition penalty area

- Only Manchester City midfielders were effective in being creative and providing important opportunities, evident in high Key Passes and Expected Goals Assisted (xA) per match numbers.

Creativity

		Passes into Final Third %	Passes into Opposing Penalty Area %	Key Passes Per Match	xA Per Match
Liverpool	James Milner	8.86%	28.67%	1.452	0.158
	Adam Lallana	4.28%	69.23%	0.692	0.038
	Georginio Wijnaldum	10.74%	9.42%	0.600	0.034
	Fabinho	9.38%	16.34%	0.571	0.046
	Jordan Henderson	10.73%	13.99%	0.438	0.047
	Naby Keita	9.38%	34.74%	0.400	0.044
Manchester City	David Silva	6.53%	61.76%	2.212	0.273
	Bernardo Silva	5.34%	59.38%	1.944	0.206
	Kevin De Bruyne	8.06%	66.67%	1.737	0.184
	Ilkay Gundogan	8.83%	27.57%	1.387	0.132
	Fernandinho	12.81%	18.11%	0.828	0.100

Passes into Final Third %, Passes into Opposing Penalty Area %, Key Passes Per Match and xA Per Match broken down by squad (Custom SQL Query4) and player_name (Custom SQL Query4).

Liverpool
Manchester City

Progressive Play
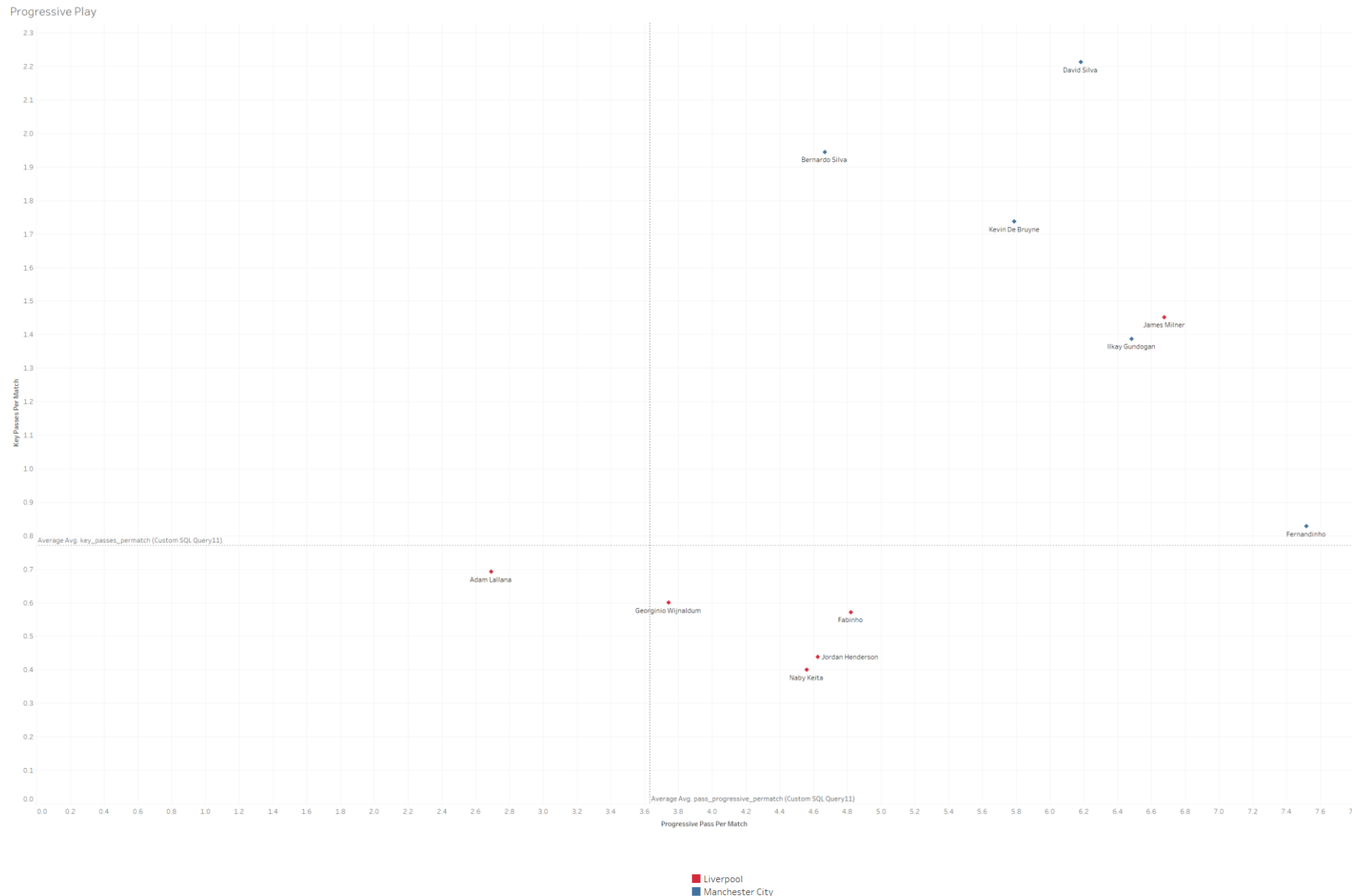
The higher the position of the plot point, the better the midfielder is to progress the play forward and penetrate the opposition with important chances.

All Manchester City players performed at much higher level, well above the league averages for players while Liverpool were below average.

The Liverpool forwards were not getting the same level of service as Manchester City forwards which may have led to lesser goals scored.

MIDFIELD — OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities Per Match

squad (Custom SQL Query5)
■ Liverpool
■ Manchester City
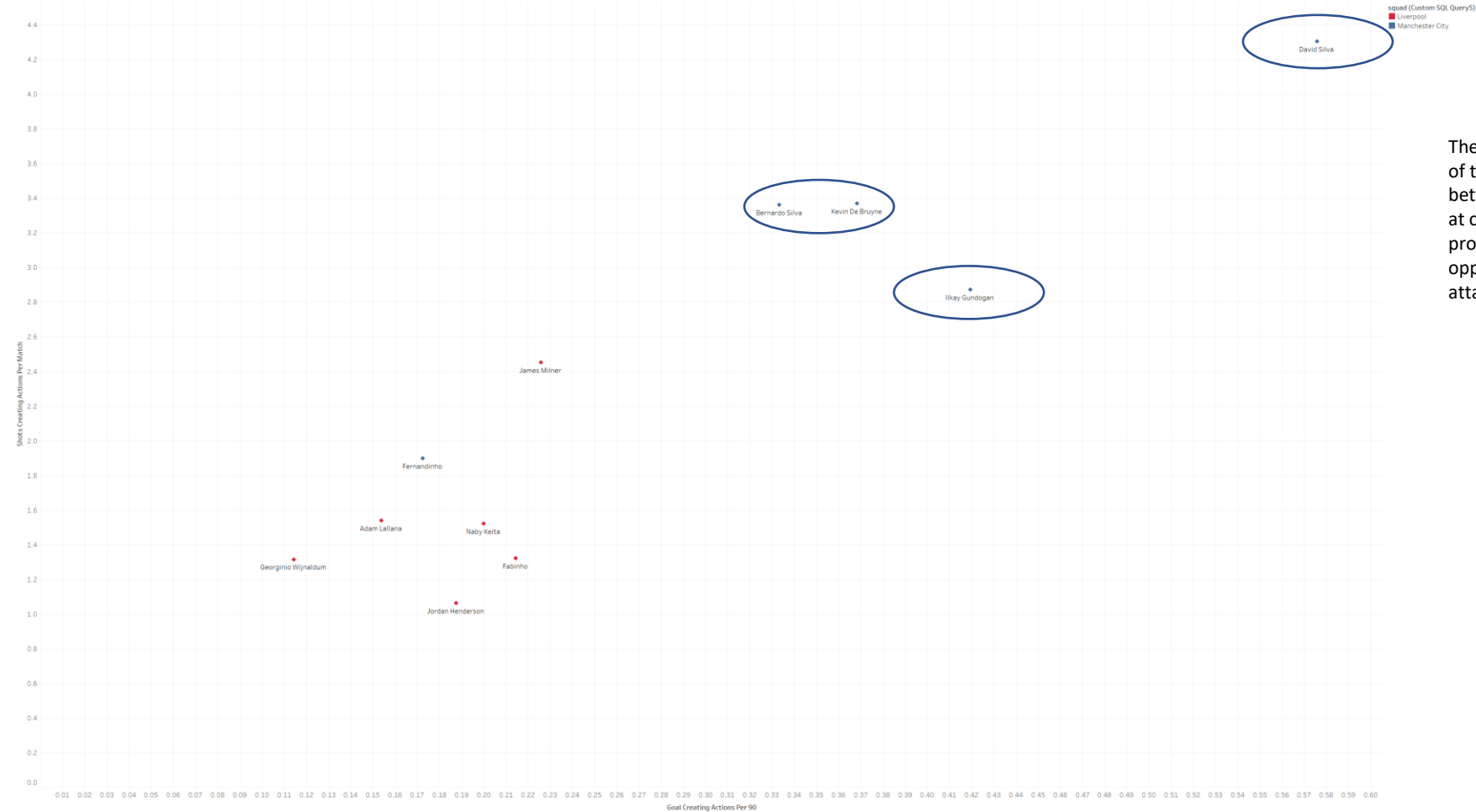
The higher the position of the plot point, the better the midfielder is at creating chances and providing goal scoring opportunities for his attacking teammates.
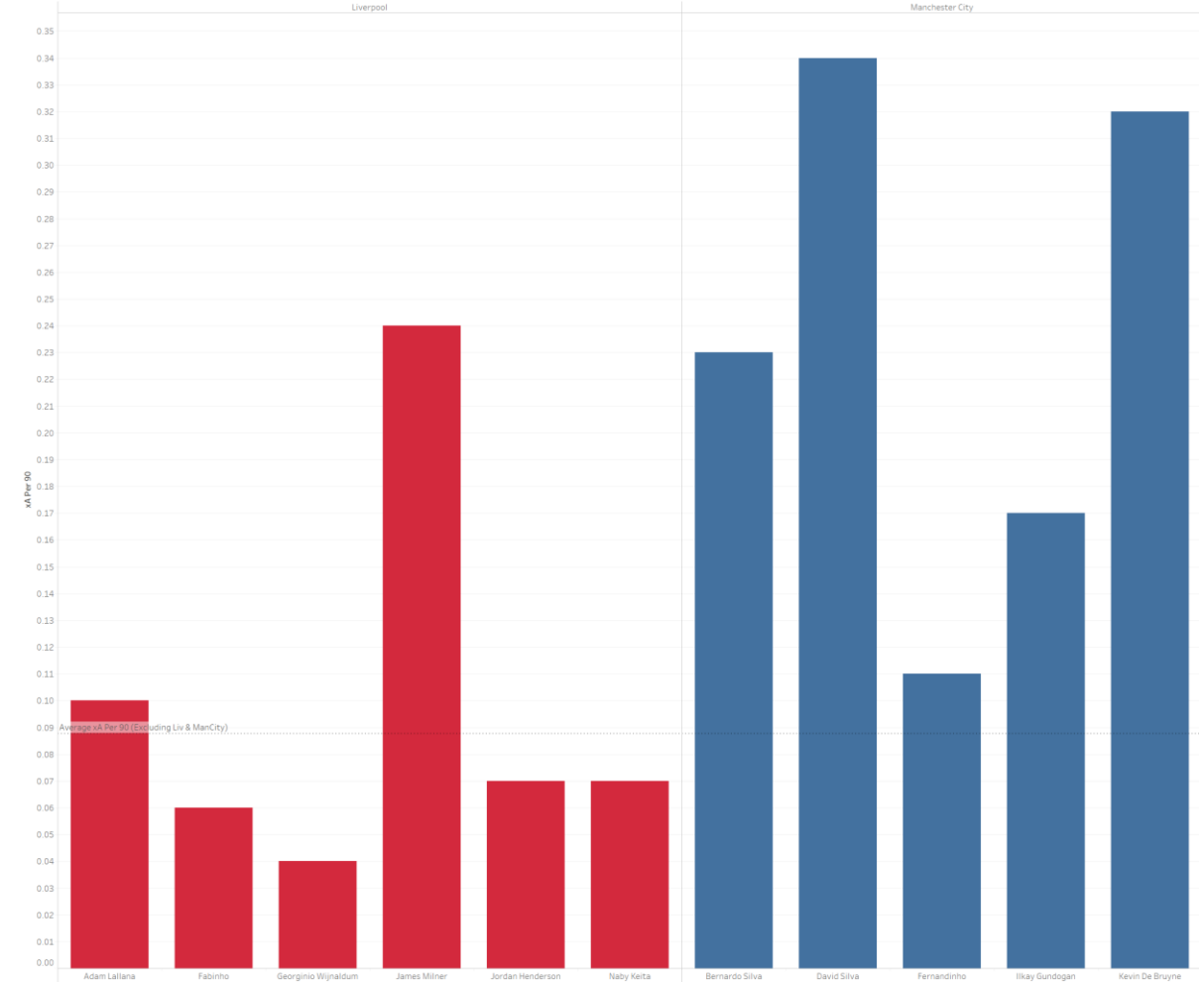
Sum of goal_creat_act_permatch vs. sum of shot_creat_act_permatch. Color shows details about squad (Custom SQL Query5). The marks are labeled by player_name (Custom SQL Query5). Details are shown for player_name (Custom SQL Query5).

■ Liverpool
■ Manchester City

MIDFIELD — CONTRIBUTIONS (ASSISTS)
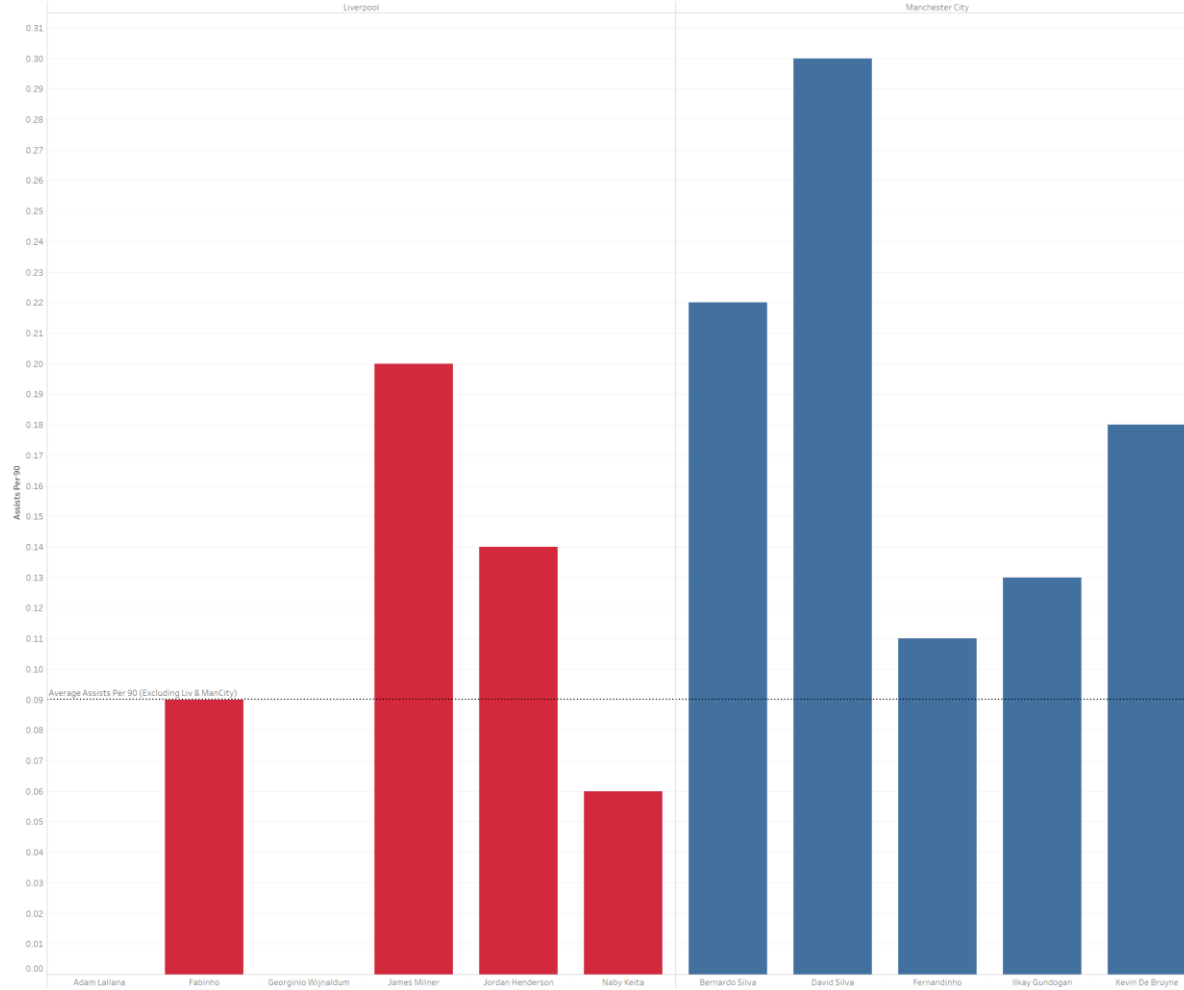
# MIDFIELD — CONTRIBUTIONS (GOALS)
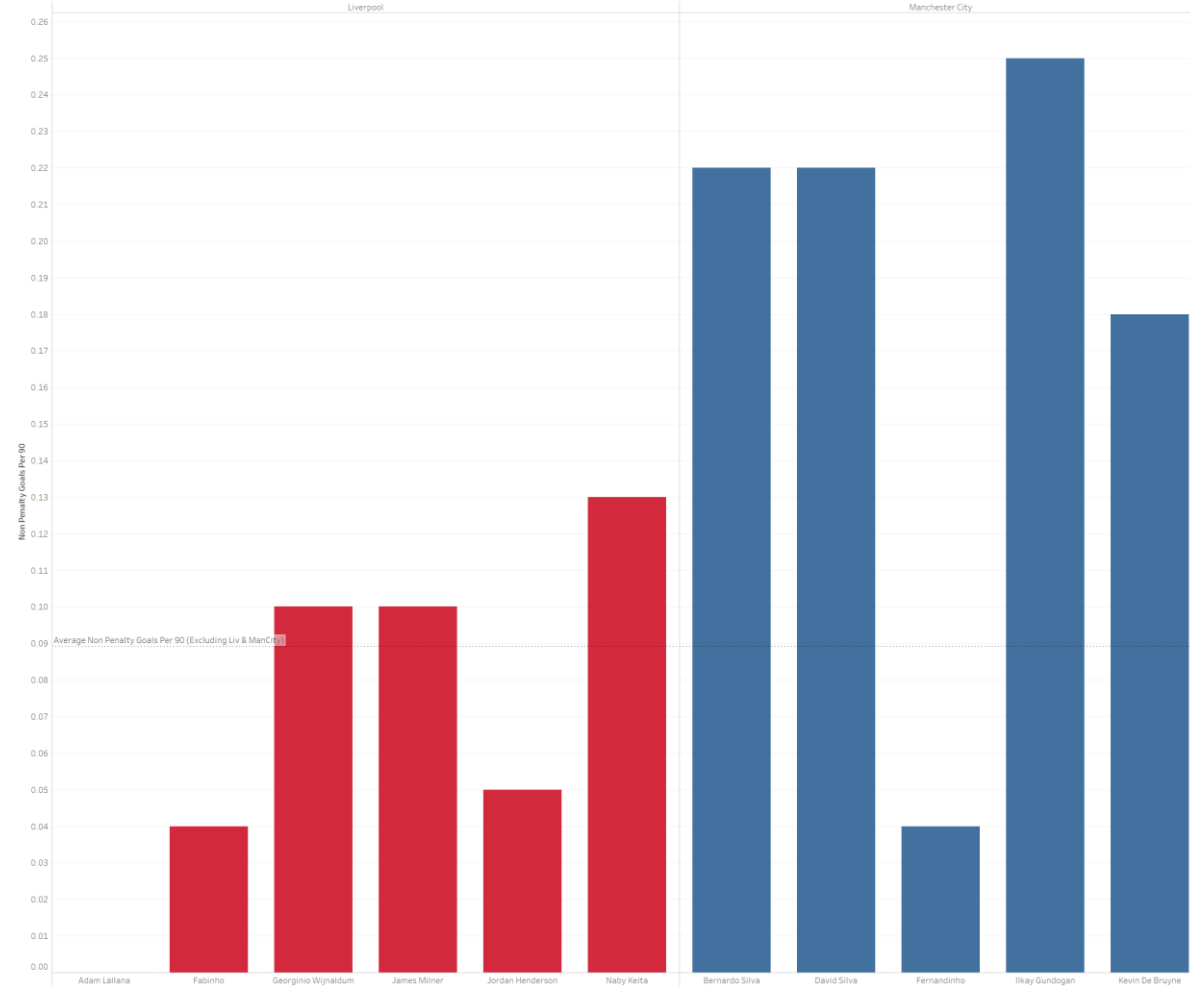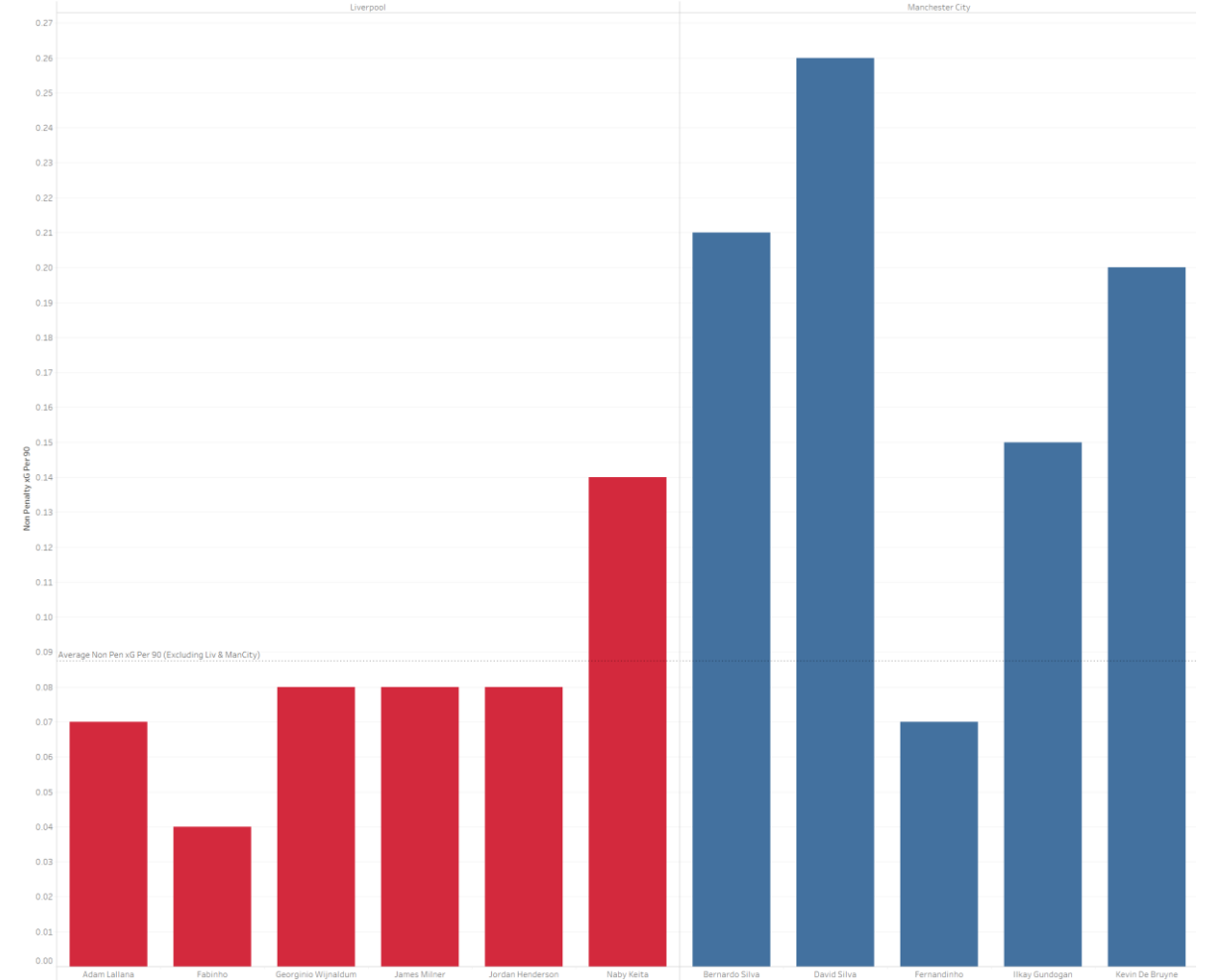
MIDFIELD — CONTRIBUTIONS

- Due to their higher quality of chance creation and ball progression, Manchester City Midfielders created more chances for goals as seen by the higher xA/90 numbers.

- As a result of larger amount of chances created, they also provided more assists to their forwards.

- Furthermore, whenever the forwards could not rise to the occasion, the midfielders would step in to provide goals as well.

- Liverpool struggled in this regard which can been evident in their below par numbers when compared to Manchester City. In some cases, their numbers look even worse when compared to the rest of the league, either on or below the averages.

- Manchester City's Midfield performed admirably, playing their role in creating and controlling while stepping up when the occasion demanded it.
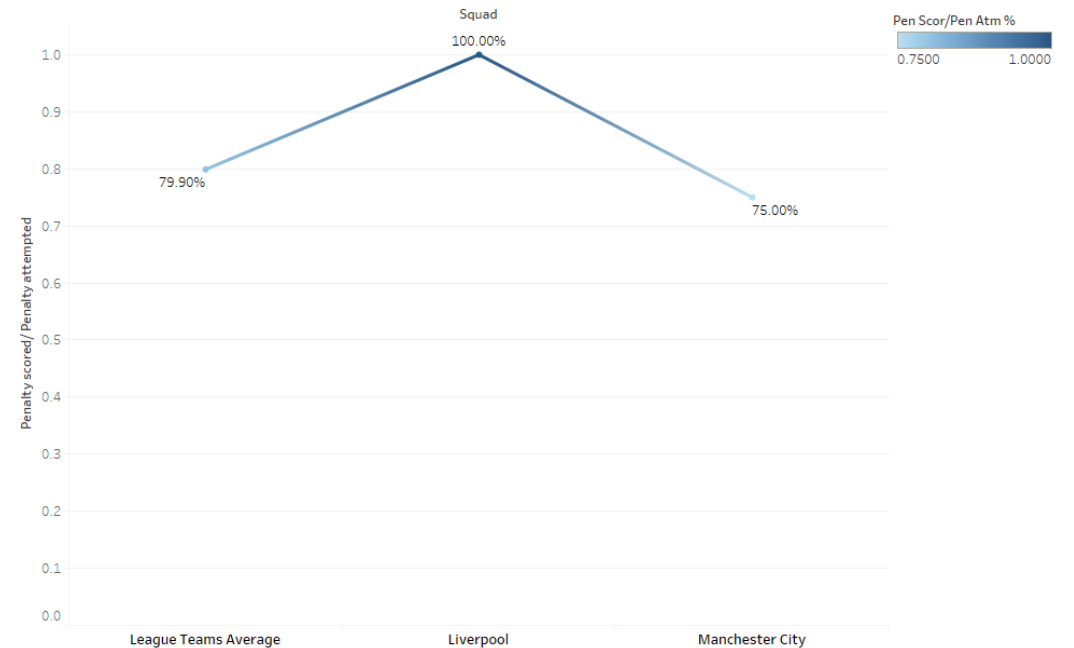
Liverpool
Manchester City

ATTACK — SHOTS ON TARGET

- The statistics show that Manchester City and Liverpool were the superior teams by a wide margin.

- Shots on Target (SOT) meaning the number of shots taken landing on target (the goal) excluding goalpost or crossbar contacts

- Liverpool performed better than Manchester City as in this case regardless of whether these shots were converted or not.
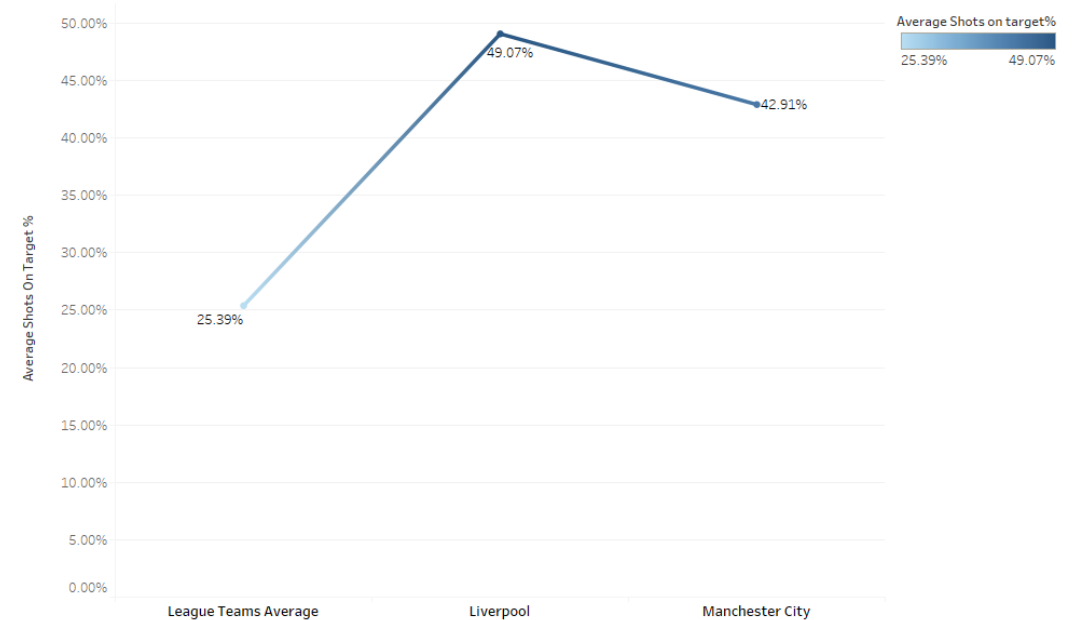
- Analyzing the total number of penalty kicks awarded to both teams, it can be seen that Liverpool had a better penalty conversion rate (4 of 4) while Manchester City did not (3 of 4)

- Was Liverpool the better team?

- Certainly not, as Manchester City scored a total of 95 goals at the end of the season which was 6 more than that of Liverpool.

ATTACK — EFFECTIVE ATTACK

- We can conclude that even though Liverpool had a better Shots on Target Percentage, they were not able to convert their shots into goals.

- In contrast to Liverpool's performance, Manchester City was able to convert most of the Shots on Target into goals which was one of the deciding factors in Manchester city outperforming Liverpool and outclassing the rest of the league.