| | **Did Tottenham Hotspur F.C.**  **Under-Perform?** | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| | There is no doubt that the Premier League is a competition of the *Haves* and *Have Nots*. This is most evident in the value and wages of each team in the competition. The general perception that the Premier League can be predicted based on the value of each squad is largely accurate, and any basic statistical analysis supports this. However, what’s often overlooked is how each team *uses* its financial resources and how that relates to success, specifically how they choose to buy or retain talent.  Another significant area of disparity between teams is their level of **Cohesion** (defined as the level of objective understanding within a team, measured by Cohesion Analytics Key Cohesion Markers). Cohesion is a critical driver of a team’s and individual players’ ability to perform at their best. Even elite players can struggle in a low cohesion environment which intern impacts the organisations ROI.  The 2024/25 Premier League season offered a clear example of how differences in Cohesion influence outcomes. By the end of the season, the team with the highest Cohesion won the league, while the team with the weakest Cohesion was relegated. While Liverpool were expected to be among the top contenders, their superior Cohesion Markers allowed them to dominate. Conversely, Southampton, recently promoted and already in survival mode, faced an uphill battle. With some of the weakest Cohesion Markers in the league, they struggled to be competitive.  **The chart below highlights two critical Cohesion Markers for every game in the 2024/25 Premier League season. Each dot represents a team’s Cohesion Strength (measured by Team Total In-Season Cohesion) and Cohesion Weakness (measured by Team Working Gaps). While a strong team will have fewer weaknesses they can still have weaknesses depending on selection, and with more weaknesses present the harder it becomes to execute effectively, *“only as strong as its weakest link.” comes to mind.* The Team Working Gaps Marker helps identify those weak links and is an important component when evaluating the effectiveness of a team. High performing teams (e.g. Liverpool FC) tend to cluster in the bottom right quadrant of the chart with high strength/low weakness.** | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| |  | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| | The contrast between Liverpool FC’s and Southampton FC’s Cohesion Markers was stark. Liverpool’s lowest Markers, even during "rest" games, were still higher than Southampton’s best across the entire season. Liverpool consistently performed above the Premier League average, while Southampton spent most of their season well below it. This meant Southampton entered most matches with significantly lower competitive Cohesion leading to 30 loses from 38 games. | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| |  | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| | **But what about Spurs?** | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| | **Ange Postecoglou** faced a major challenge in building Cohesion within Tottenham Hotspur throughout the 2024/25 season. Compared to the rest of the league, Spurs ranked in the bottom half for overall Cohesion, so their overall position is not surprising. Spurs managed only *one* game with stronger Markers than their strongest game in 2023/24, highlighting their inability to consistently build on the previous year. But why did this happen?  One key factor was high game-by-game turnover in the starting XI due to injury, which prevented the team from developing competitive Cohesion throughout the season. Spurs used significantly more first team players than most clubs, with more frequent changes per game. As a result, the team lacked the ability to generate the shared understanding needed to execute effectively. This issue was compounded by the club being in a developmental phase under a second year manager. Postecoglou continued reshaping the squad to reflect his vision, which reduced long-term tenure and Cohesion depth. The high injury rate also meant that Spurs actual “value” wasn’t on the pitch often, impacting their ability to perform at full capacity.  **The chart below shows Tottenham Hotspurs 2024/25 Premier League games (light blue dots) compared to the Premier League average (purple star) and their strongest Europa League Final Marker (dark blue dot).** | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| |  | | --- | |
| --- | --- |

| | As their Europa League win demonstrated (bottom right dark blue dot), Spurs had the capacity to perform when their strongest competitive Cohesion was available. The team’s Cohesion Markers during the Europa League Finals were the highest they achieved all season and even surpassed any Markers from 2023/24. With the Europa League Final in sight, it appears the latter part of the Premier League season was strategically managed to prioritise success in Europe. With limited Cohesion depth in the squad, Spurs fielded some very low Cohesion Premier League lineups during that period, with predictably poor outcomes. Winning the Europa League came at a cost.  The team Ange Postecoglou was building at Spurs was beginning to reach competitive levels of Cohesion, and their Europa League success was proof of that. Unfortunately, the high churn made it difficult to consistently deploy those Markers during the Premier League season. Had Spurs been able to achieve Europa League level Cohesion domestically, their league performance would have been much stronger. Just how much stronger is unknown, but their capacity to execute would certainly have improved.  All signs suggest that Ange Postecoglou was actively developing his team, as evidenced by stronger Cohesion Markers created in 2024/25 highlighted by the Europa League finals. Expectations were high that this development would continue into 2025/26, particularly with the strong foundation laid in Europe. However, as is often the case in the Premier League, results are paramount, and time is rarely on a Manager’s side.  Spurs overall performance in the 2024/25 Premier League can be attributed more towards their limited ability to create competitive Cohesion within the team than the Managers ability to coach the team. The team didn't under-perform, they were just not at the level the organisation needed without understanding the "why". Without competitive levels of Cohesion they were always going to struggle irrespective of who the Manager was.  **The challenge for Tottenham Hotspur now is this: With the appointment of a new Manager, will they start from scratch as the new Manager reworks the squad in their own image or build on the foundations created by Ange?** | | --- | |
| --- | --- |