Chelsea 25/26 Striker Analysis Report

Summary

This project identifies striker targets for Chelsea's 25/26 summer transfer window based on data analysis on football players shooting statistics across the big 5 European Leagues. The primary goal was to find young, efficient finishers fitting Chelsea's u25 recruitment policy and Enzo's Maresca's tactical system, which emphasizes high-quality close-range finishing and tactical discipline. Using a database scraped from fbref, the analysis focused on key metrics such as expected goals per shot (xG/shot), goal conversion rate (goals/shots) and average shot distance. A final shortlist of strikers was constructed through statistical filters and ranked through tactical fit.

Data Collection and Methodology

- Data Source: https://fbref.com/en/comps/Big5/shooting/players/Big-5-European-Leagues-Stats
- Tools: Python, Pandas, Matplotlib, MySQL, SQLalchemy
- Steps:
    1. Scraped Data from fbref on 4/25/2025
    2. Loaded Data into MySQL database
    3. Filtered players by numbers of shots (>20) to focus on forwards/strikers
    4. Selected Metrics xG per shot, Goal conversion, Average shot distance through MySQL
    5. Visualized data with Bar Charts with Pandas and Matplotlib
    6. Built a final shortlist based on tactical fit and age

Metric Importance and Definitions

- Expected Goals per shot (xG per shot)

  "xG" also known as expected goals measures the probability that a shot will result in a goal. It is the foundation of modern striker data analysis. Each goal is assigned a number between 0 and 1. 0 equals no chance of scoring and 1 represents a guaranteed goal. xG is calculated based on a vast database of historical shots. The closer the shot is to the goal the higher xG it is assigned, for example a penalty is around 0.75 to 0.80 meaning it is scored 75% to 80% of the time. xG per shot is the result of dividing the xG a striker generates by each shot he takes. A higher XG per shot indicates that the player is consistently getting into high value scoring positions. In simple terms it tells us how good their chances are when they shoot.

- Goal Conversion Rate

  Goal conversion rate measures a striker's efficiency in finishing. It is calculated by dividing the number of goals scored by the number of shots taken. A higher goal conversion rate indicates that a striker needs fewer attempts to score, showcasing clinical finishing ability. This metric is critical for identifying strikers who can maximize limited opportunities in high pressure matches.

- Average Shot Distance

  This measures the typical distance in yards from the goal at which a striker takes their shots. This metric will help us identify which strikers fit the desired "Fox in the box" profile Enzo Maresca's tactical system needs. Strikers who have a lower shot distance have the box presence close to goal that Chelsea currently lack.

Findings

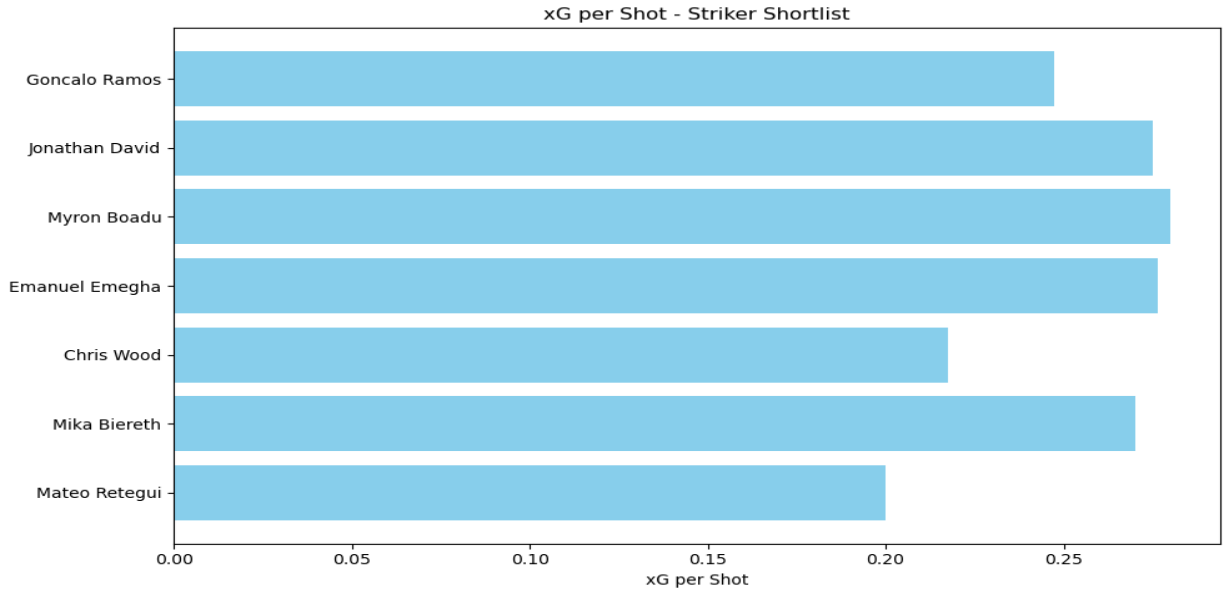

Figure 1: Expected Goals per Shot for shortlisted strikers.
Higher Values indicate players who consistently generate high quality scoring opportunities with each shot

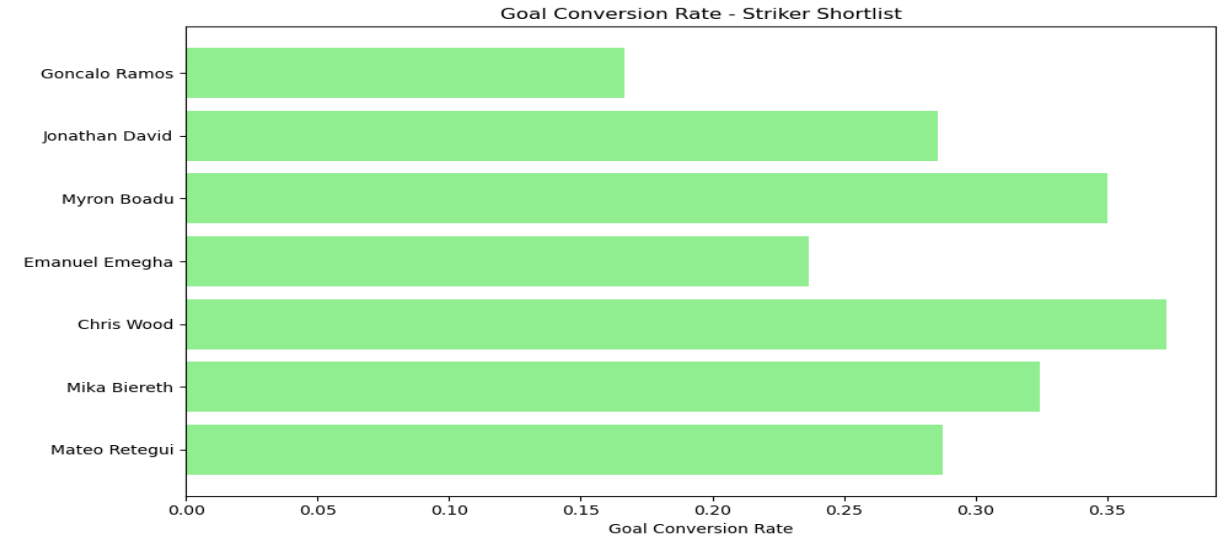

Figure 2: Goal Conversion Rate
Higher percentages show players who finish their chances efficiently, requiring fewer shots to score

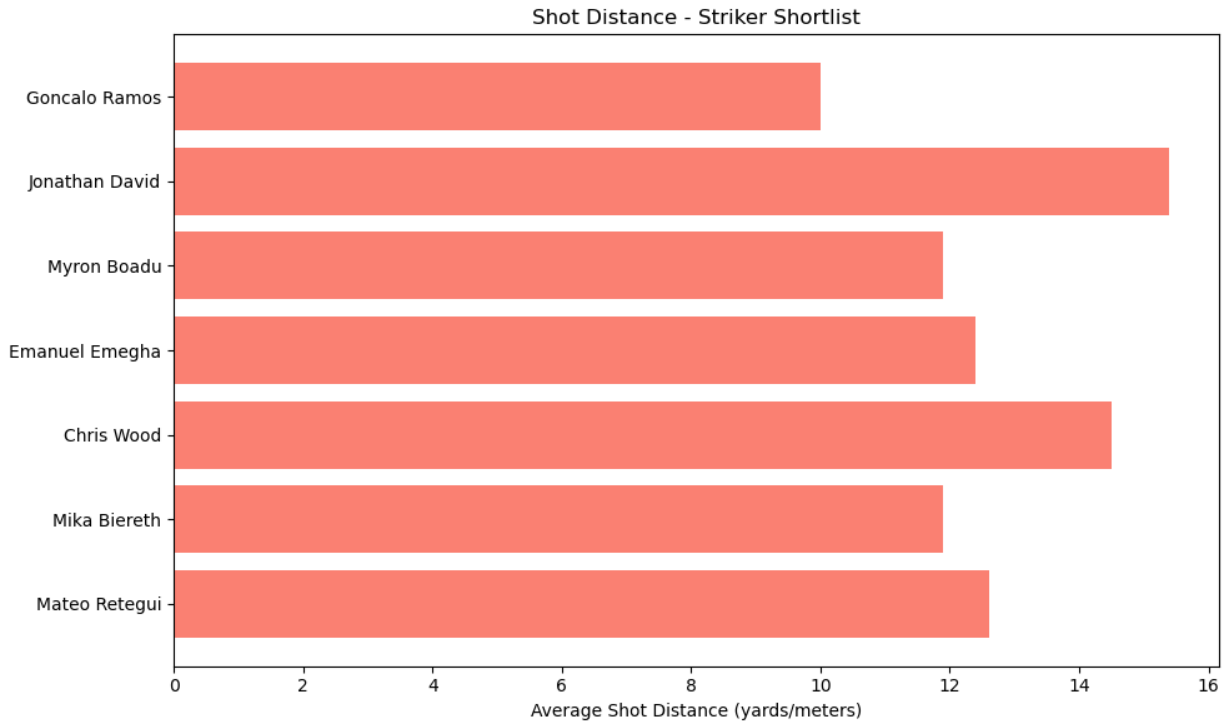

Figure 3: Average Shot Distance (yards)
Lower distances indicate strikers who take their shots closer to goal aligning with the desired "fox in the box" profile.

The following is a shortlist that identifies key candidates that fit into Chelsea's strategy for the upcoming 25/26 summer transfer window.

Player	Strengths
Gonçalo Ramos (PSG)	Shortest shot distance 10 yards- elite box Presence
Jonathan David (Lille)	Highest xG per shot 0.2804 – elite chance creation
Myron Boadu (VFL Bochum)	High xG per shot 0.28 and high goal conversion 0.35
Emmanuel Emegha (Strasbourg)	Very high xG per shot 0.2764 – indicates strong finishing positions
Mika Biereth (Monaco)	High Goal Conversion 0.333 – emerging Talent
Mateo Retegui (Atalanta)	Most Goals Scored Among Shortlist 23 - Poacher
Chris Wood (Nottingham Forest)	Highest Overall Goal Conversion 0.3725 – Clinical finisher

The Eye Test

While data analytics can point scouts in the right direction when identifying striker targets, making a final decision requires due diligence through film analysis. Purchasing a striker is an important and expensive investment for any club, and it is crucial to ensure that the data aligns with the player's actual on-field performance. Therefore, video analysis was conducted to validate the statistical findings and assess tactical fit within Enzo Maresca's system at Chelsea. Enzo Maresca utilizes a 4-3-3 or 3-2-5 formation based on positional play principles inspired by Pep Guardiola. In his system, the striker is expected to stay centrally positioned, link play efficiently, press aggressively after possession loss, finish chances with high efficiency, and minimize dropping deep into midfield areas. `

After conducting film analysis, the Eye Test largely validated the initial statistical findings, while also highlighting important tactical considerations. Gonçalo Ramos, Myron Boadu, Emanuel Emegha and Mika Biereth demonstrated strong tactical fits, with varying levels of readiness for Chelsea's first team.

Ramos showed the strongest immediate fit, combining box presence, finishing quality, and pressing energy. Boadu and Biereth both offer potential as cost effective squad depth options, though Biereth's success in transition heavy systems raises adaptation questions in Chelsea's possession-based system. Emanuel Emegha stood out as the top recommendation – offering elite physical presence, strong xG generation, and a smooth transition path for a potential summer transfer through Chelsea's ownership structure with Strasbourg.

Players such as Chris Wood, Jonathan David, and Mateo Retegui, while statistically strong in some areas, presented tactical and developmental concerns that make them less ideal fits for Enzo Maresca's system.

Players from shortlist that didn't make final recommendation	Reasoning
Chris Wood (Nottingham Forest)	Age 33 does not match u25 recruitment policy of Chelsea's transfer strategy
Jonathan David (Lille)	Weak penalty box presence and does not press often. Does not match profile Chelsea needs at striker
Mateo Retegui (Atalanta)	Has only found success in two striker setups. Enzo Maresca utilizes 2 wingers and a lone striker.

Final Recommendation

Based on combined data analysis and film study. It is recommended that Chelsea prioritize signing Emanuel Emegha as the primary striker reinforcement for the 2025/26 season. His physical profile, tactical fit, development potential, and smooth transfer feasibility through Strasbourg make him a long-term investment.

Gonçalo Ramos is also highly recommended as a competitive backup option, capable of providing immediate impact and tactical flexibility. Myron Boadu and Mika Biereth could be considered as lower cost depth options, though strategic caution should be advised due to risk of a player not adapting to the premier league.

Overall, Chelsea should seek to complement Nicolas Jackson with a striker who thrives inside the penalty box, presses aggressively, and aligns with Maresca's positional play.

Recommended Striker Rankings

1.Emanuel Emegha (€20.00m)
2.Gonçalo Ramos (€45.00m)
3. Mika Biereth (€25.00m)
4. Myron Boadu(€7.00m)

Sources

- **Transfermarkt** — Player Market Values and Profiles
  https://www.transfermarkt.com/
- **FBref** — Big 5 European Leagues Shooting Statistics
  https://fbref.com/en/comps/Big5/shooting/players/Big-5-European-Leagues-Stats
- **WhoScored** — Player and Team Statistical Profiles
  https://www.whoscored.com/
- **YouTube Film Study Clips:**
  - Mika Biereth — https://youtu.be/TfQUBdKUl80?si=WAhgTpXdiwzFD-lk
  - Mateo Retegui— https://youtu.be/Jtp8iuuE1sU?si=VRj59L2gJck_RQ7S
  - Emanuel Emegha — https://youtu.be/jaWC4uz_7N8?si=zzifswEviXg_xKb6
  - Myron Boadu — https://youtu.be/Wh4eYSR1-XY?si=Al_7SvIJ0HwWCk75
  - Jonathan David — https://youtu.be/5SINxRaBqe0?si=3U74_9gx2Ft5pAQD
  - Enzo Maresca system — https://youtu.be/zMuxvmbZ-4A?si=nOaZeiEXFvj86FxY
  - Chris Wood — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LypT2-1CmJM