SPAIN VS FRANCE: THE KEYS BEHIND THE SCORELINE

STATS
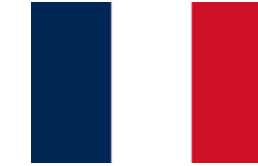
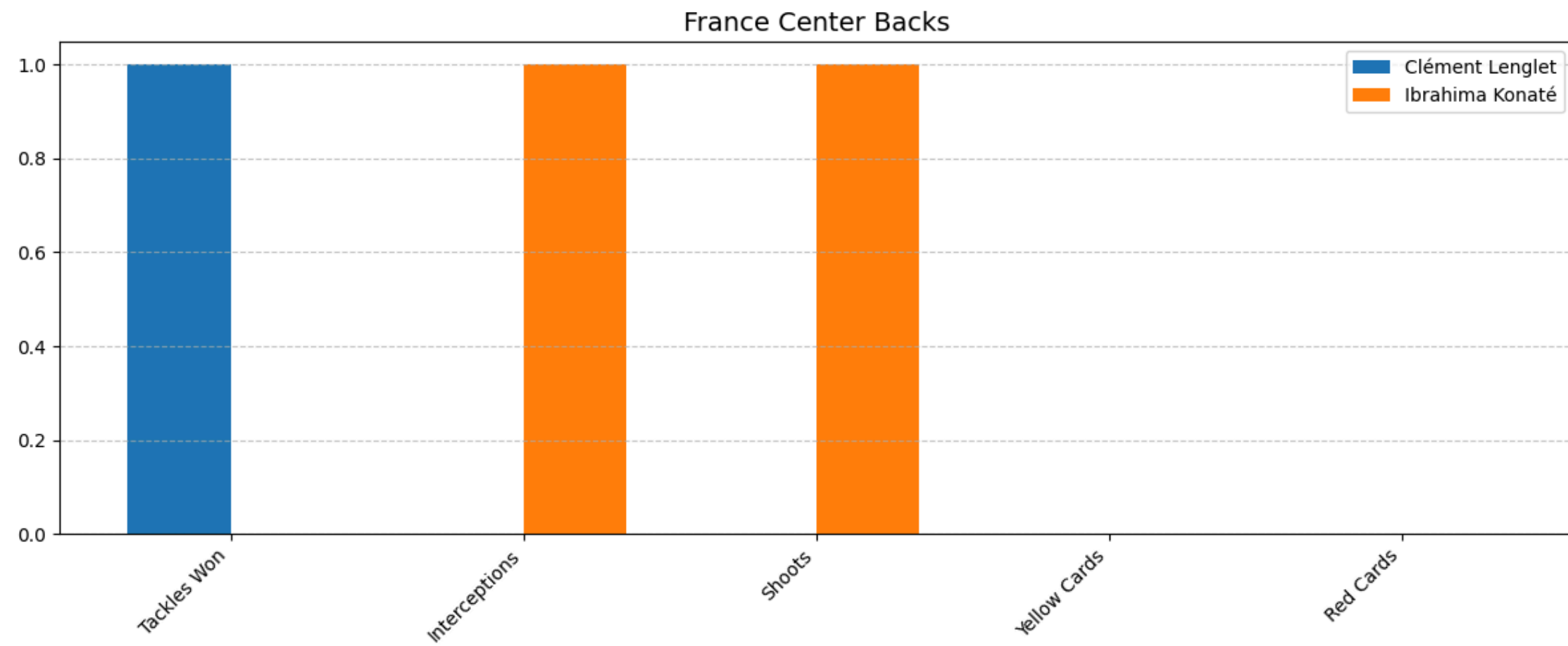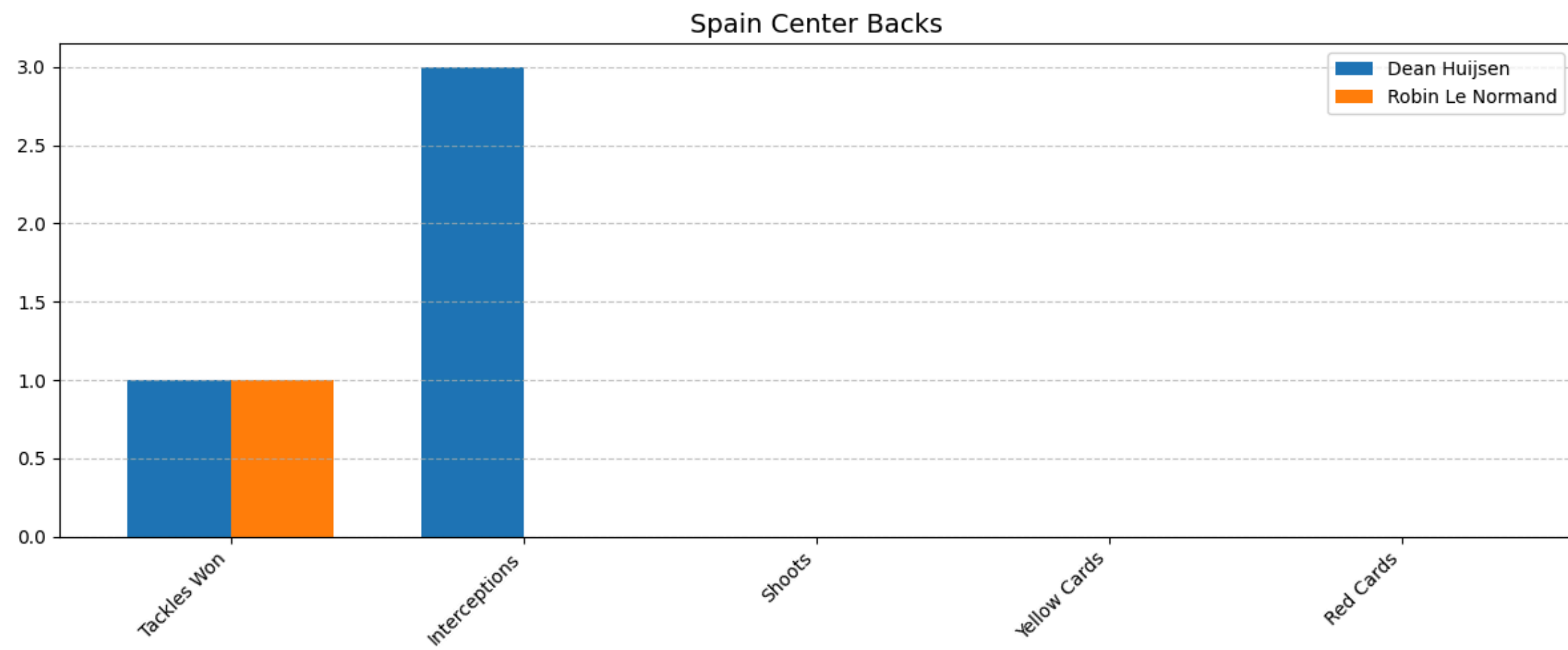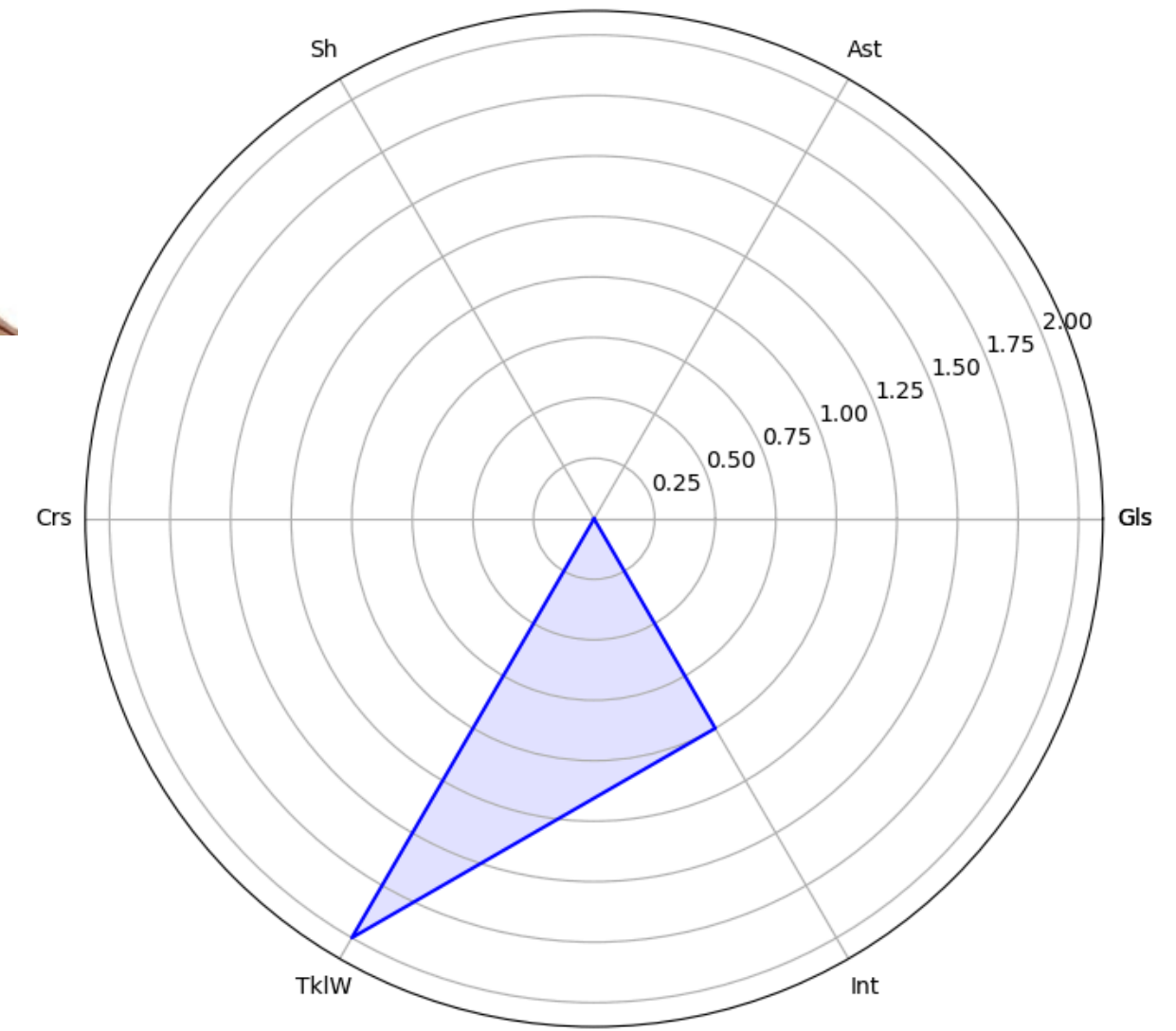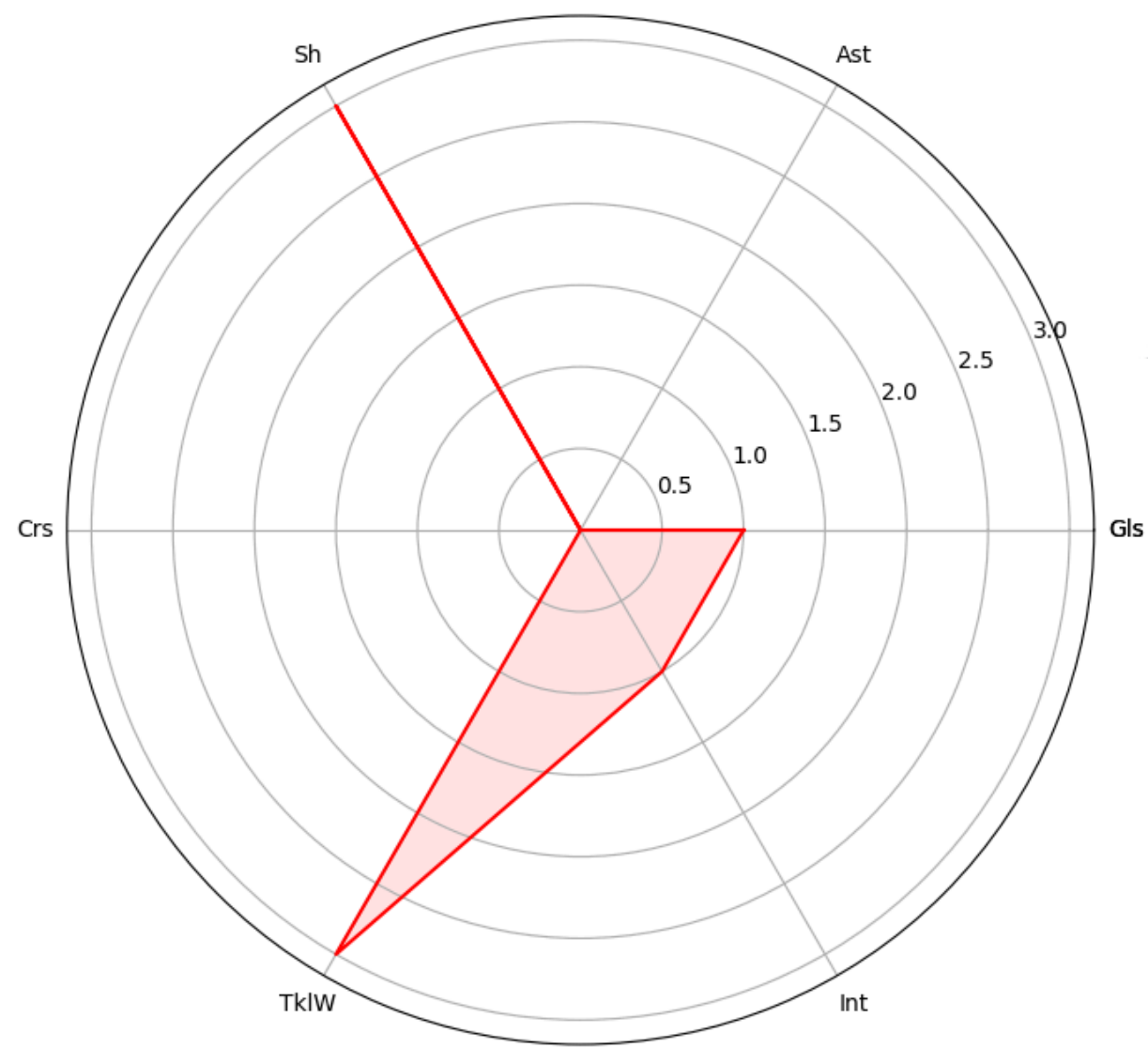| Spain		France
47	Possession (%)	53
15	Total shots fired	26
31	Attacks	57
4	Corner kicks taken	6
83	Passing accuracy (%)	90
330	Completed passes	468
398	Passes made	522
37	Recovered balls	32
2	Offsides	1
6	Stops	3
117.2	Distance traveled (km)	111.7
2	Yellow cards	4
0	Red cards	0

Center Backs Analysis: Spain vs France

The Spanish center-backs demonstrated greater defensive solidity during the match.

While both teams recorded a similar number of successful tackles, it was young Dean Huijsen who made the difference with exceptional game-reading skills, cutting out three key attacking plays thanks to his intelligent positioning and defensive timing.

On the opposing side, the center-backs failed to make a defensive impact.

The only notable offensive moment came from Konaté, whose headed shot was the lone threatening incident in the defensive third.

Midfield Analysis: Spain vs. France

According to Flashscore data (https://www.flashscore.es/partido/futbol/dKFWcs0E/#/resumen-del-partido/alineaciones), the highest-rated midfielders in the match were Mikel Merino (Spain) and Manu Koné (France). Both stood out in defensive duties, recording a similar number of interceptions and successful tackles during the game.

However, Merino outperformed his counterpart in attacking impact: with three shots attempted, one of which resulted in a goal, earning him the top rating among central midfielders. His decisive contribution in attack made the difference in their head-to-head battle.

MAN OF THE MATCH
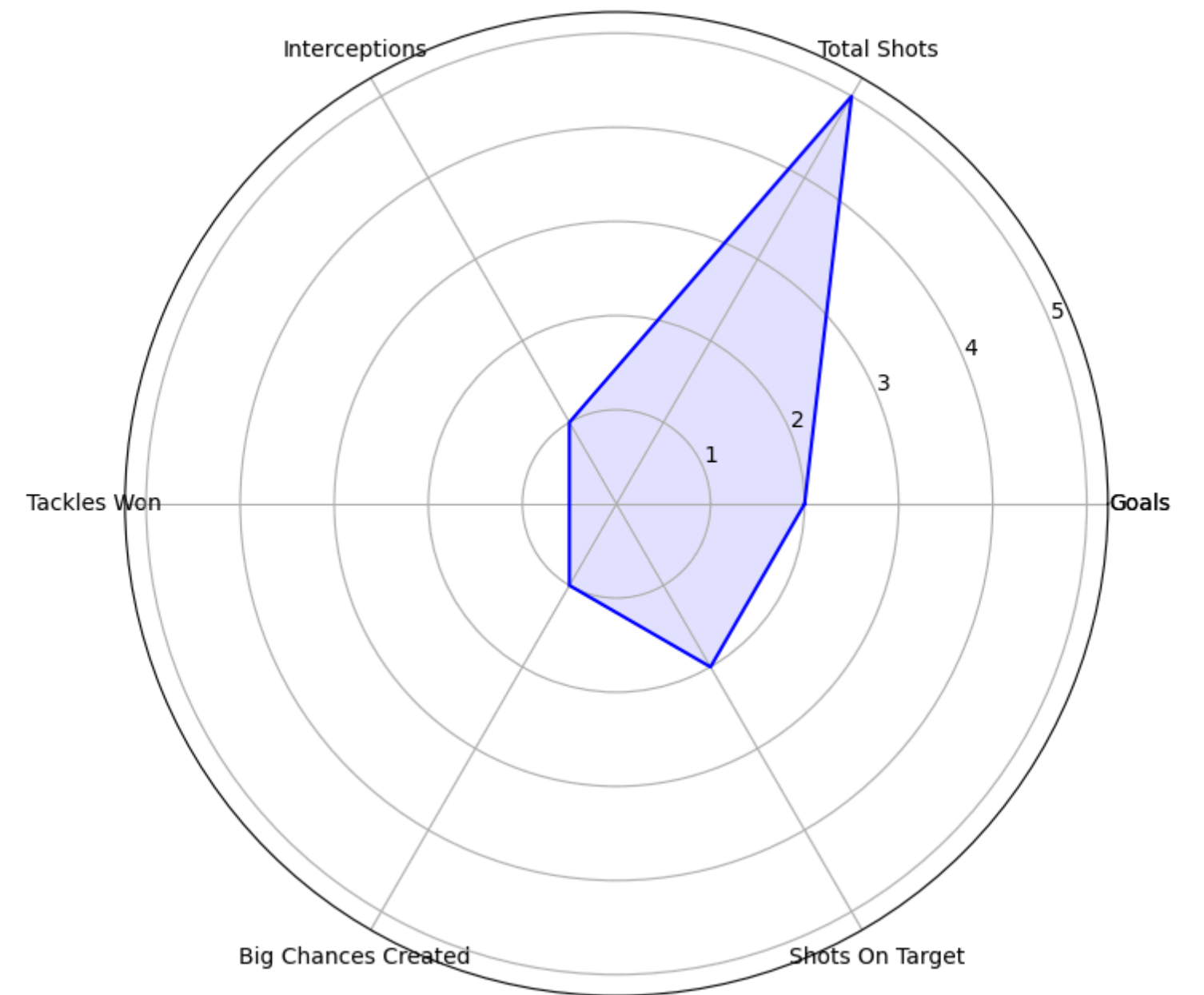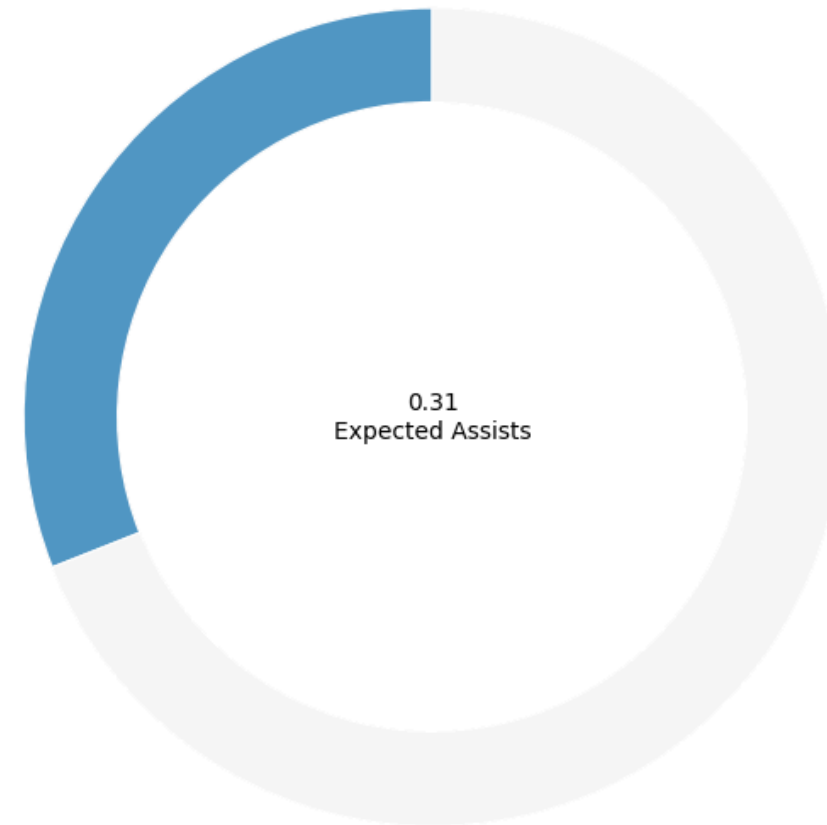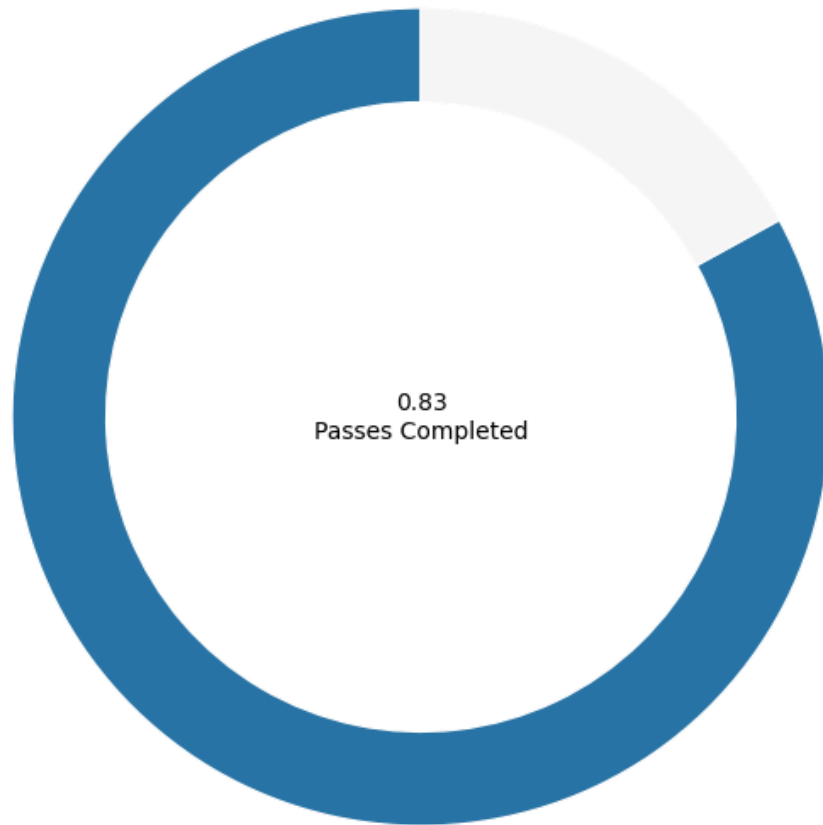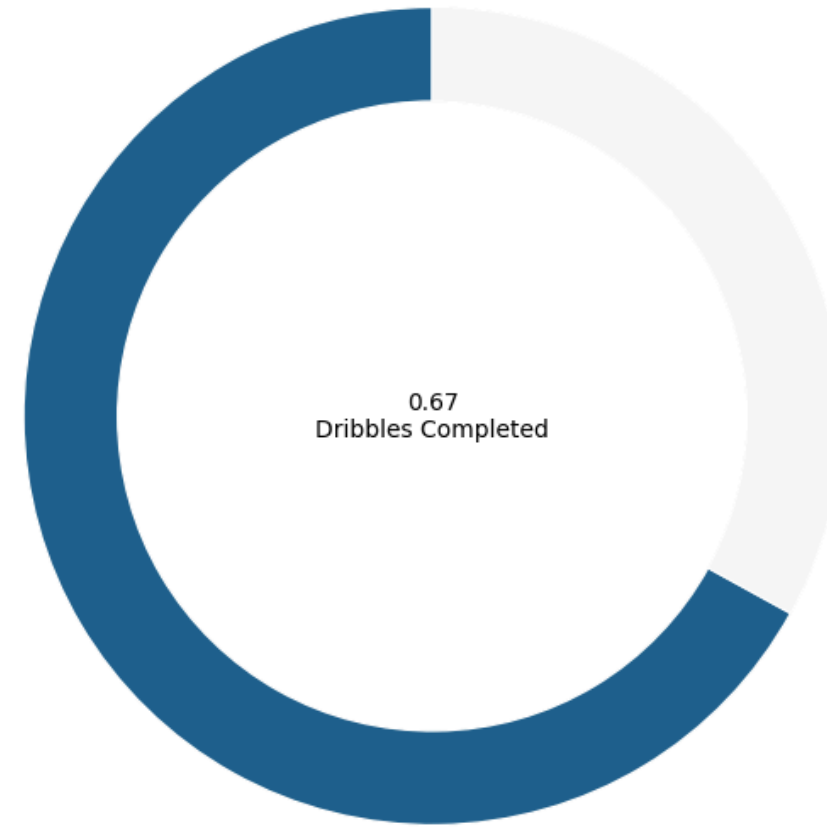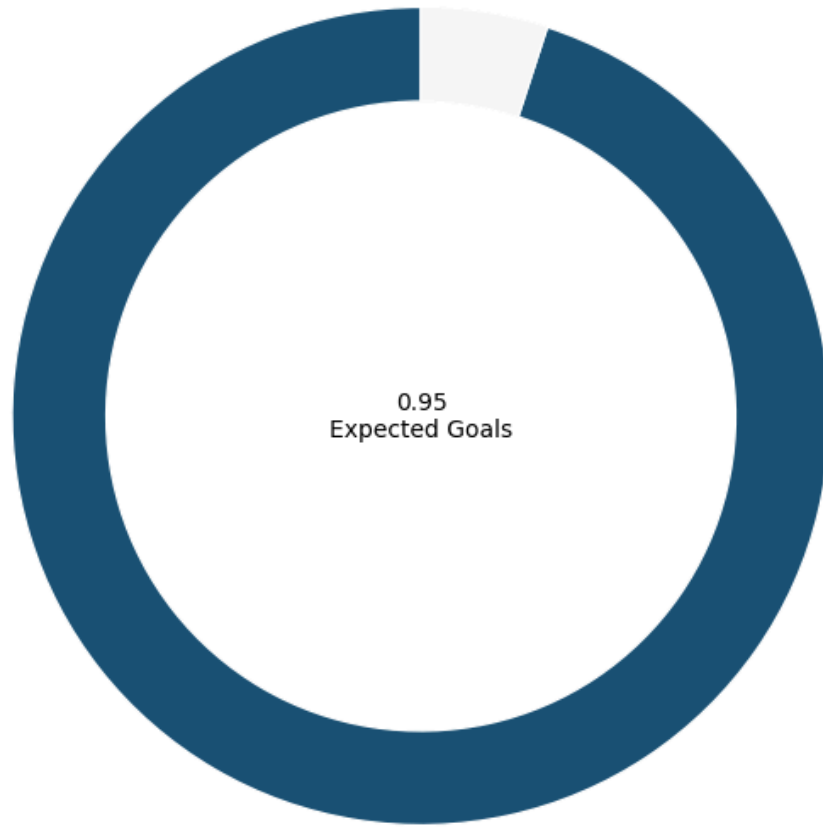
Both Teams Opt for a False 9 – But with Very Different Approaches

Neither side fielded a traditional center-forward, instead choosing versatile players capable of adapting to the false 9 role. This isn't new for either Mbappé or Oyarzabal—both have experience in the position for their clubs and national teams.

However, France and Spain are using the false 9 in fundamentally different ways:

France: Mbappé as the Ultimate Free Roamer

Mbappé isn't a classic false 9—he's more of a hybrid striker, granted complete freedom to drift across the frontline. The team is built to maximize his pace, dribbling, and lethal finishing.

The Risk: If opponents successfully neutralize him (with tight marking or a deep defensive block), France lacks a true target man or midfield runners (like a declining Griezmann) to provide alternative threats. This could leave them overly reliant on wingers without a clear focal point.

Spain: Possession, Movement, and Late Runs

Oyarzabal operates as a more traditional false 9, dropping deep to link play and create space for wingers (Yamal, Williams) to exploit.

Key Advantage: His movement allows Spain to overload midfield, facilitating late-arriving midfielders (Merino, Pedri) and preventing a static attack.

Technical Bonus: Unlike Mbappé, Oyarzabal contributes to buildup play with short passes and smart positioning, reinforcing Spain's possession-based style.

The Bottom Line: France relies on Mbappé's individual brilliance, while Spain prioritizes collective creation and midfield penetration. The false 9 isn't a one-size-fits-all role—these two approaches highlight its tactical flexibility.