

Orkun Kökçü 2022-2023 Eredivisie Analysis

Does he fit Benfica?

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Introduction

Since Roger Schmidt arrived at Benfica, in the 2022-2023 season, the portuguese club has been no short of sensational, showing incredible consistency as well as a well-drilled, fast-paced and enthralling football for the fans. Most of the credits go to the manager. However, there were key players who were crucial in turning the tactics into performances. Footballers like João Mário, Gonçalo Ramos, Rafa Silva, Nicolás Otamendi, Fredrik Aursnes, Florentino Luís were vital in this matter. But there was a player, who only played for the first half of the season, that was recognized by the fans as a world-class one. He was mesmerizing throughout the 6 months he spent at Benfica, fascinating the fans by his ability to circulate the ball, dictate the tempo of the game, produce long and accurate passes, make important tackles and powerful shots. This footballer is Enzo Fernández, 2022 World Cup winner and young player of the tournament. He was one of the many reasons Benfica were able to get the first place in their UEFA Champions League group, surpassing Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus. In the January transfer window, he went to Chelsea, leaving Benfica with huge amounts of money but with no proper replacement for the Argentinian. The first one was Chiquinho, who gave some intensity to the team, in spite of never reaching the level of Enzo Fernández, especially in terms of end-product. Near the end of the season, the german manager decided to bring in João Neves, an academy player. Even though the 18-year-old was able to put good performances, some fans still claimed that a midfielder was necessary. Given this, Benfica contacted Feyenoord, in hope of getting their captain, Orkun Kökçü, a 22-year-old valued at 30M€. They got the turkish footballer for 25M€, the club's record transfer fee regarding buyings.

Player General Information/Statistics

Orkun Kökçü, born in 29/12/2000 (22 years old), in Haarlem, Netherlands, is a two-footed midfielder who started playing for Feyenoord in the 2018/2019 season, the only club he had been representing until now. The turkish player has 175 appearances in his senior career, accumulating 32 goals and 27 assists, whilst in his national team, for which he debuted in 06/09/2020, has 22 matches played, 2 goals and 5 assists.

This season, in 32 matches in the Eredivisie, Orkun Kökçü got 8 goals and 3 assists, while in the UEFA Europa League, he managed to score 3 times and assist 2 in 10 matches. Besides this, the 22-year-old was able to put the ball in the net one time in 4 KNVB beker matches, totalling 46 matches, 12 goals and 5 assists in the 2022/2023 season. Given his performance, Feyenoord's captain was elected Eredivisie's player of the season.

Club's Context

Feyenoord were Eredivisie champions with 82 points in 34 matches (2.41 points per game), and their statistics show how well-deserved this title was to them. They've scored 81 goals (2.38 per game) and conceded 30 (0.88).

Orkun Kökçü's former team produced 20.0 shots per game, whose 37.5% were on target (7.5 shots on target per game). This amount of shots per game traduces in a high xGFp90 (2.35), similar as the goals scored per game metric. However, their xGAp90 is 1.09, considerably higher than the goals conceded per game, which demonstrates that their main goalkeeper, Justin Bijlow, is a good shot stopper and a reliable player for Arne Slot's tactics.

With these metrics, is it possible to acknowledge that this team is an attacking one, rather vertical than conservative, especially because their average possession in the league is not incredibly high (58.7%). Their dominance during the match is due to the lack of defensive solutions from the opponents to Feyenoord's fast-paced football, which leads to an enormous amount of shots for and against too, as a result of their offensive approach to the game, whose effects can be seen on their clean sheet percentage (38.2%) and on the number of fouls committed per match (8.9).

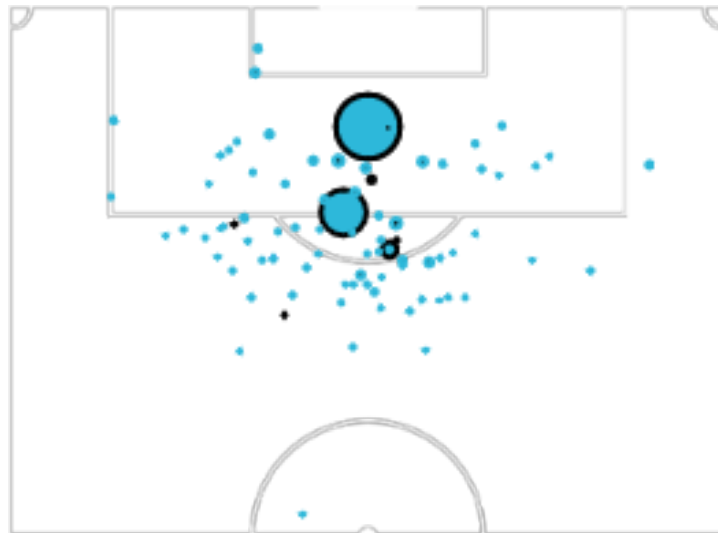
Player In-depth Analysis

□ Shooting

Orkun Kökçü was Feyenoord's freekick and penalty taker, which shows that the turkish player, in terms of shooting, is exceptional, and this statement couldn't be further from the truth. The 22-year-old racked up, in the Eredivisie, 0.19 xGp90 (0.14 npGp90), scoring 0.27 goals per game. The 0.08 difference, 0.06 if penalty kicks are taken out of the equation, tells that he is outstanding at this matter, especially at long shots, which is supported by the following statistics, in which penalty kicks are not included:

- 2.74 shots per game;
- 0.97 shots on target per game;
- 35.4% of shots that are on target;
- 0.05 npG/Shot;
- Average shot distance of 23.3 meters.

These metrics show Kökçü likes to take risks, taking the shot when space opens up. In the image below, we can observe his shots map, whose blue dots represent shots and blue dots with a black contour mean goals. The bigger the dot, the higher the xG. It is possible to affirm that most of the 22-year-old's shots are from out of the box and some the them were worth taking.



Orkun Kökçü's shots map

Source: xvalue

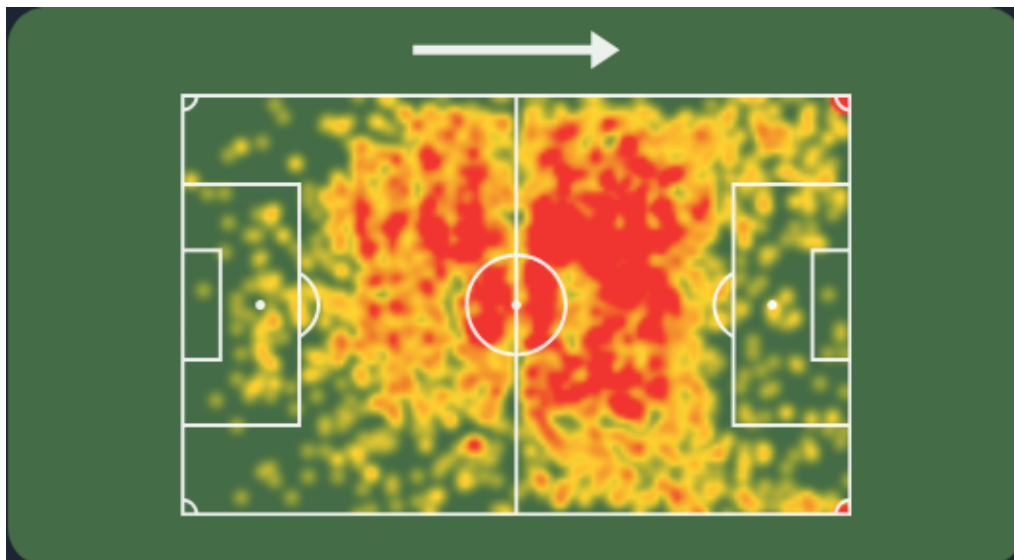
☐ Passing/Possession

Kökçü is an extraordinary passer, being preponderant in almost every on-the-ball phase of the game, from the build-up to creating chances in the final third. He's a high-volume player, meaning he gets lots of touches per game (94.77 touches per 90).

Touches' Zone	Number of Touches per 90 minutes
Defensive penalty area	1.40
Defensive third	11.88
Middle third	53.35
Attacking third	30.65
Attacking penalty area	1.77

Orkun Kökçü's touches statistics

Source: FBref



Orkun Kökçü's touch heatmap

Source: Sofascore

Pass Lenght	Pass Completion (%)
Short	91.3
Medium	86.3
Long	55.7

Orkun Kökçü's pass completion percentage at different lenghts

Source: FBref

Despite being a number 8, the turkish player plays an active role in creating chances, averaging per 90 minutes:

- 0.25 xA (0.19 from open play only);
- 2.97 key passes;
- 10.92 passes into the final third (set pieces not included);
- 2.50 passes into the penalty area (set pieces not included);
- 0.60 crosses into the panlty area (set pieces not included);
- 12.65 progressive passes.

Given the relatively low number of switches the 22-year-old makes per 90 minutes (0.50), it is possible to state that he likes to play the ball forward in order to create opportunities.

Orkun Kökçü is reasonably capable of carrying the ball, accumulating 3.04 progressive carries per 90 minutes last season in the Eredivisie. However, he's not a good dribbler, having a successful Take-On percentage of just 50.0, which practically demonstrates that he loses the ball quite often.

❑ Defending

By being largely present in the attacking part of game, the Turkish international rarely does defensive work, and isn't proficient in this regard either. Kökçü averages 1.30 tackles per 90, with 0.60 (46.15%) only turning out to be fruitful.

Tackles' zone	Number of Tackles per 90 minutes
Defensive Third	0.40
Middle Third	0.50
Attacking Third	0.40

Orkun Kökçü's tackles statistics

Source: FBref

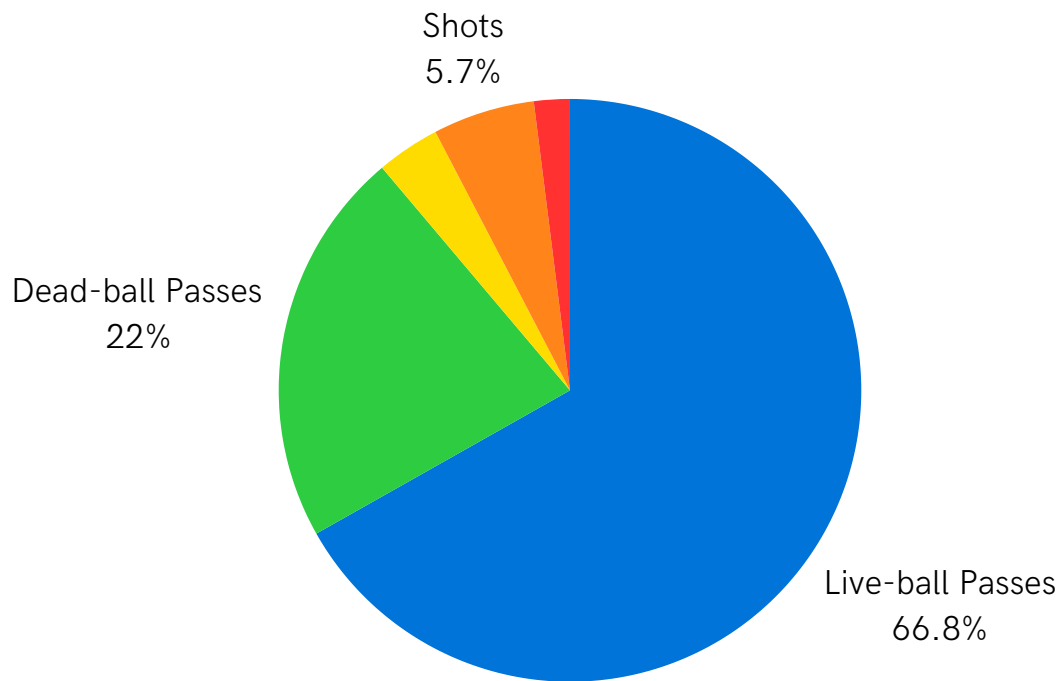
Other off-the-ball attributes show a clear weakness in his game, especially in the defensive third (all data is per 90 minutes):

- 0.53 blocks;
- 0.63 interceptions;
- 0.53 clearances.

In spite of his small defensive volume, the former Feyenoord player has a notable presence in their pressing. Nevertheless, doing so means there will be a huge space behind him that can be exploited. Against tougher opposition sides, Benfica will have to be careful in their off-the-ball approach as a defensive-minded midfielder will be crucial to retain the team's balance.

□ Shot Creation

With outstanding numbers last season in the Eredivisie (6.54 SCAp90), Orkun Kökçü acquisition will undeniably bolster Benfica's attack.



Orkun Kökçü's shot-creating actions statistics

Source: FBref

Most of his shot-creating actions comes from passes as he was on set pieces at Feyenoord and, in open play, regularly tends to pass the ball forward for his teammates to shoot. This graph confirms his superb passing capability. It also confirms that Kökçü likes to shoot on many occasions, due to the high SCA (Shots) value. On the other hand, dribbling isn't as predominant as other elements are in the Turkish player's game, having a relatively low SCA (Dribbles) value.

It is important to highlight that the 22-year-old has not made any defensive action that led to a shot, which accentuates his incapacity to make numerous and good tackles, hence the need for a holding midfielder beside him in a double pivot role.

Final Remarks

To sum up, Orkun Kökçü excels on a wide range of aspects, which is tremendously helpful to Benfica, since his pressing and quality on the ball will certainly make Benfica a more dominant team.

It should be emphasized that, given his age, there's an immense room for improvement, particularly on his intelligence on the ball, as he sometimes seems to eager to push forward.

Overall, Benfica got an excellent midfielder, and, alongside a defensive-focused one, such as Florentino Luís or João Neves, Roger Schmidt's side can capitalise on their new signing's abilities on and off-the-ball to achieve even more this season.

Sources

- [FBref](#)
- [xvalue](#)
- [Transfermarkt](#)
- [Sofascore](#)
- [FootyStats](#)