

Liverpool FC's Performance Report (2023-2024 / 1)

Did Liverpool start well their Premier League campaign?

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Introduction

After a disappointing season, Liverpool F.C. aimed to start the season pretty well in order to bounce back and return to a stage where the team controls the game almost impeccably and has a relentless attack. With the summer signings, the intensity that was lacking last season can now resurge.

There's only one caveat: the fact that football evolved significantly in a short space of time as teams are now better in evading the press. However, to cope with this change, Klopp switched, at the end of the last Premier League campaign, from overlapping to inverted full-backs, thus creating a box midfield, which bolstered the center of the pitch due to the numerical superiority created.

'The Reds' ended last season in an astonishing form, but the 'surprise effect' has now gone. Trent Alexander-Arnold leaves a huge space in behind, an area can be cause severe trouble since opposition sides can take advantage of this. How can Liverpool hit the ground running this season?

Games and Results

Note: the number within the parentheses is the Expected Goals (xG) for the respective team.

☐ 13/08/2023 - Chelsea (1.35) 1 - 1 (1.28) Liverpool

In Mauricio Pochettino's first game as the new Chelsea F.C. manager, his team was able to force Liverpool in a low block as they had 65% of the possession of the ball, with 'The Reds' creating most of their chances in transitional moments.

☐ 19/08/2023 - Liverpool 3 (3.08) - (1.29) 1 Bournemouth

After a shaky start, 'The Reds' found themselves and played considerably well, despite losing some control of the match in the last 10 minutes.

❑ 27/08/2023 - Newcastle 1 (1.99) - (0.88) 2 Liverpool

'The Magpies' were dominating the game, especially after Van Dijk got sent off. Nonetheless, Darwin Núñez came off the bench, stepped up, sealed the victory and gave the 3 points to the red Merseyside club which was 1-man down since the 28' minute.

❑ 03/09/2023 - Liverpool 3 (2.47) - (0.66) 0 Aston Villa

In a surprising way, 'The Reds' kept a clean sheet and beat Unai Emery's side, dictating the game and exploiting the weaknesses Aston Villa's high defensive line possesses.

❑ 16/09/2023 - Wolves 1 (0.63) - (2.52) 3 Liverpool

In spite of a bad first half, Klopp managed to improve the team as they recovered from a 1-0 defeat, scoring 3 goals in the second 45 minutes. It should be noted that Jarell Quansah, who made his full debut for the senior Liverpool team, was amazing, being brave in duels and great in anticipating danger.

General Performance

The overall ΔxG ($xGF - xGA$) in Liverpool's first 5 games was 4.31, a notable value which translates the good performances 'The Reds' have been having. Nevertheless, the xGA still remains quite high, at 5.92 (1.18 per game). The attack is phenomenal because an average of 2.05 expected goals per game is definitely remarkable!

Apart from the underlying numbers, it is possible to verify that the squad has an elite mentality as they were able to win against Newcastle, handling St. James' Park euphoric atmosphere whilst being 1-man and 1-goal down and secure a victory in the Molineux Stadium following an early Wolves goal.

Key Players

☐ Mohamed Salah

2 goals (xG - 2.73), 4 assists (xA - 2.08) and 6 big chances created in just 5 five games are excellent numbers. Salah has undoubtedly been a key player for Liverpool in the start of the 2023/2024 season, but this time it seems as he has shifted his focus to playmaking, something that will be discussed later. The Egyptian has also been great at pressing, showing a precious effort to materialize Klopp's ideas.

☐ Andrew Robertson

Despite being deployed as a LCB when he really excels as a LWB, Robertson is an example of discipline, given that he has performed superbly in the opening 5 games. So far, the Scottish player has 1 goal (xG - 0.42) from the same amount of shots and an xA of 0.48. Crucial in defending, influential in attacking.

☐ Alisson

The Brazilian has been instrumental in making sure 'The Reds' don't concede more goals. With an xGA of 5.92, only 4 shots went in against Alisson (xGA - goals conceded = 1.92), who has an incredible save percentage of 83%. Exceptional between the posts, sensational with the feet.

☐ Dominik Szoboszlai

The most expensive signing of this transfer market didn't need time to adapt to the Premier League as he already has 1 goal (well taken shot; xG - 0.44), an xA of 0.58 and 1 big chance created. A tireless runner, tremendously consistent.

Tactical Analysis

As expected, Liverpool FC carried on their new setup (3-2-2-3), which allowed 'The Reds' to get decent results, some of them won by a significant margin of xG. Nevertheless, it's not perfect as sometimes it seems a bit asymmetrical. Such deformation might cause some trouble, mostly on the defence. That is true as the xGA is concerningly high. Another reason for this might be due to shortage of good defenders on the bench. This lack of squad depth can originate severe consequences later in the course of the season. Going back to the first problem, the space that Trent Alexander-Arnold leaves behind tends to be heavily exploited. With Alexis Mac Allister next to him, Liverpool's simplified structure whilst attacking will resemble more of a 4-6 (4 defending, 6 attacking), due to the fact that the Argentinian usually goes up the pitch to link with the other midfielders. That is if Robertson doesn't advance as well. However, this shape can prove to be prolific as long as 'The Reds' press quickly and with energy right after they lose possession of the ball, a response that is extremely achievable since the midfield rebuild is, so far, successful.

In essence, even though Klopp's formation guarantees an enormous attacking threat, it must be noted that they still concede numerous chances from the opposition.

Conclusion

It is far too early to start concluding Liverpool's performance owing to the small number of games 'The Reds' have played. However, it is possible to affirm some aspects, the majority positive. Despite the little sample size, Liverpool F.C. look considerable more energetic, especially in the midfield, an area desperate for signings this summer, more threatening in attack but still leaky defensively as huge and concerning holes in the defence remain appearing in almost every single match.

Sources

- [Sofascore](#)