



KYLE DEGELMAN





FUEL FOR FOOTBALL

Change The Game

Longford Town 0 – 1 Bray Wanderers

(15/02/2025)



LONGFORD
TOWN

OVERVIEW

This was a good win to start the season with the only goal of the game resulting from your free-kick. It was a low and driven ball which caused problems for Longford to deal with defensively. Your other free-kick in the game would have benefitted from a similar trajectory. Offensively, you showed your quality both in escaping pressure and driving past opponents. Ensure that you keep employing these actions to stand out.

Furthermore, avoid forcing any passes or committing technical errors due to feeling the pressure. You can always cut and shift on the ball whenever necessary to set yourself up properly for well executed actions. Technically speaking, your balls down the line would also benefit from more curl and a direct trajectory ie spun down the side.

Defensively, you played aggressively and made a number of tackles and interceptions. The most important scenario to consider continues to be defending against an opponent with their back to goal. In particular, work on the timing of your contact and body weight as the first touch is taken. You allowed the attacker to open forward from these positions a couple of times by either overcommitting to one side without winning the ball or by putting a leg in as they take the touch rather than before it. Only commit around the side if you are certain you can get a foot to the ball. Use your knees behind the opponent early prior to the ball arriving. Lastly, stay flat with your weight on the back foot as they take the first touch so that you can react quickly after.

STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- *The goal*
- *Defensive aggression*
- *Interceptions*
- *Free-kick trajectory*
- *Escaping pressure*
- *Defending from behind*
- *Spinning passes down the side*
- *Making first contact on aerial duels*





► GAME ANALYSIS

AGGRESSIVE DEFENDING

Although we will look more into the timing of actions and how to improve your defending in close quarters, we did appreciate your aggressive approach to defending. This led to a number of interceptions to your inside as well as when stepping out to apply pressure on your matchup.



Here, not only did you get out quickly to meet the ball but also played a superb forward pass to outplay multiple opponents too. This is the ideal scenario, reading play well enough to intercept the pass in and then immediately finding the best option up the pitch.



► GAME ANALYSIS

TACKLING OFF THE FIRST TOUCH

The other time you had some good success in your 1v1 battles was putting in the challenge right after their first touch. This is important for any moment that you cannot intercept the ball on its way in, as the next best moment is jumping on their first touch.



With each of these, we can appreciate you had time to step in and win the ball after that first touch. It is true at all levels but especially where you are now, that first touches can be looser. The key is to recognise the 1-yard touch (or greater) as a trigger to go for the ball or into a challenge. When you have someone under pressure, the tight touch keeping the ball glued to their foot is the correct touch to prevent you from being able to step in. Any other touch while you are within touching distance is an immediate cue to be aggressive in your approach.



► GAME ANALYSIS

DEFENDING FROM BEHIND

Quite often you fail to reach the ball prior to the opponent receiving and then leave yourself compromised for being rolled to one side. It is important to only reach for the ball when you are certain you can get the first touch to it. As such, there are moments in which you miss out slightly and should have taken a different approach.



With all three examples, we can see you reached for a ball that you did not intercept or knock away. Generally you need a clear path towards the ball for this, which can come by going around the opponent where there is time, or by manipulating them out of the way such as with a shoulder barge, push or pull to takeover their position. Otherwise, you have two options available. The first of these is to apply pressure towards one side before committing to the other side off their first touch. Rather than reaching for the ball, you can do this with a simple barge, contact or knee before the ball arrives. This is ideal for when there is a specific way you want to show them, such as to the outside where the available space and pitch is smaller. Your other option is to stay flat behind the man, something we will touch on now.



► GAME ANALYSIS

TIMING CONTACT

When you defend flat, your aim is to gain ground position where possible. Even if it is a ground pass in, forcing your opponent back on themselves is ideal for congesting the space they have to play. Aerially, taking over the superior ground position will put you in the greater position for winning the header.



The key then is with the timing. At the point they make their touch, you want both feet down and ready to push off in any direction (again unless you can 100% knock the ball away). Therefore, any knee in the back, push, shove or scrape should come as the ball travels into your opponent. The top snapshot was ideal for driving the knee upwards before settling it back down again as he took the touch. Your technical error is driving this knee as he takes the touch leaving you in a more compromised position for balance and subsequent change of direction.



► GAME ANALYSIS

CLEARANCES

Offensively speaking, we know you have the technical ability to stand out at this level. It is therefore important that you retain your confidence and composure making passes and clearances out of pressure.



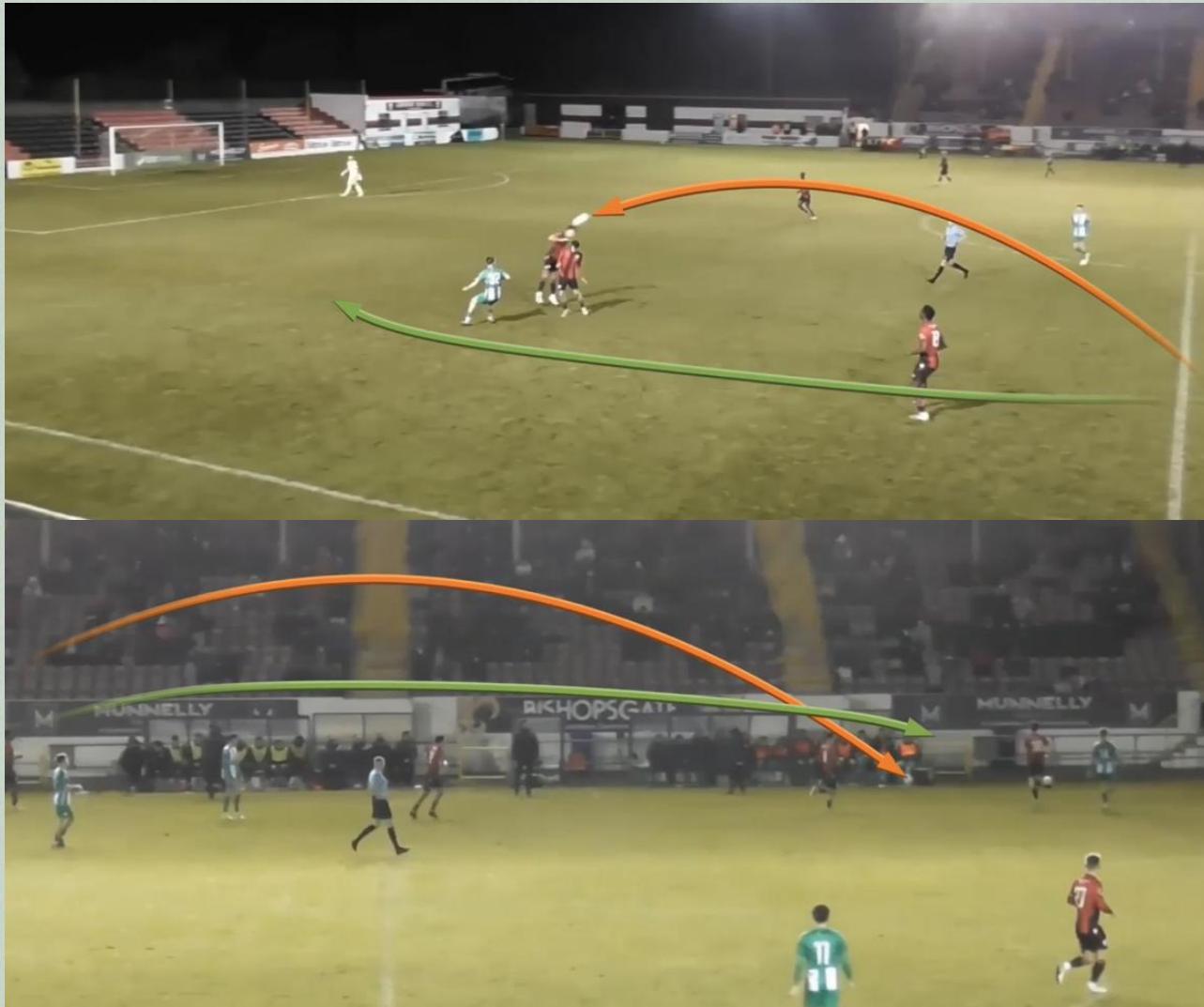
Always look to set your feet properly before you pass. If you are under high pressure and unable to do so, it is wiser to continue dribbling with small touches and using your body to protect the ball. Remember that if you are 1v1 you can always cut and change direction to buy more time before making the bigger action. In the above, it was important to make sure of the technique or otherwise faking the pass before playing it after or continuing to drive towards the sideline for greater ball retention.



► GAME ANALYSIS

PASSING DOWN THE SIDE

One area of technical inaccuracy was on your passes down the side of the defence. For these, the spun ball is ideal for giving your forwards the best chance of receiving and retaining possession. Strike the ball with a slightly more open foot, connecting along the boneline on your instep. Aim towards the sideline while bringing your foot around the ball by connecting slightly to the outside of the ball too.



With each of these examples, the curled technique would have been ideal. We can also mention the need for a more driven ball along a lower trajectory for these too. The only time to employ a floated ball down the line is for 50:50's where you are buying time for teammates to join the attack in support. Generally speaking, the driven and curled option is the ideal for ball retention and potentially creating 1v1's thereafter.



► GAME ANALYSIS

ESCAPING PRESSURE

Something you do really well and should continue to apply in games is cutting against the motion of the opposition winger. This is great for escaping pressure and you have been getting the touch distance and disguise right consistently.



This is a great example, whereby you cut inside as the Longford winger closed off your passing line down the side. From there, you played an excellent pass into the space for your teammate to run onto while also exploiting an overload.



► GAME ANALYSIS

ESCAPING PRESSURE

One of your better actions in this game also came while escaping pressure. As the defender came in overly aggressive, you correctly took the 3-yard touch into space beyond him to move onto.



From there, it was a good decision to drive down the line and into a crossing position. The ideal was a quick release cross, whipping your hip around the ball early and towards the general danger zone. As you took a moment to set into the cross this gave time for the opponent to recover into the challenge. If you cannot get your feet set for the cross quickly, this is the time to cut against the motion instead or to use fakes and feints. Here, a cut back on yourself into a right-footed cross would have worked well.



► GAME ANALYSIS

ESCAPING PRESSURE

The same point stands when you have your back to goal also. If you keep cutting (when you are left 1v1) there, you can open the angle to play forwards. There is also no need to force the ball off-balance if you cannot get your feet set properly either.



Although the pass was cut off here so we could not see exactly if there was a technical error, note the initial cut to the outside which was great. The alternative if not making the pass is simply to cut again and keep your body between the man and the ball. From there, you can pass backwards to recycle play or if forward options are available take those too.



► GAME ANALYSIS

FREE KICKS

With your free-kicks, one of these led into a goal which was great to see. Dissecting the technique, the low and driven ball was great for creating danger. Notice the difference between this one and the other which came on a higher arch.



Especially with your longer-range free-kicks, keep a powerful and lower trajectory just over head height. Ideally also aim towards a corner of the goal even if intending to make a cross onto someone's head. Ultimately, keep replicating the top free-kick through your future performances.