

The Sorcery of Semedo

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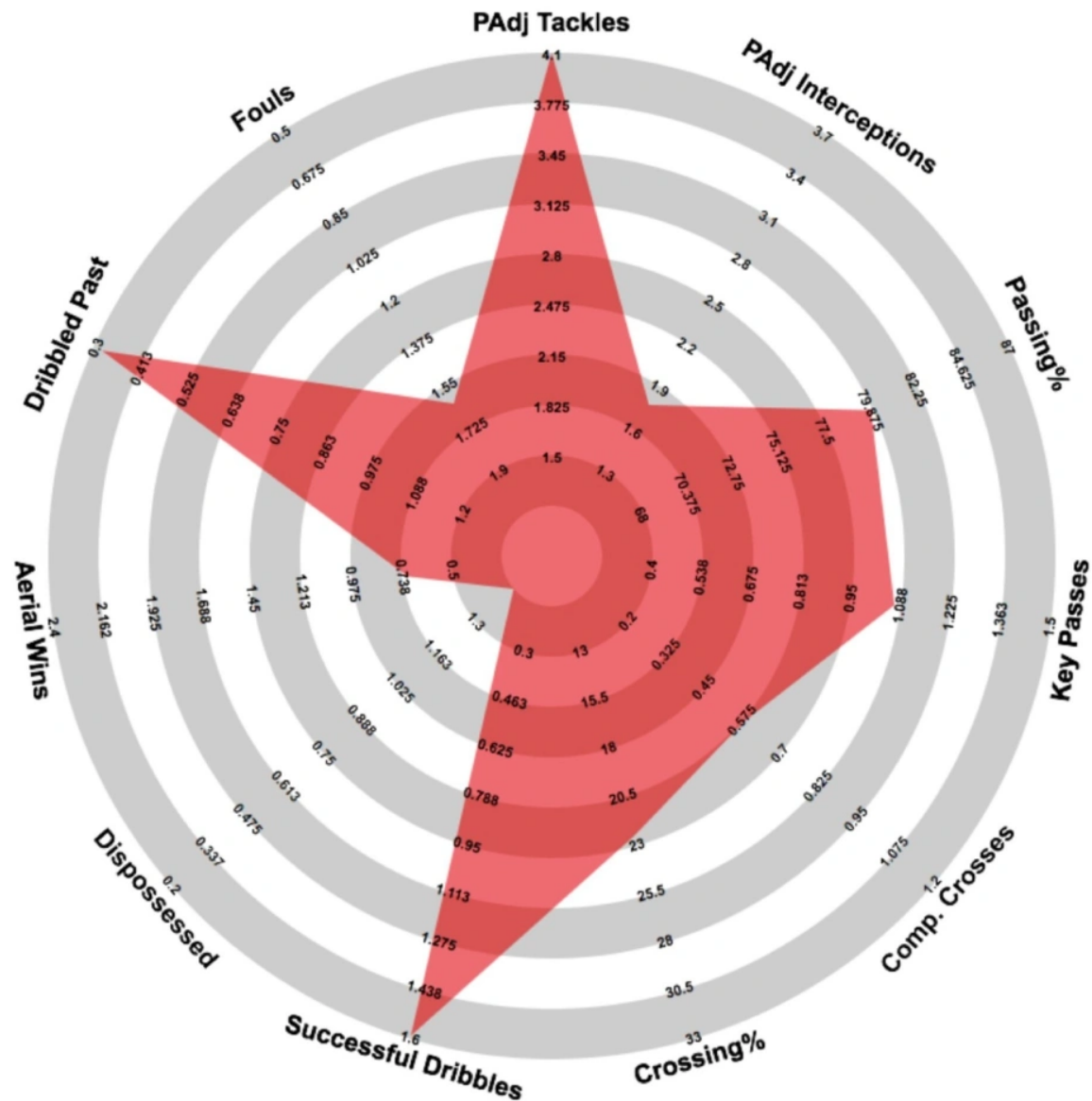
Nelson Semedo. The name on everyone's mind right now, especially those in Catalunya. Barcelona has completed a 5-year deal with Portugal's hottest talent in an attempt to fill that rightback spot that's been a thorn in their side for a year now. He's destined to become one of the greats of the game and has been dubbed a "legend in the making" all at the age of 23. That shows how talented he is and many of Europe's elites were after his signature – a steal for anyone who got their hands on him.

Benfica lost their star centreback to Manchester United, their goalkeeper to Manchester City and have now lost their gem in Nelsinho to Barça. Fans are eager for the youngster's arrival at the Camp Nou because Semedo has everything, if not more, to replace Dani Alves. Just like his Brazilian counterpart, the Portuguese national loves to attack. Constantly spotted on the wing, he has a knack for putting the opposition defenders in trouble. He's a former #10 with phenomenal vision and very, very rare intelligence and decision-making skills. The perfect package for any club.

Deceptively quick and agile on the ball, Nelson Semedo loves a bit of taking on defenders, pulling them out of their positions and subsequently creating gaps for teammates to run into. Here's where his intelligence comes into play: he can either play a teammate into the box and possibly get an assist or pre-assist or as he often does, he could try to work his way around his defender which would cause all sorts of other problems (now that the defender will have to follow Semedo thus vacating his position and moving inwards and any mistake that he makes could be costly as he's left quite a bit of space behind). Quick turns, roulettes and skillful feet place the €35 million man into spaces between defenders, which is why he had more assists last season than players like Carvajal, Walker, Lahm and even Alves. Not only does he like feeding the ball to his teammates, he loves getting on the end of through balls and work some magic in the box.

Above all this, however, is the man's intelligence and calmness on the ball at such a young age. The video below has several examples of him getting into tight spots, making a completely unexpected decision and coming out on top in the

duel. He's become a dominant force on the right side and a beauty to watch week in, week out.



Giving the team that extra burst up front isn't his only strength. Semedo is a confident tackler with very precise timing, winning 70 tackles in his 31 appearances in the league last season. His radar (@fussballradars) is up there for you to see.

That preference to play up higher and support the attack is balanced by his wonderful back tracking to defence, where his duties lie as well. 38 interceptions and 33 chances created show what a brilliant all round threat he is on the pitch and will be reminiscent of the Alves glory days at Barca. Portuguese football experts have been wanting him to move to a club like Barcelona where he'll get to play alongside world class players like Messi and develop massively as a player to ultimately get the recognition he truly deserves.

I have no doubts we'll be looking back one day, to the player, to the price tag and see him as a huge bargain. We'll wonder how we got away with such a player for such a price, considering we were getting another rightback (Bellerin) for more than 45 million. This year's UCL campaign showcased the importance of a fullback in a team and the influence they can have on a match; Nelson Semedo is more than capable of putting on dazzling displays himself.

Now sit back and enjoy two clips (@breakingthelines and @eifsoccer) of Nelsinho's sorcery from last season – something we'll all be looking forward to witnessing more of this season.

0:46 will leave you speechless.

Image source:

<https://metrouk2.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/gettyimages-630671766.jpg?quality=80&strip=all>