

Everton season review notes - prepared by Richard Watts

How have we done overall?

What is par for Everton?

- Wages: 12th (according to capology)
- Turnover 11th - between Brighton and Crystal Palace (Deloitte money league) - will be higher this season

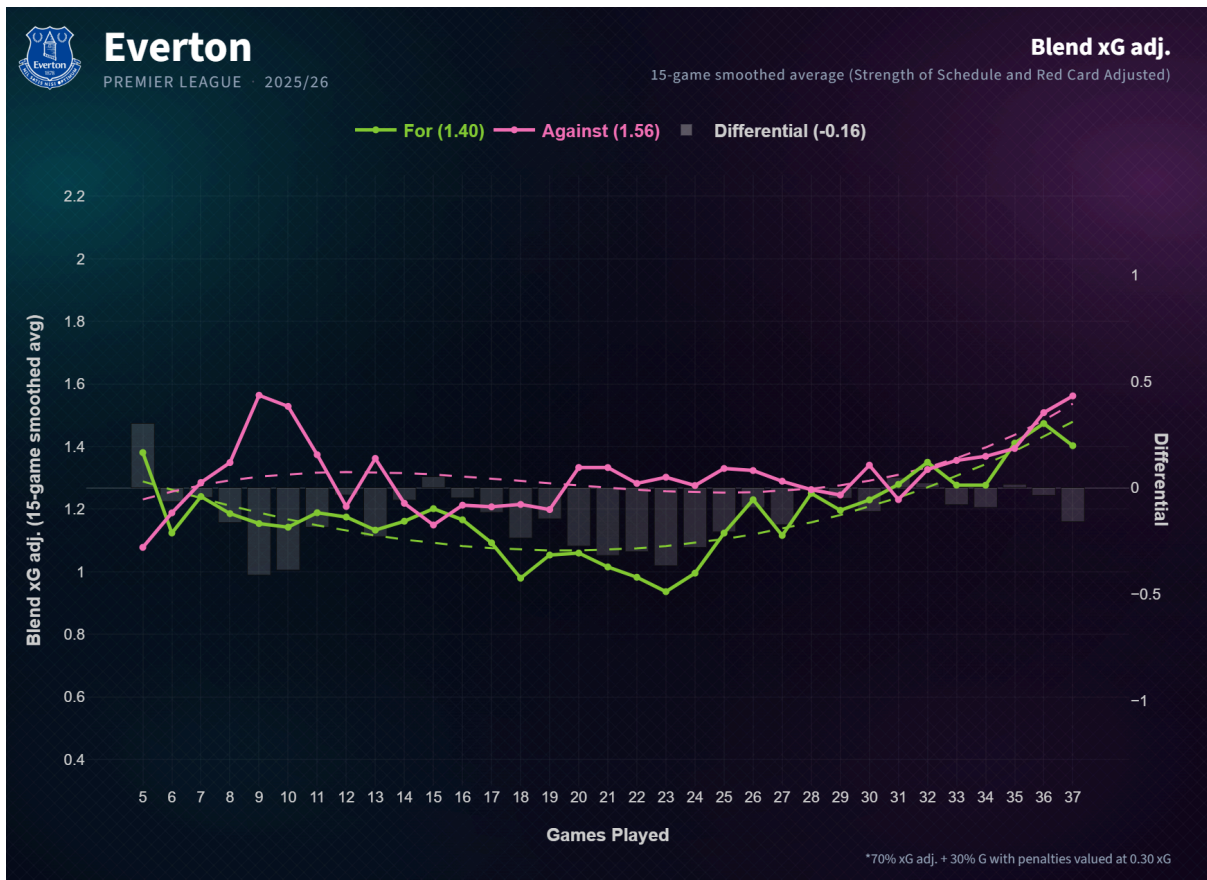
Comparison to last seasons:

- 49 points compared to 48 for last 2 seasons
- Underlying data (Source: Understat):

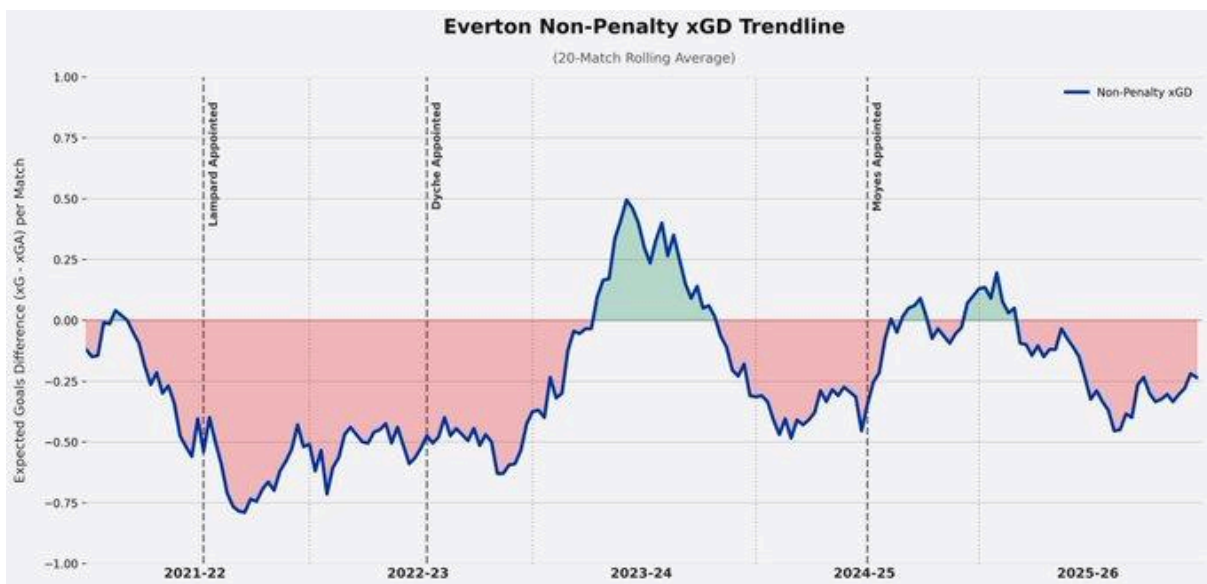
| | 25-26 | 24-25 | 23-24 |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| xG | 49.87 | 46.87 | 60.75 |
| xGA | 59.99 | 53.66 | 60.26 |
| xPts | 46.17 (14th) | 47.65 (15th) | 53.10 (10th) |

Consistent under performance in finishing and over-performance in opponent finishing (Pickford impact)

Trend over season :



Longer term



Conclusions:

- Slight improvement in attack from better talent (KDH, Grealish, Barry)
- Significant drop in defence (Brathwaite injury, decline in Tarkowski's performance, overreliance on Keane. Poor seasons from Myko and O'Brien - see below)
- This podcast would have had a very different feel if we'd done it at the end of March but tail-off at end of season clearly colours impression of how the season went. Drop-off in last 7 matches took us back to true performance level - regression to XG the most iron law in football.
- At one level, kept us out of highly competitive relegation race (which was always likely this season given Leeds' strength) but hasn't seen any real progress
- Overall, season has something of a feel of stagnation

Key questions:

Defensive performance

- Centre-back pairings

Aaron Barton posted a table on social media showing we concede 40% (1.4 per match) more goals when Keane and Tarkowski than any other Centre Back pairing.

- Fullback performance (compared to Top 7 European league fullbacks. Source: Datamb.football)

Mykolenko:

- 16th percentile for Expected Assists
- Only 25th percentile for defensive duels win!
- Better at forward passes (60th percentile) - helped by playing behind Grealish and Ndiaye

O'Brien:

- C. 90th percentile for duels (defensive and ariel)
- 1st percentile for Expected Assists
- 4th percentile for Progressive carries (attacking dribbles)

Attacking output nowhere near good enough

Obvious O'Brien playing out of position - assume Moyes wants to keep height on pitch for set-pieces but downsides are massive

Biggest improvement we could make to attack is getting better fullbacks

Performance of the strikers

Comparison v other strikers available last Summer (GW37) - League games only:

| | Barry | Beto | Sesko | Ouararra* | Delap | DCL |
|-----|-------|------|-------|-----------|-------|------|
| Fee | Up to | £25m | Up to | Up to | £30m | Free |

| | £29m | | £74m | £42.5m | | |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Goals | 8 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 14 |
| G/90 | 0.39 | 0.52 | 0.61 | 0.29 | 0.09 | 0.47 |
| xG/90 | 0.40 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 0.31 | 0.40 | 0.52 |
| Shots/90 | 1.82 | 2.48 | 3.36 | 2.18 | 3.13 | 2.44 |
| Ariels won % | 46.2% | 44.6% | 52.9% | 49.5% | 41.8% | 40.7% |
| Duels won % | 38.9% | 39.5% | 40.7% | 42.9% | 39.9% | 39.7% |
| xA / 90 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.17 | 0.02 | 0.03 |

Source: FotMob

*Often plays as a winger

NB. there are some 'Sub' effects here for the Everton players

RW conclusions:

- Strikers aren't great, but they are performing at an acceptable level for a mid-table PL club
- Neither were bad buys given what we paid for them
- The way Moyes uses the target man doesn't help their goalscoring - look at DCL playing in a different system at Leeds (14 goals)
- They aren't the team's biggest problems, or anywhere near it
- The cost of upgrading to better strikers would be very substantial - not VFM
- (or we get lucky eg. Brentford signing Thiago - but requires us to shop in riskier / cheaper markets)

Transfer performance

- Moyes' record at WH was actually pretty awful: <https://x.com/DanMc1878/status/2056091102940176782?s=20> - a part of gargantuan mess West Ham now find themselves in is as a consequence of 'win now' players becoming too old while still on big contracts
- Recognise whole new club executive and recruitment team are all new and some not even in place until September
- Club in Everton's position needs to find value in transfers - hard to do that while having such a heavy bias towards "Premier League experience", ironic given some of Moyes' best buys have never had that - Bowen, Arteta, Pienaar, Cahill etc.
- Some signings worked: KDH, Grealish and Barry to a degree (good VFM for a young striker - see above, but some immaturity on and off pitch),

- KDH clearly really worked-out but each transfer like that is a gamble eg. financial impact of failed 'win now' signings is massive, actually a bigger gamble than a cheaper player from a difference league
- Club failed to address proprietary positions, esp fullback in the Summer (cursory effort at Kenny Tete) but oversupplied in central midfield with similar players
- Young players brought in clearly not trusted by the manager and not played - Dibling and Aznou cost £43m between them. Must have known their profile - or scouting was abysmal.
- Didn't convince there is alignment within club
- January was an opportunity to address at least one priority position (eg Right back) - paid price for not doing that later in the season
- Other clubs significantly out performed us with less cautious transfer strategy - Bournemouth: Truffert and Jimenez jointly cost £28m and Rayan less than Dibling. Again, cost of preference for "Premier League Experience".
- Welcome contract agreements with Garner, Branthwaite, Armstrong etc.

Squad Development

- This is where it gets really frustrating
- Poor squad management - exhaustion as a factor in the late drop-off.
- Matt Jones research:
 - Bottom in division for both players used and subs used
 - We had eight players play 2,500 or more minutes this season - Pickford, Tarkowski, Keane, O'Brien, Mykolenko, Dewsbury-Hall, Garner, Ndiaye - the most of any side in the Premier League
 - Also play in a tiring way - most duels contested in the league
 - Upshot is squad ran out of gas: Since late March international break in March, Everton have conceded eight (!) goals in the 75th minute or later across just seven games.
- Adds to the frustration of not using some of the Summer signings
- Should note that there was a major improvement in James Garner - should have gone to World Cup

Moyes' performance

- Defining characteristic is caution - selection, transfers, tactics
- Spy-gate joke
- Provides a 'high floor and a low ceiling' to his team's performances
- Good argument he was right person to bring-in when Dyche went unexpectedly early straight after take-over and club needed stabilisation while TFG sorted finances and we got through exceptionally competitive season
- Moyes isn't changing - will continue on this way
- How much better were we in last 15 mins against Spurs with George adding some pace on left and Garner adding creativity from fullback?

The future:

Is recruitment structure and senior team:

- Is there a clear football strategy and alignment behind it?
- Is there a wider strategy for the whole club?

Stadium move:

- Stadium is incredible
- Some teething problems inevitable and seem well handled by club when they occurred
- Big question is wider ambition for club to drive regeneration of the area

What do the Friedkins want?

- They have probably already made their money from Everton
- Have done a good job of stabilising club finances -
- *Doesn't seem to be any emotional link from Friedkins personally to Everton - Dan never visited. Seems to very much just be another business in their group.*
- Scenario where as long as we don't go down, they're happy for club to be in this kind of position - can look to sell club for a profit within a few years
- In this scenario keeping Moyes makes a lot of sense - TFG should give him extension

- Or do they want to push on?
- If so, failure to bring-in a right-back in January despite such obvious need left us horribly exposed when Branthwaite got injured again and so big opportunity missed this season
- Need for significantly better transfer improvement and, frankly, less Moyes influence not more - can't sign Soucek etc.
- Need to be less cautious in team selection and tactics eg. need to move on from Moyes now
- Given good managers available this close season - Glasner, Iraola - then very strong argument for paying what it takes to get one

- Worst of all words is leaving it another year before deciding on which direction to take - would suggest drift from the top
- I know what i'd prefer