

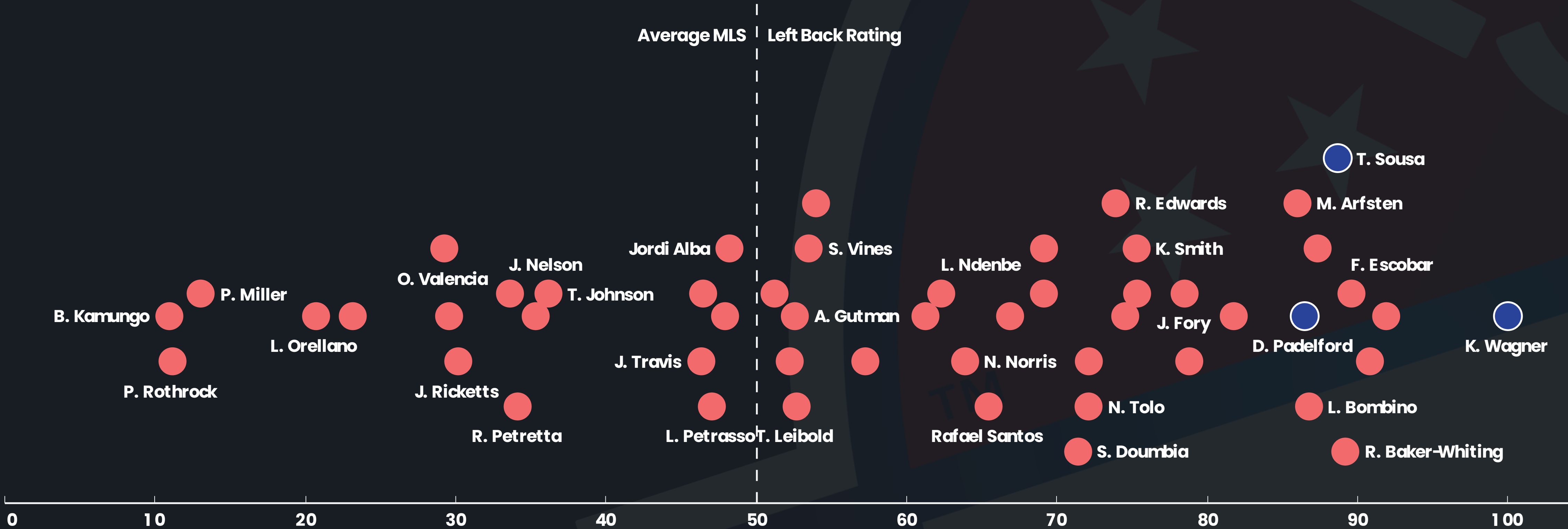


Left Backs

Overall Ratings – MLS Left Backs

in specialist Championship Framework

The graph below ranks every left back in the MLS 2025 Season in a specialist **ScoutDeck® Championship Framework**.
Players must have played a minimum of 600 minutes to qualify.



MLS Left Backs – Potential Championship Signings



Kai Wagner

Philadelphia Union

Age : 28
Position : Left Back
Nationality : Germany
Height : 182cm / 6'0"
Weight : 78kg / 171lbs
Foot : Left

Market Value : £4.3 Million
Release Clause : £1.5 Million
Wages : £17,000 per week (est)
Contract Expiry : 31/12/2026

Strengths

Best Attributes

- Tackling
- 1 v 1 duels
- Passing
- Crossing
- Set-pieces
- Chance creation
- Anticipation
- Concentration

Season Stats

2024 – 2025

Appearances : 28
Minutes Played : 2700
Defensive Duels per 90 : 7.93
Defensive Duels Won, % : 63.0%
Aerial Duels per 90 : 2.67
Aerial Duels Won, % : 57.5%
Assists : 9
xA per 90 : 0.32

Additional Info

Both Burnley and Coventry have looked at signing him in the last 12 months, as well as Serie A sides Atalanta and Parma Calcio

Weaknesses

Areas to Improve

- Tendancy to slide tackle
- Tries killer balls often

Best Roles

Framework Scores



Defensive Fullback
1st in MLS



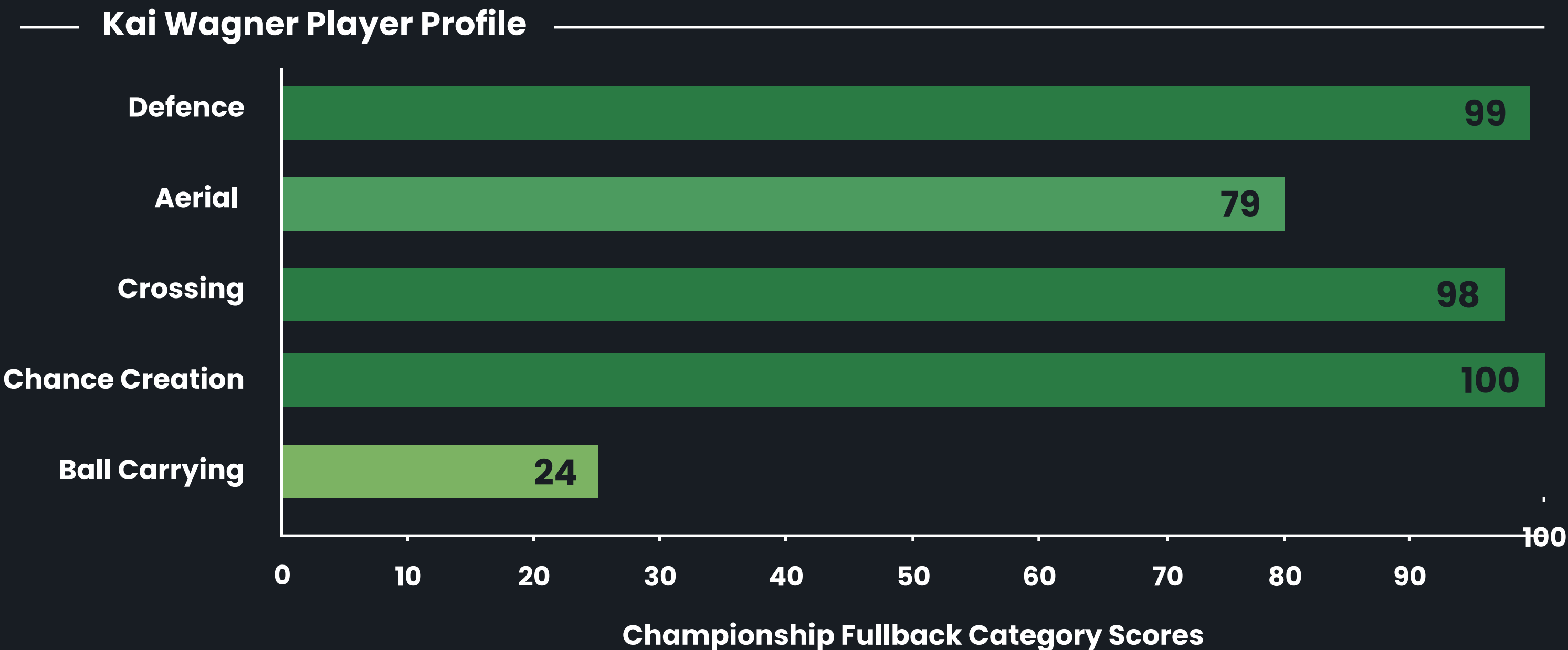
Attacking Fullback
1st in MLS



Balanced Fullback
6th in MLS

Category Scores | **Championship Fullback Framework**

Kai Wagner scores impressively in four out of five categories in the Championship Fullback framework thanks to his elite defensive abilities, combined with his ability to create high quality chances for his team.



What does this mean?

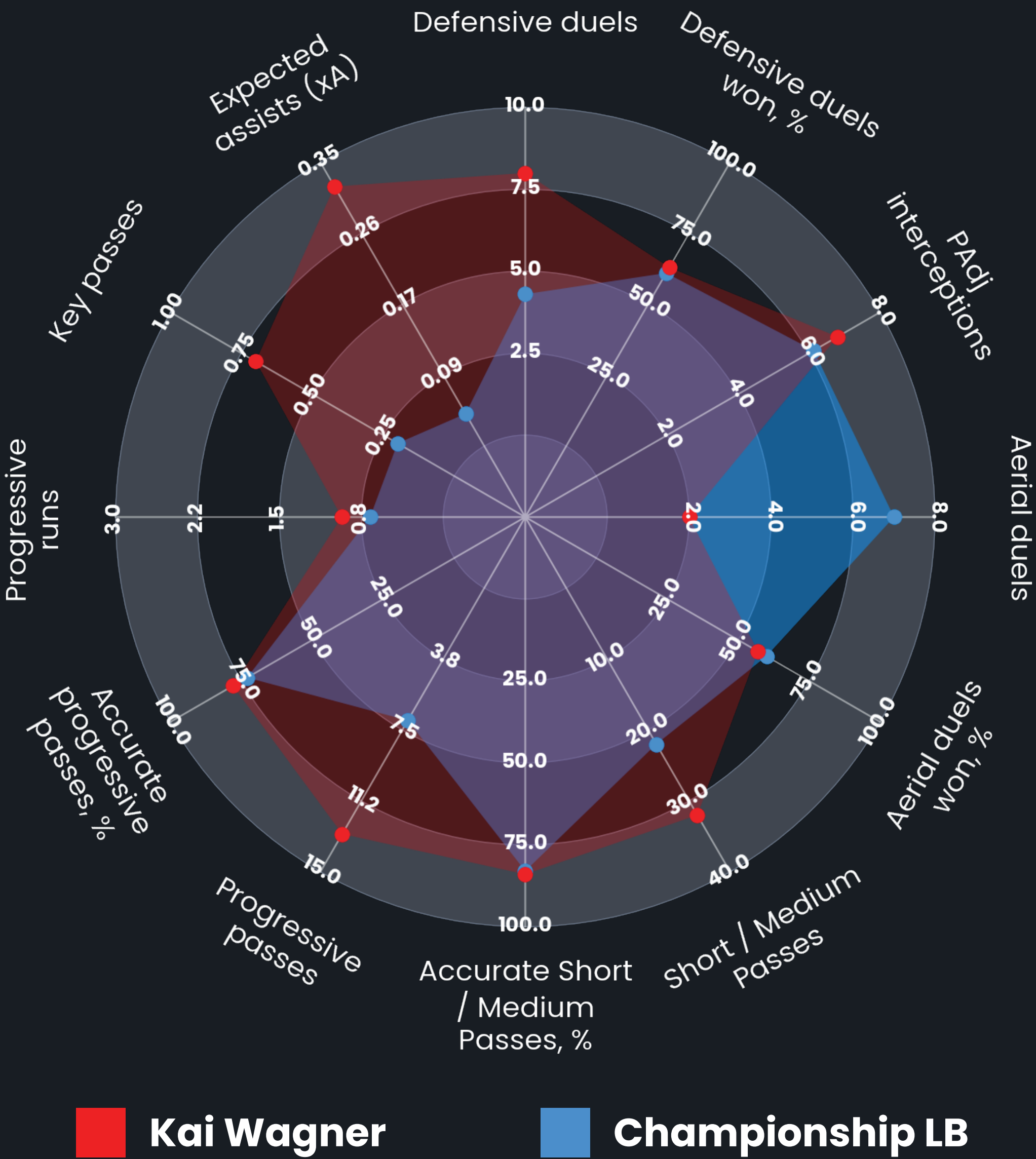
- Defence : **99/100** – Elite score showcasing his defensive reliability
- Aerial: **79/100** – Strong in the air, consistently competitive
- Crossing: **98/100** – Excellent ball delivery adds an extra dimension to his overall game
- Chance Creation: **100/100** – Elite chance creation and provision of high quality chances for teammates
- Ball Carrying: **24/100** – Wagner focuses on build-up play and passing rather than ball carrying

To break it down, Kai Wagner is the standout left back in the MLS due to his ability on the ball.

Kai Wagner vs Championship LB

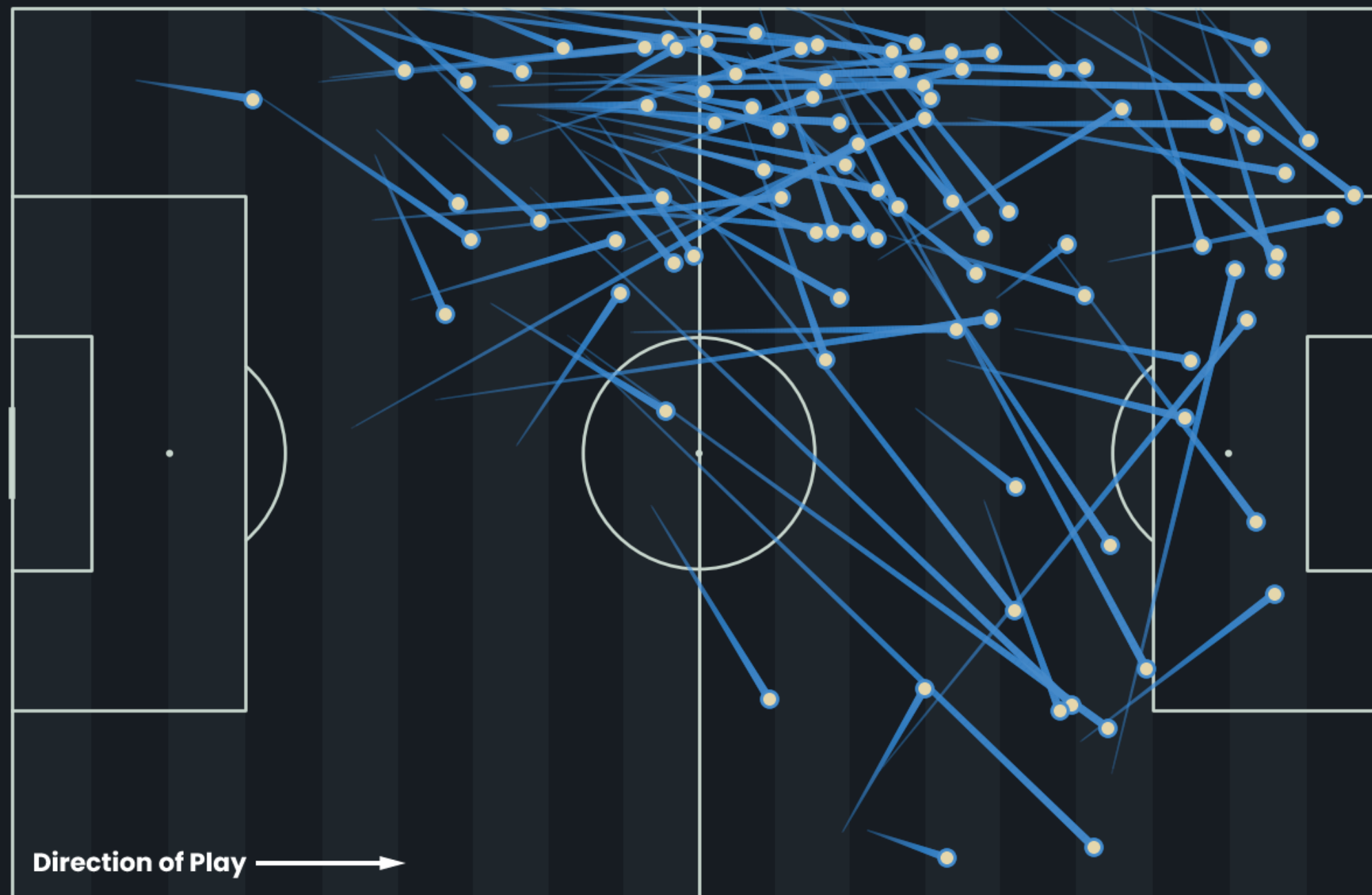
MLS 2025 vs Championship 24 - 25

All metrics are per 90 unless stated.



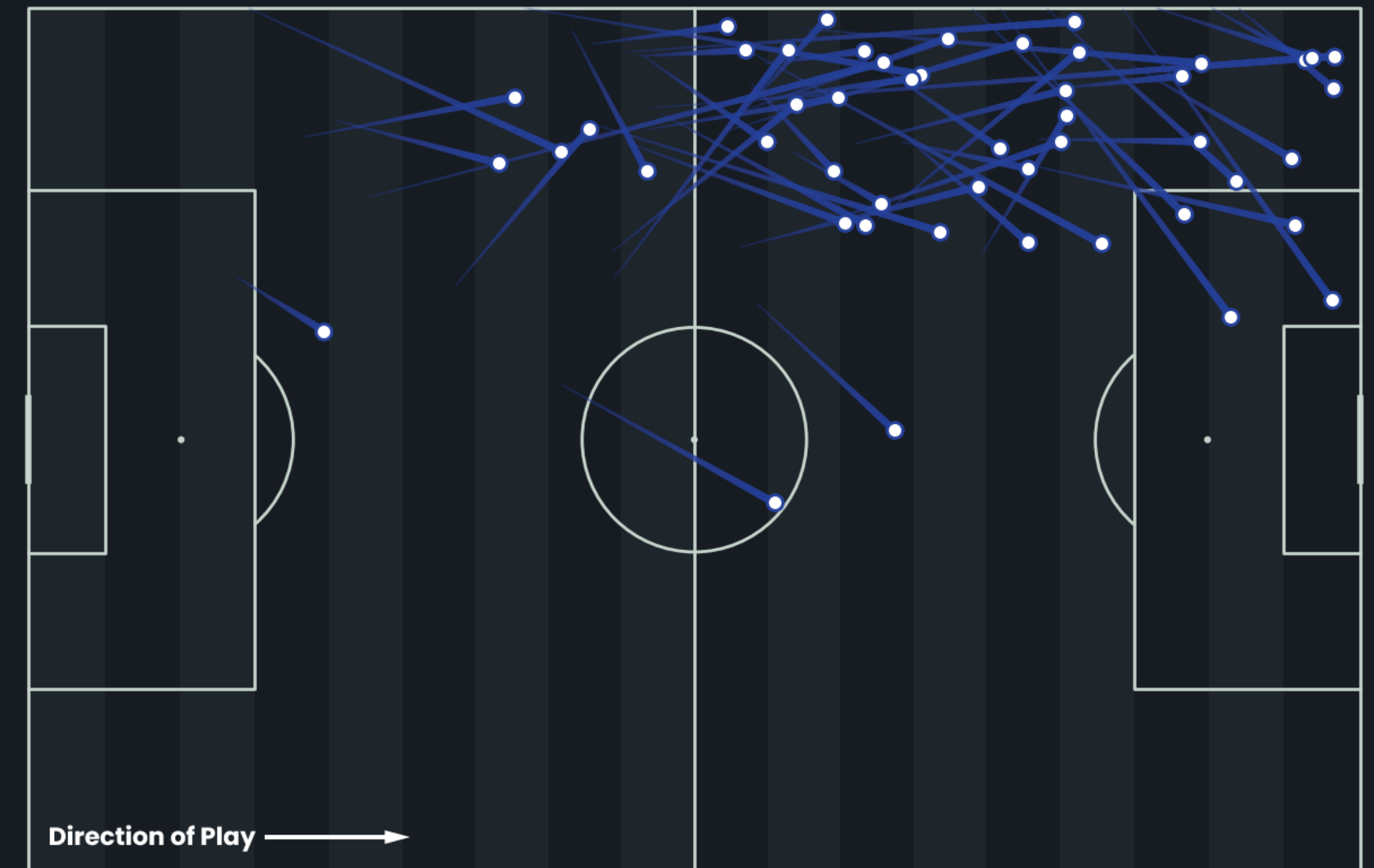
Kai Wagner Progressive Passes

This map shows Kai Wagner's progressive passes over the last five games. A forward-thinking left-back, he consistently looks to advance play from deep, mixing shorter line-breaking passes into midfield with longer switches into advanced wide areas. His distribution regularly finds teammates in attacking positions, with multiple entries into the final third and edge of the box. Wagner's range and execution make him a reliable outlet in build-up while also providing penetration and variety to disrupt opposition defensive structures.



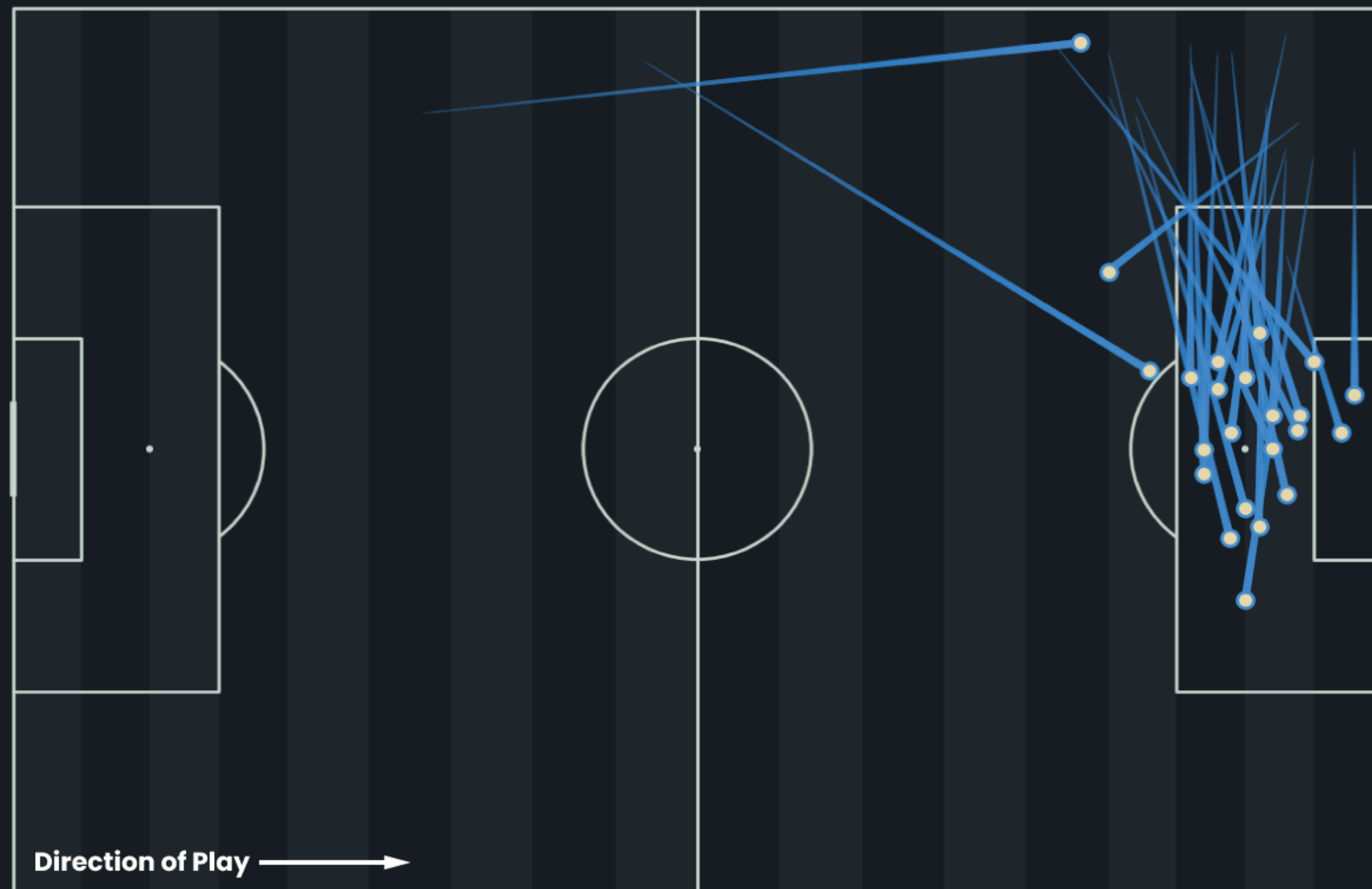
Championship LB Progressive Passes

The map below shows Championship LB's progressive passes over the last five games. He plays in a straightforward manner, moving the ball safely down the left flank and into wide attacking areas. While reliable and consistent, his influence in deeper build-up is limited, with little progression through central zones or variation in his passing. He provides stability and territory, though his technical limitations mean he has a reduced impact on build-up play.



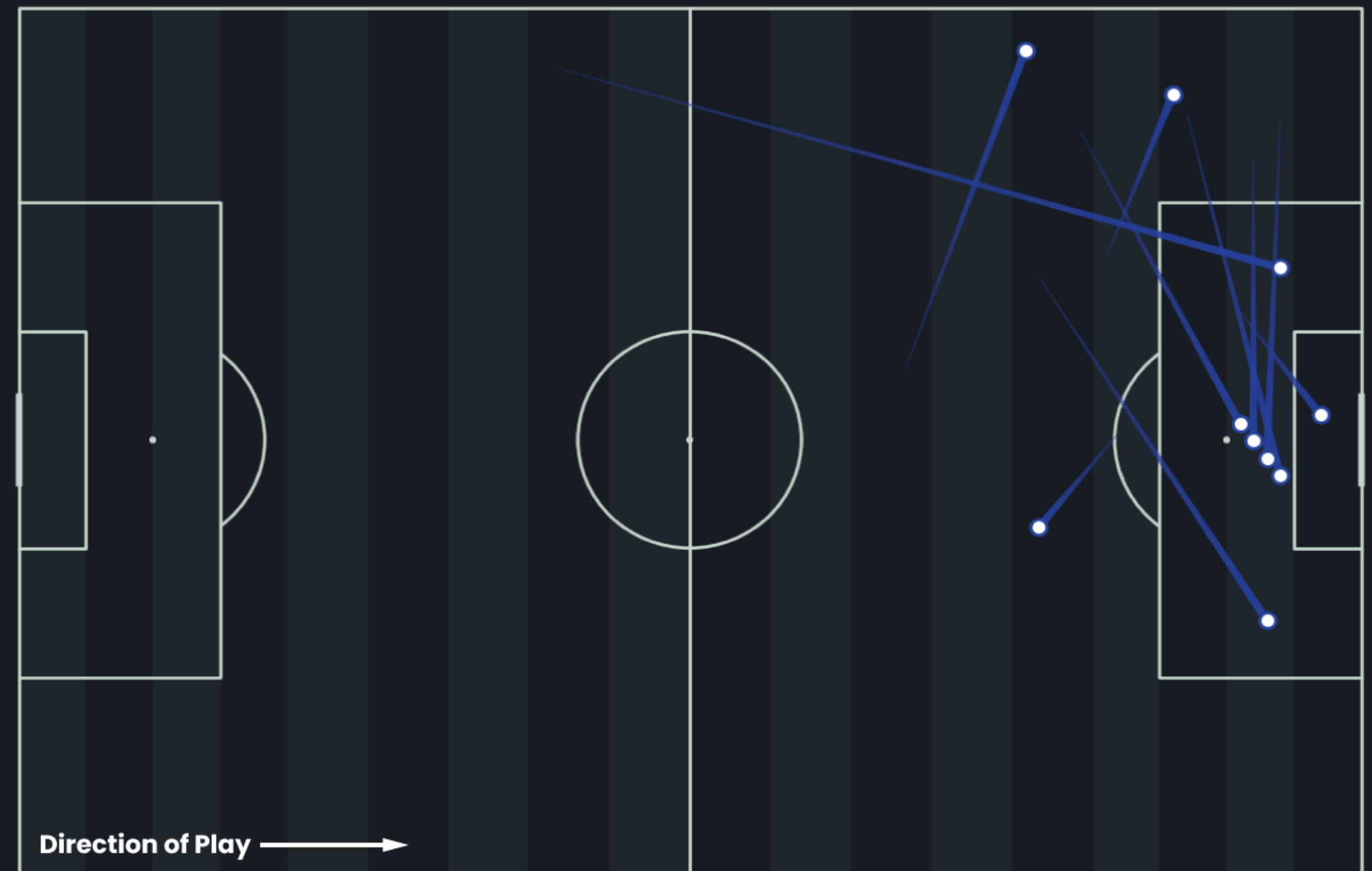
Kai Wagner Key Passes

These are Kai Wagner's 24 key passes from last season, each leading directly to a shot. Operating as a left-back, he consistently delivers into advanced areas, with the majority aimed at the edge of the box or into central attacking zones. His crossing and final-third passing make him a clear creative outlet, reflected in an xA of 0.32 per 90, one of the strongest outputs for his position. Wagner's distribution underlines his value as an attacking full-back, offering consistent chance creation from the left side.



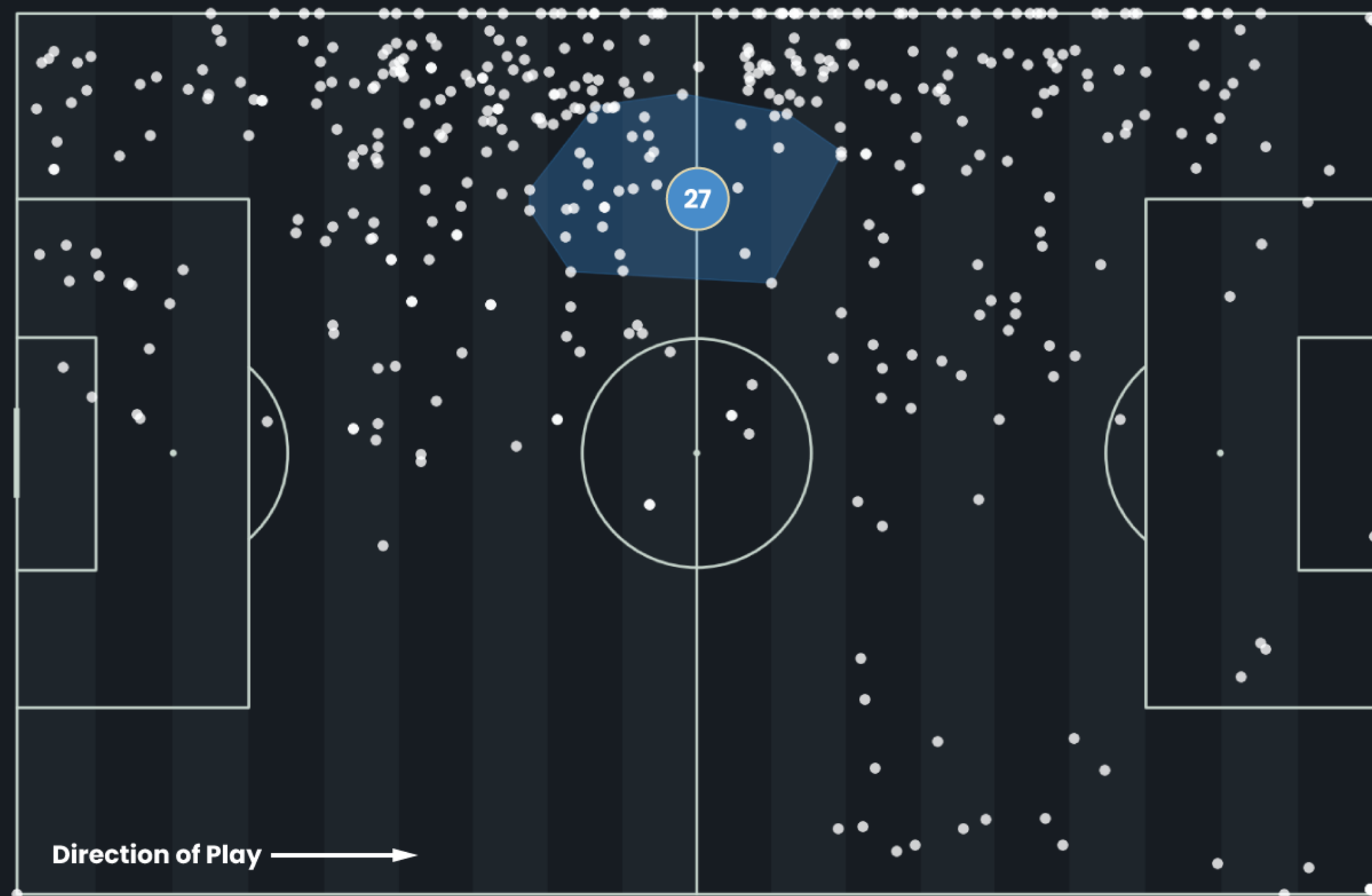
Championship LB Key Passes

Across last season, Championship LB produced just 10 key passes, each leading directly to a shot. Operating as a left-back, his chance creation was limited, with most passes coming from straightforward deliveries into the box rather than varied or incisive play. His xA of 0.03 per 90 reflects a minimal creative influence, offering little impact in possession beyond basic service. He provides defensive stability, but his contribution to chance creation remains very restricted.



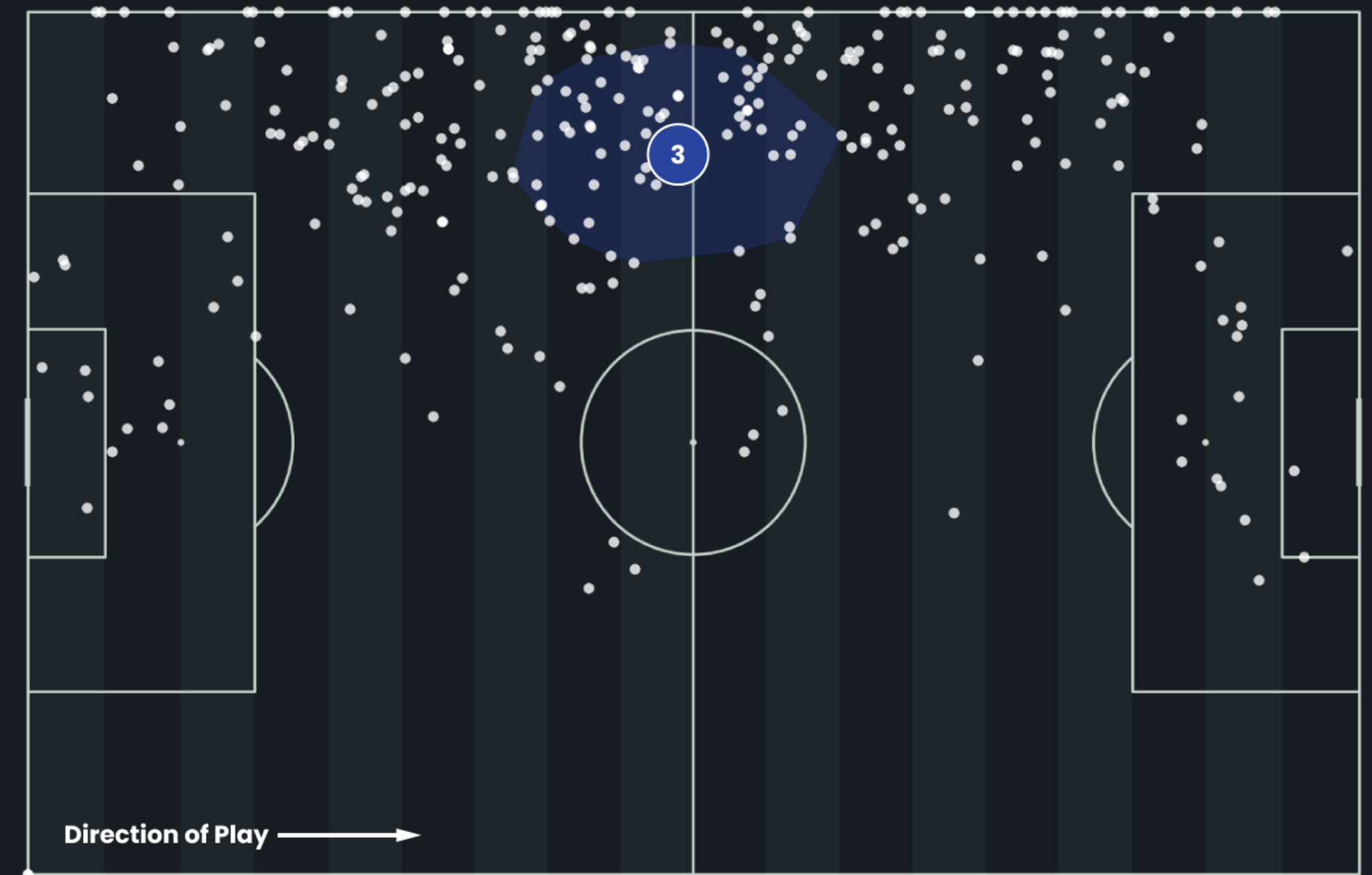
Kai Wagner Touch Map

Wagner's touch map illustrates just how involved he is down the left flank, with consistent activity in both deep build-up and advanced areas. He regularly collects possession in his own half to initiate progression, while also pushing high into the final third to support attacks. Across his last five games he registered 426 touches, an average of 85 per game, which is unusually high for a left-back and closer to central midfielder levels. This underlines his role as both a reliable outlet in possession and an attacking full-back who contributes consistently to chance creation.



Championship LB Touch Map

This touch map reflects a more conservative profile at left-back, with the majority of his involvement coming deeper in his own half and along the defensive third. While he does advance into wide attacking areas, his overall influence on possession phases is limited, with fewer touches in central zones or the final third. Across his last five games he registered 304 touches, an average of 61 per game, underlining a role focused more on defensive security and recycling possession rather than driving progression.



Kai Wagner Defensive Actions

Wagner’s defensive actions are concentrated down the left flank, showing reliability in protecting his defensive channel while also stepping higher to press and disrupt wide attacks.

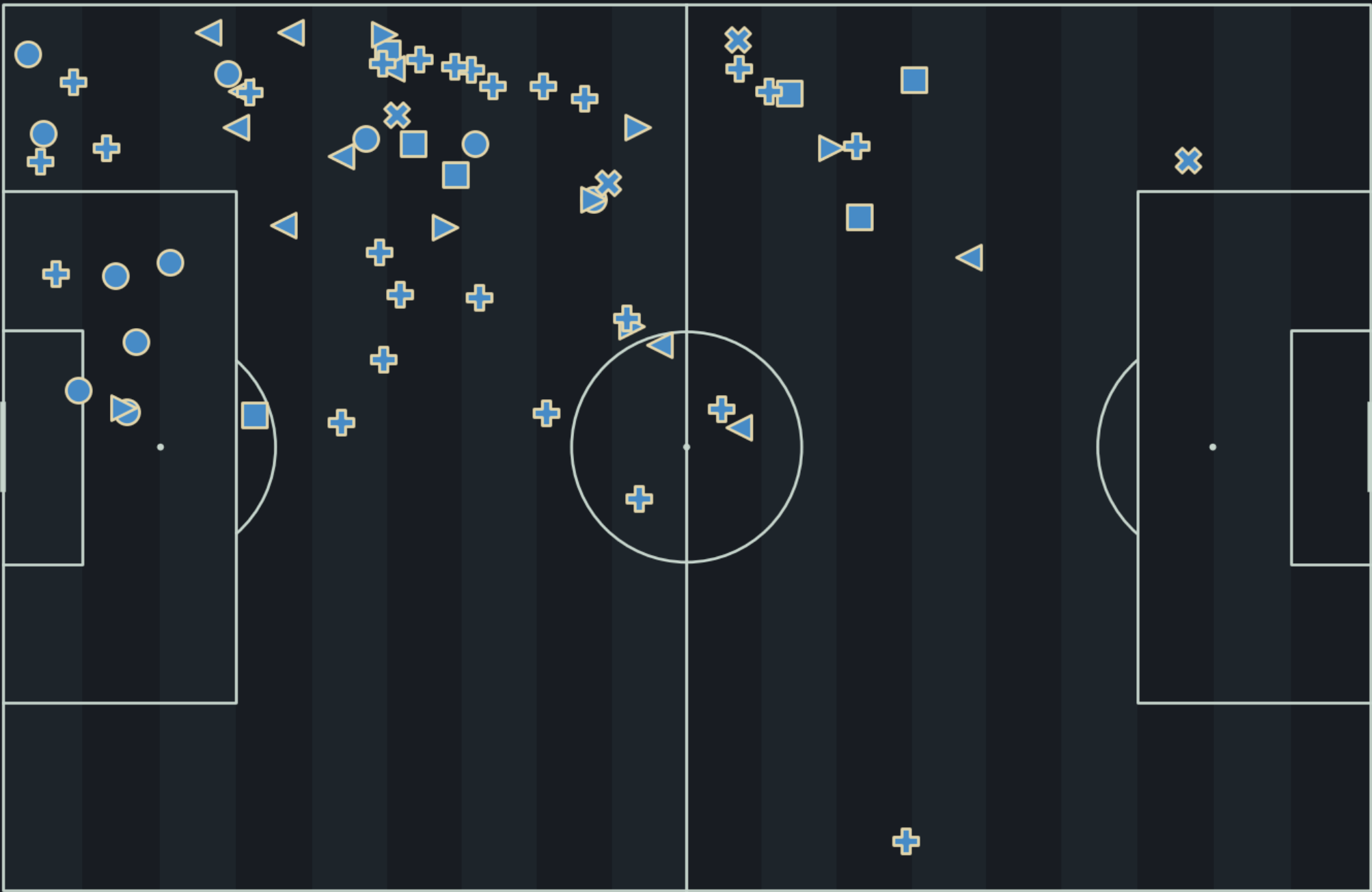
- ◀

Tackles – 10
- ▶

Headers – 7
- +

Ball Recoveries – 25
- Interceptions – 7
- Clearances – 11
- ✕

Fouls Suffered – 4



→ Direction of play

Championship LB Defensive Actions

Championship LB’s defensive actions are concentrated around his own box, reflecting a traditional full-back who prioritises clearances and duels in deep areas.

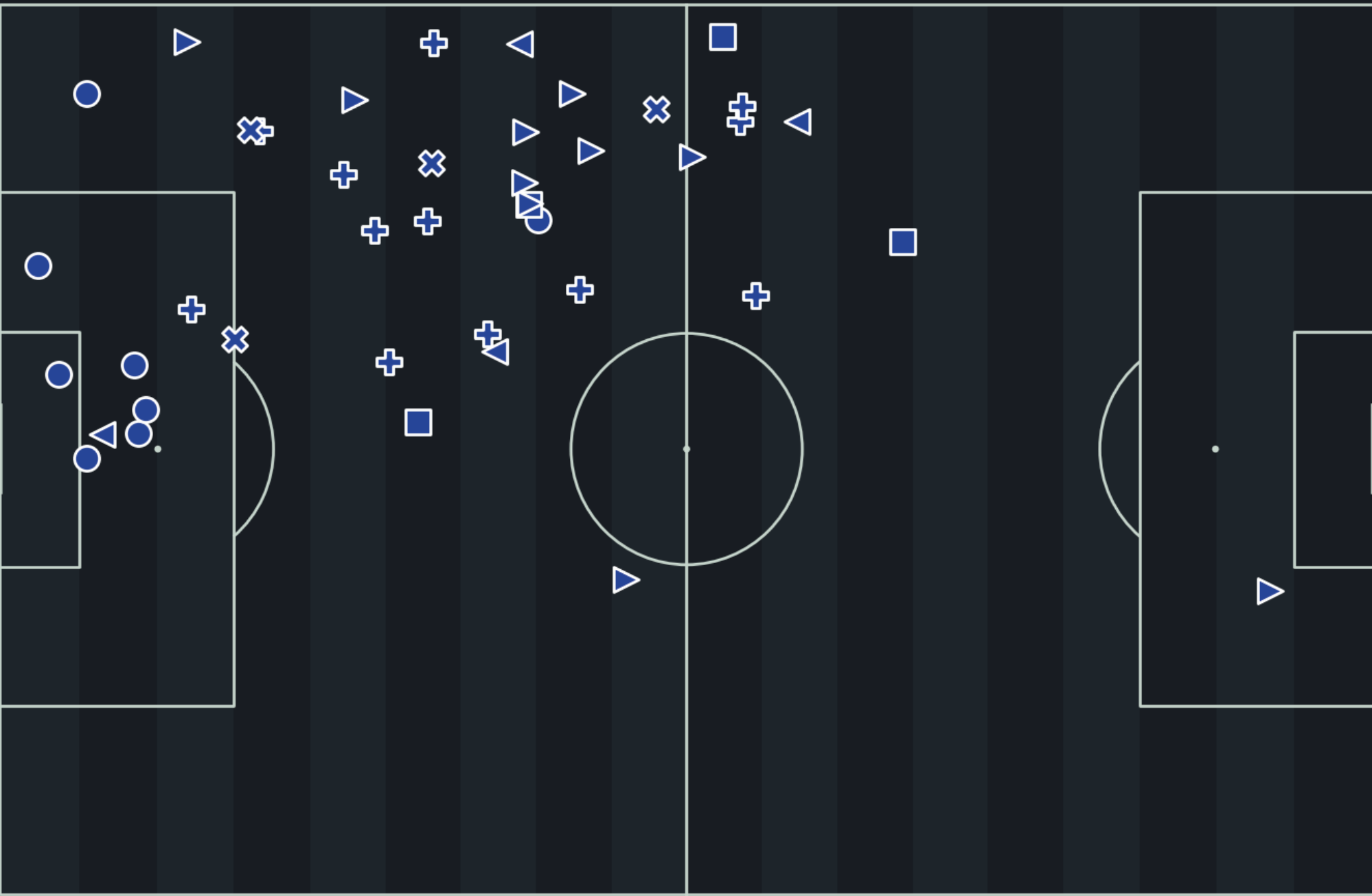
- ◀

Tackles – 9
- ▶

Headers – 13
- +

Ball Recoveries – 12
- Interceptions – 4
- Clearances – 8
- ✕

Fouls Suffered – 6



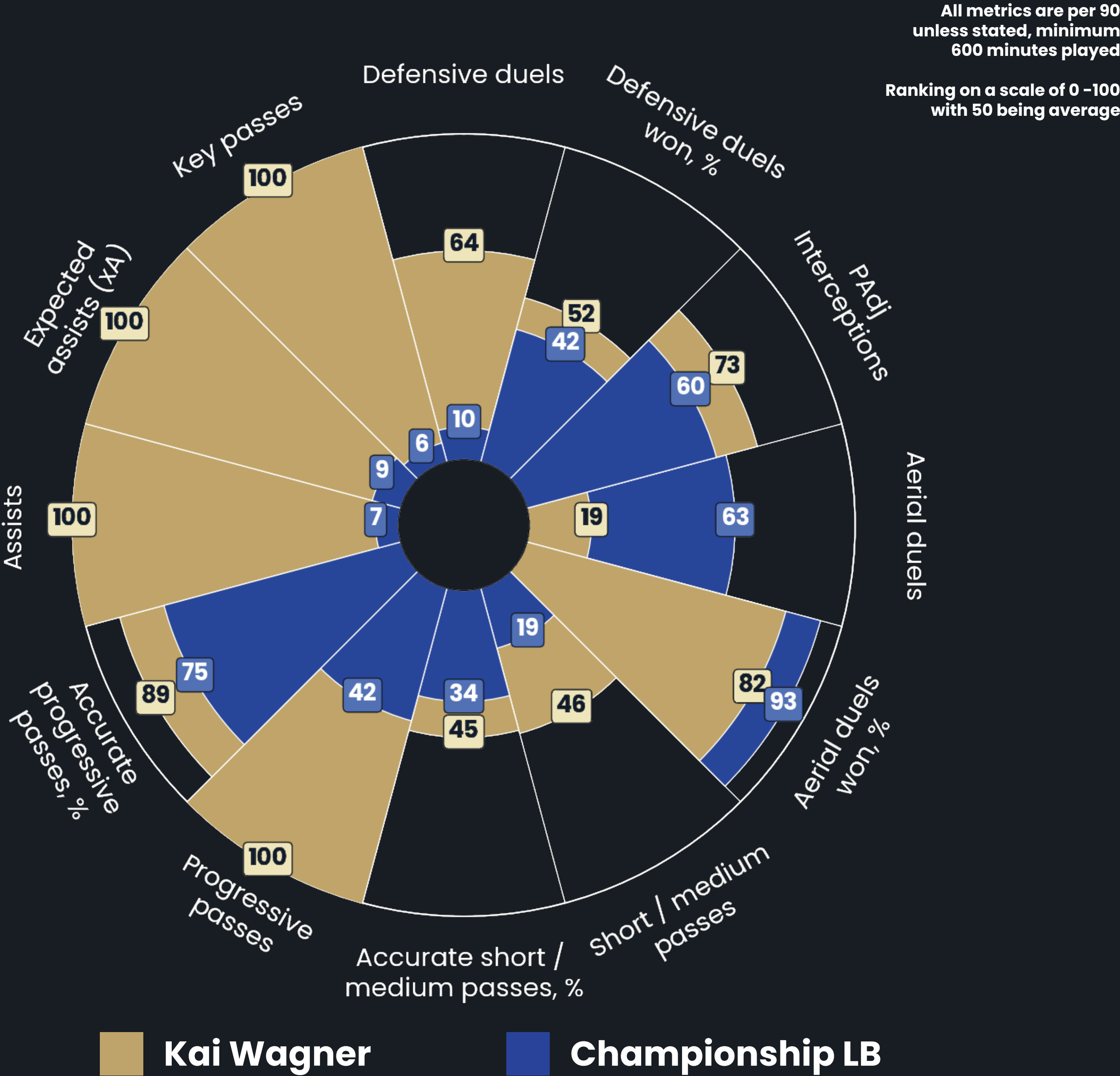
→ Direction of play

Championship Left Backs

in Championship Fullback Framework

We analysed Kai Wagner’s 2025 MLS data against every Championship left-back from the 2024–25 season. To ensure accuracy, we factored in a 15% difficulty adjustment to reflect the higher standard of the Championship, integrating this into our framework calculations to estimate how Wagner’s performance would translate if he were to make the move.

For context, we have also included a current first-choice Championship left-back within the pizza chart. This allows a direct comparison, showing how both players rank on a 0–100 scale across key attributes, using our bespoke Championship Fullback framework model.

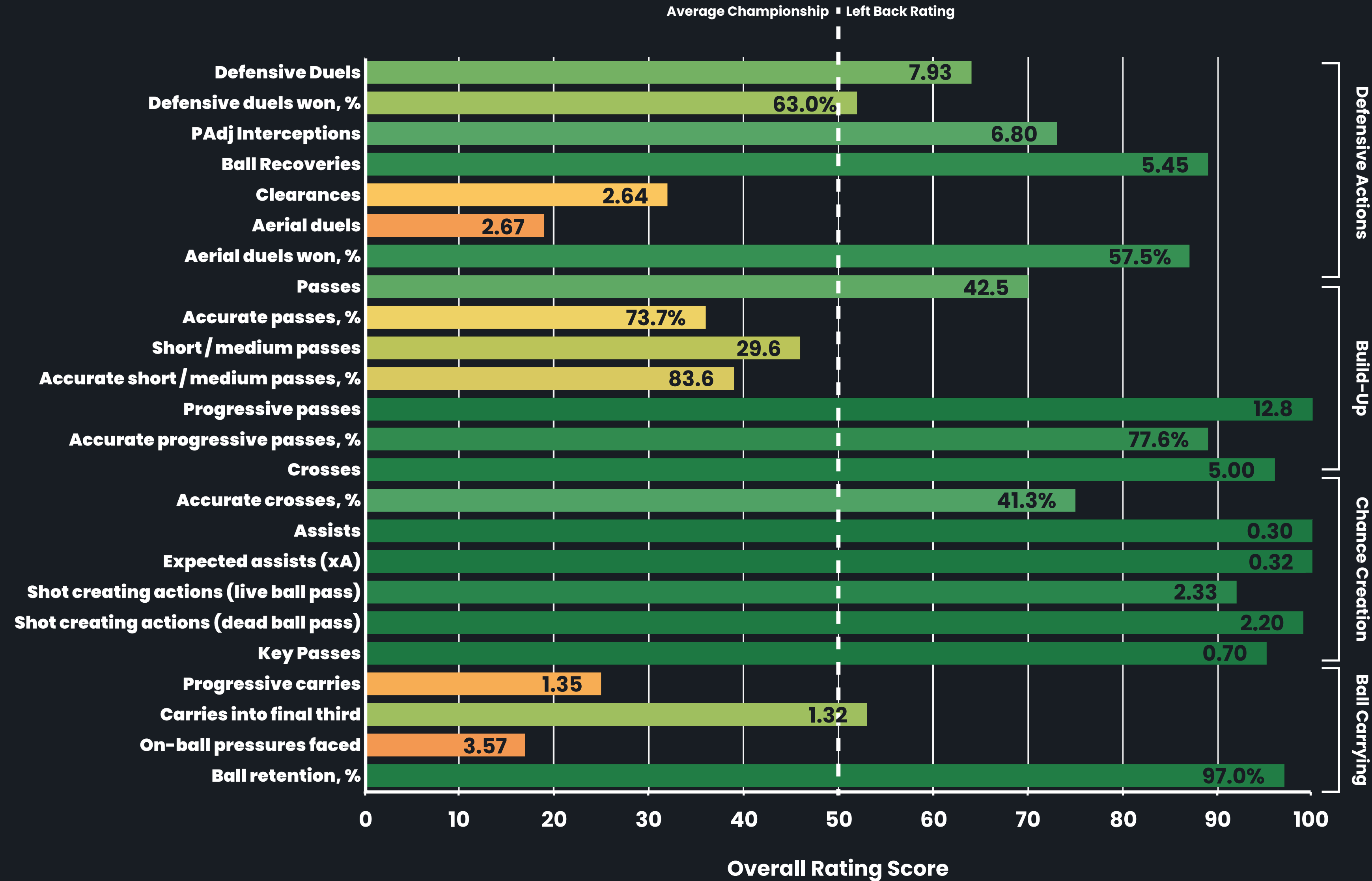


Kai Wagner Ranking

versus EFL Championship Left Backs

All metrics are per 90
unless stated, minimum
600 minutes played

Ranking on a scale of 0 -100
with 50 being average

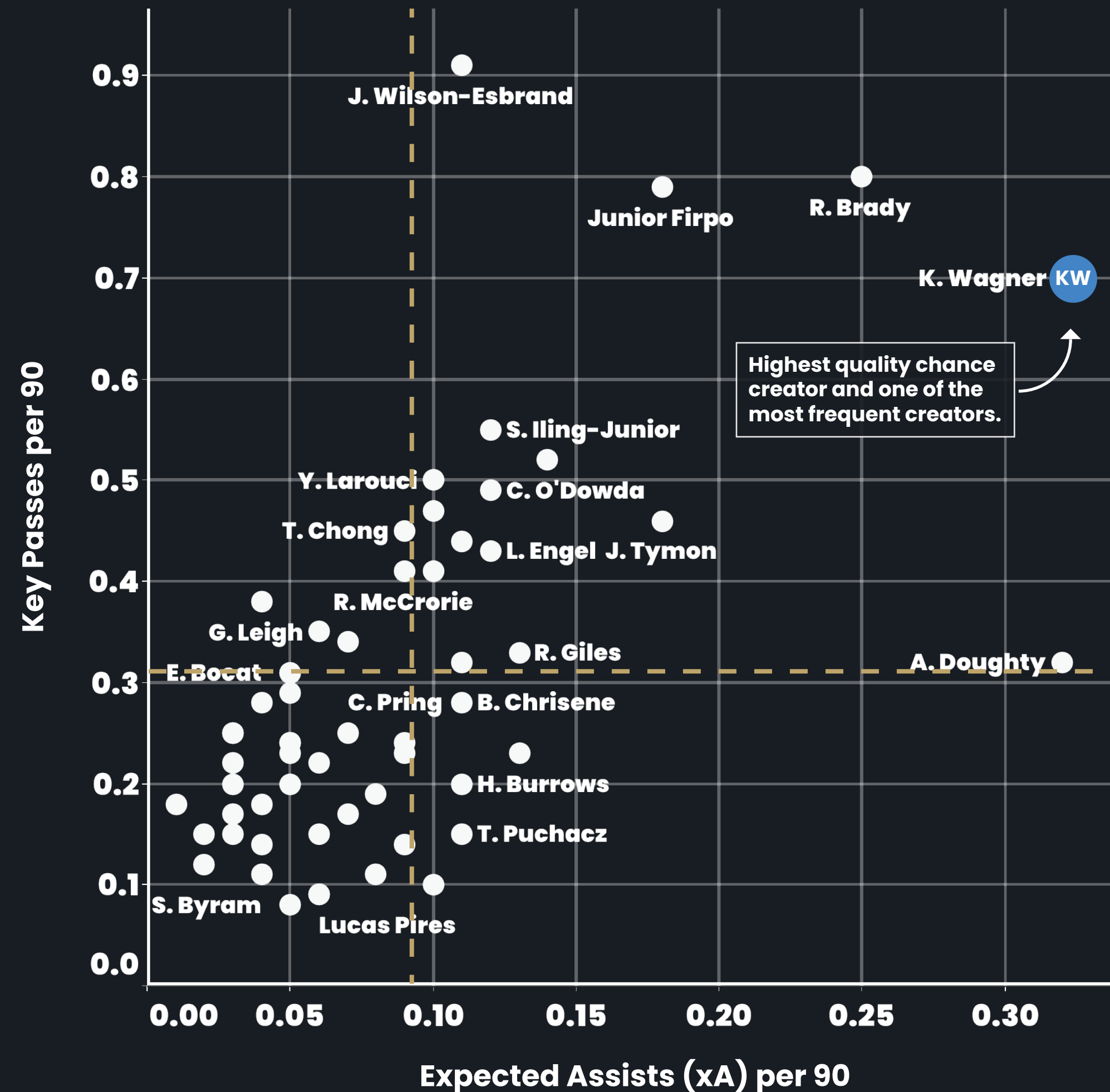


Comparison Stats

compared to Championship Left Backs 24-25

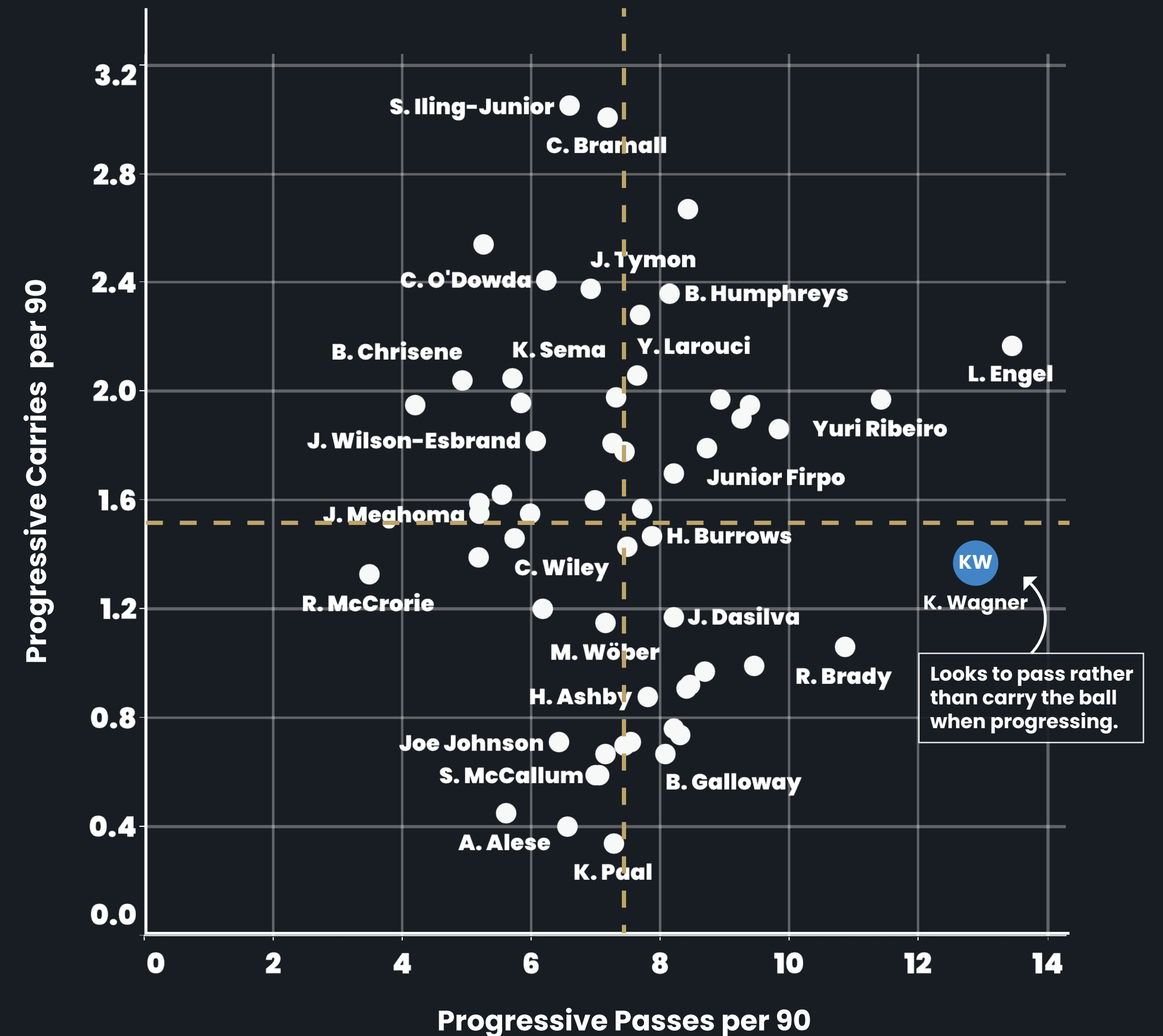
Key Passes per 90 vs Expected Assists (xA) per 90

- Key Passes per 90 = 0.70
- Expected Assists (xA) per 90 = 0.32



Progressive Carries per 90 vs Progressive Passes per 90

- Progressive Carries per 90 = 1.35
- Progressive Passes per 90 = 12.8

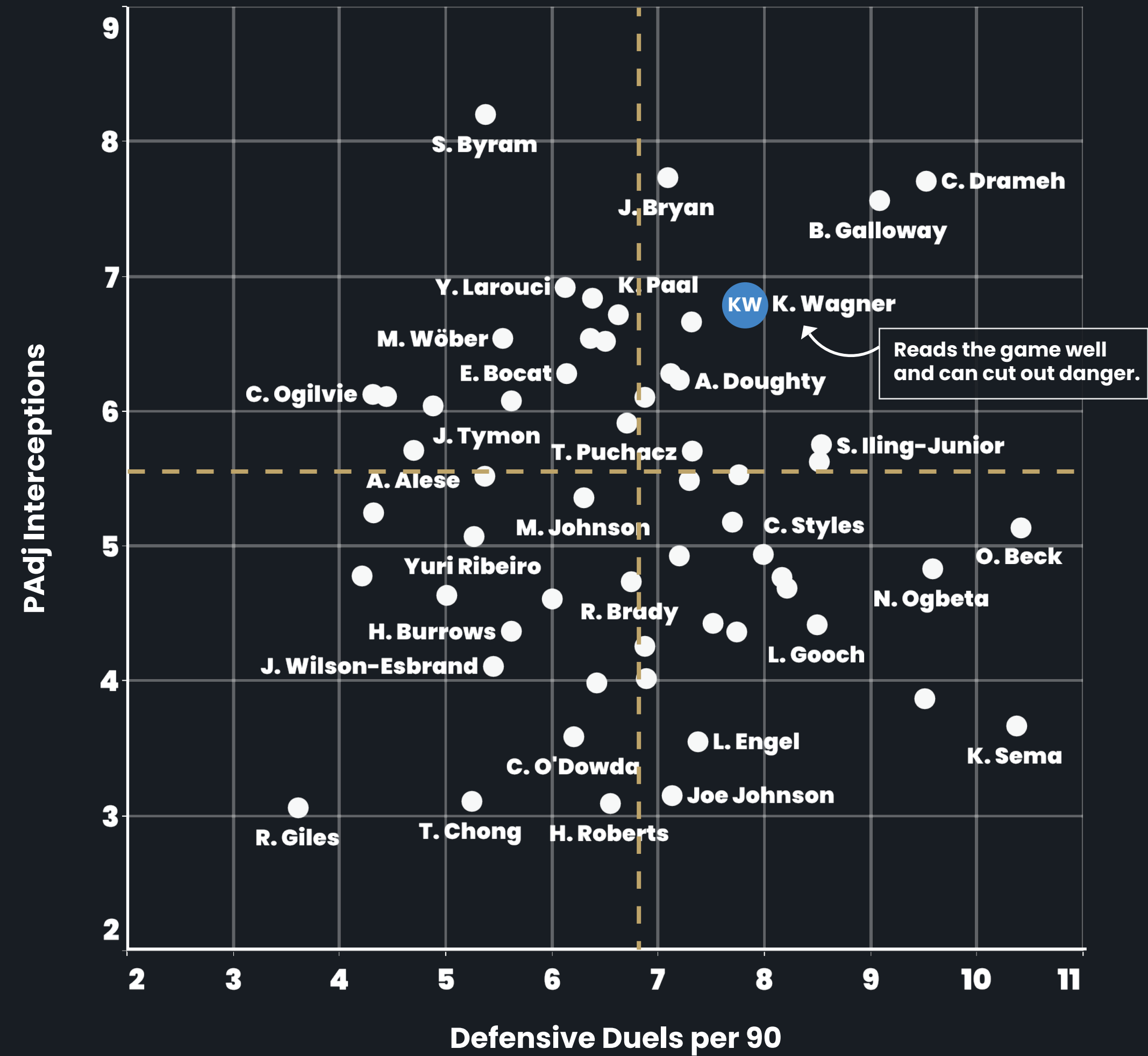


Comparison Stats

compared to Championship Left Backs 24-25

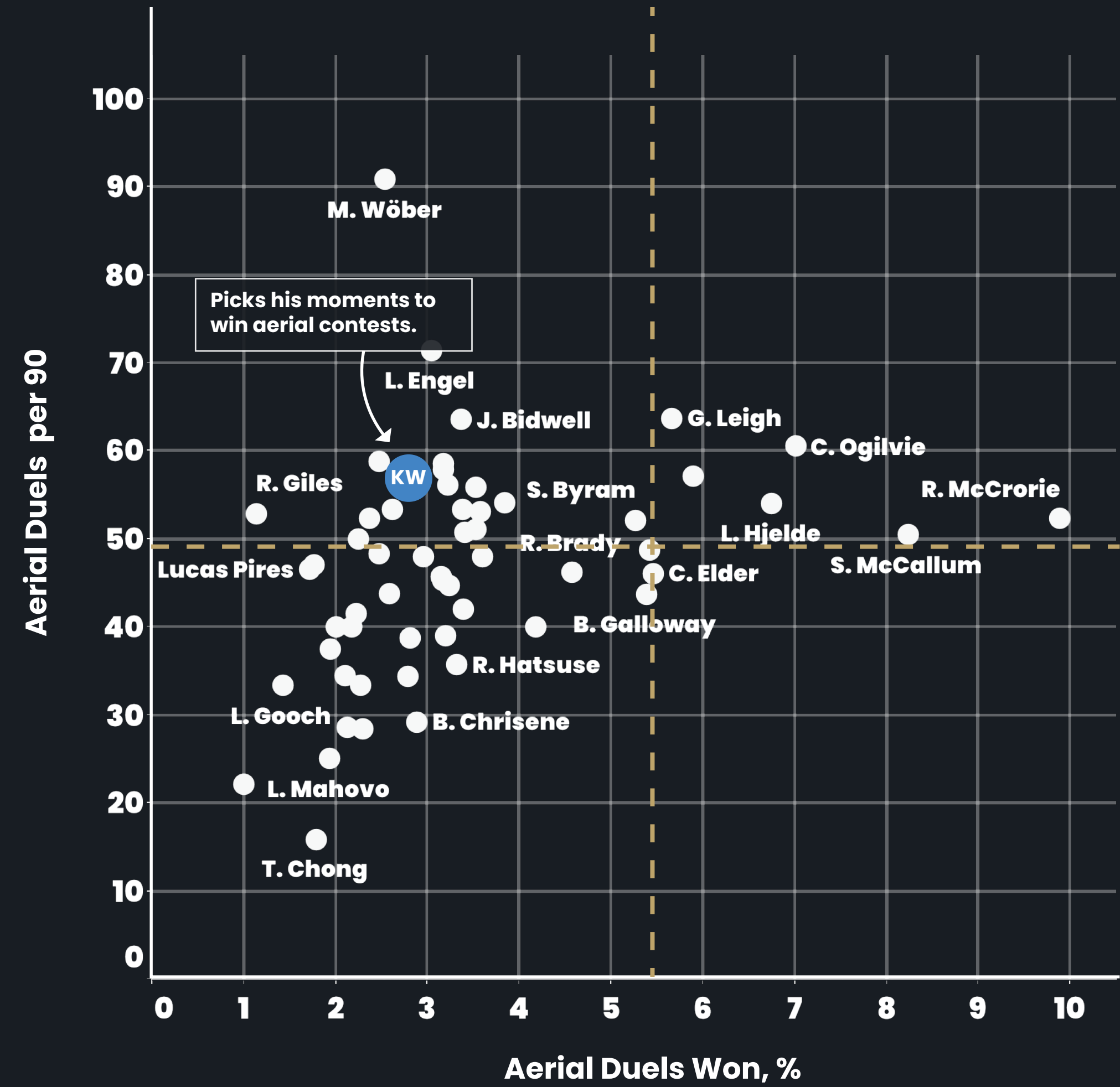
PAdj Interceptions vs Defensive Duels per 90

- PAdj Interceptions = 7.98
- Defensive Duels per 90 = 6.80



Aerial Duels per 90 vs Aerial Duels won, %

- Aerial Duels per 90 = 2.67
- Aerial Duels Won, % = 57.5%



Set Pieces

Delivering extra Set Piece Value

Kai Wagner delivers the majority of Philadelphia Union’s set-pieces, around 85 – 90% of corners and most wide free-kicks, helping drive their set-piece xG to 0.49 per game, compared to Portsmouth and West Brom’s 0.38 as an example.

That 0.11 gap, over a Championship season, equates to several additional goals purely from dead-ball situations. With roughly 20% of all goals in the division scored from set-pieces (excluding penalties), adding a specialist like Wagner could give Championship clubs a vital tactical edge, turning routine corners and free-kicks into match-winning opportunities.

Team	Set-piece xG
 Philadelphia Union	0.49
 San Jose Earthquakes	0.49
 Minnesota United FC	0.47
 Houston Dynamo FC	0.42
 Nashville SC	0.40
 St. Louis City SC	0.39
 Chicago Fire FC	0.38
 Vancouver Whitecaps FC	0.37
 CF Montréal	0.31
 Atlanta United	0.30

* MLS 2025 Season 31 games played

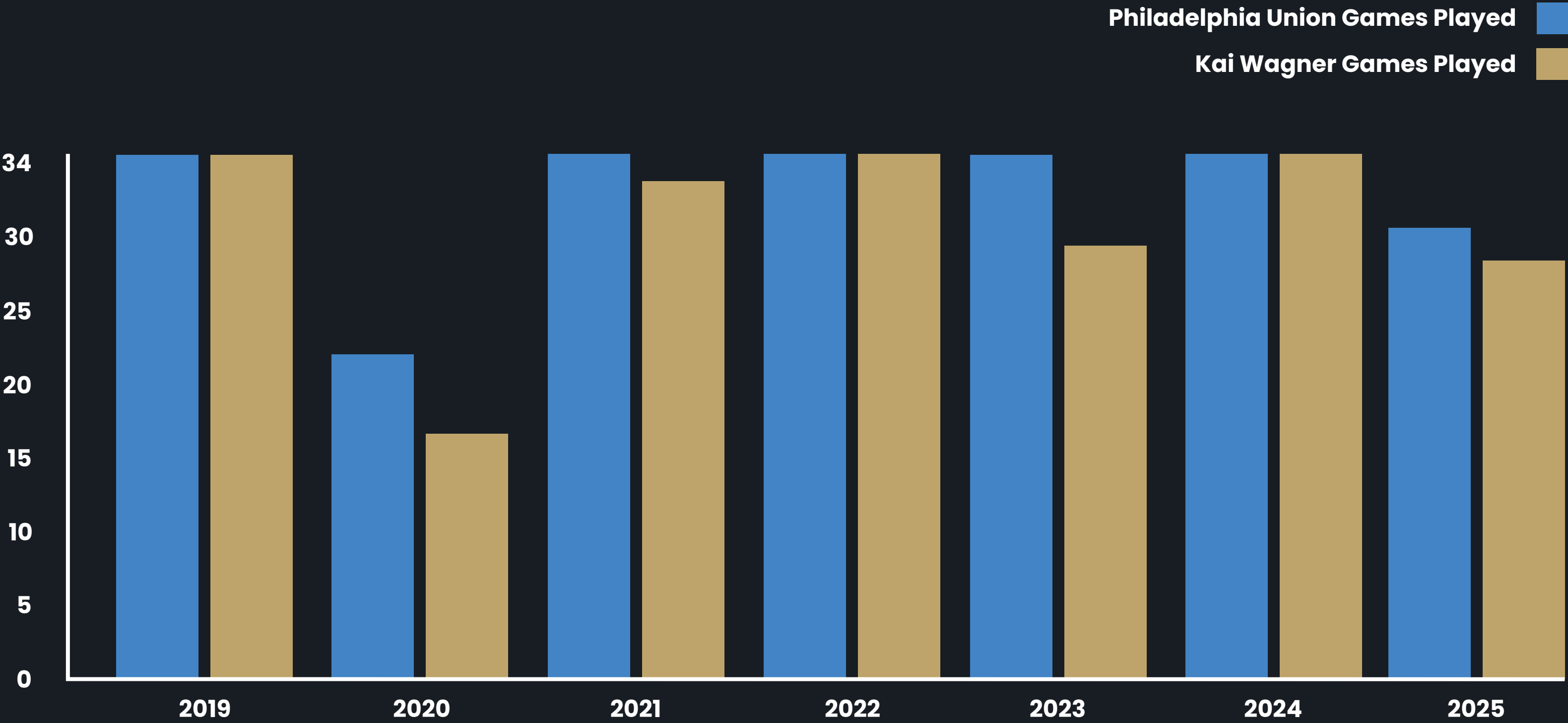
Team	Set-piece xG
 Coventry City	0.57
 Sheffield United	0.55
 Oxford United	0.53
 Millwall	0.50
 Ipswich Town	0.49
 Blackburn Rovers	0.47
 Southampton	0.44
 Wrexham	0.43
 West Bromwich Albion	0.38
 Portsmouth	0.38

* EFL Championship 2025-26 season 6 games played

Injury History and Game Availability

Since signing for Philadelphia Union, Kai Wagner has been available for 209 of 224 MLS matches, giving him an outstanding 93% availability rate. Over seven seasons he has missed just 15 league games, which is remarkable for a fullback in such a physically demanding role.

This level of consistency reduces disruption to team structure and provides coaches with the confidence to build tactical systems around him. His durability not only safeguards tactical continuity but also lessens the financial and sporting risks associated with injuries. Wagner’s reliability ensures his influence, whether through progressive play, defensive contribution, or set-piece delivery, is almost always present, making him both a technical asset and a dependable cornerstone in squad planning.



Season	Minutes Played	Games missed due to injury	Injury
2019	3129	0	N/A
2020	1074	7	Leg Injury
2021	3371	1	Covid – Quarantine
2022	3578	0	N/A
2023	2809	5	Hamstring injury & recurrence
2024	3255	0	N/A
2025	2798	2	Injury to abdominal muscles

Video Analysis

ScoutDepth *Video Analysis*

Kai
Wagner



Kai Wagner Highlights

FA Four Corner Profile

Kai Wagner

Technical

Wagner offers a well-rounded technical base that combines secure possession with consistent end product. His left foot provides a reliable outlet for switches of play and progressive distribution, enabling teams to move opponents laterally and open space in advanced areas. Beyond ball circulation, his crossing is a genuine weapon: he delivers with variety, able to whip balls into the near post or stand them up to the far post, giving forwards multiple types of service. For teams looking to increase their output from wide areas, Wagner's proven creativity from both open play and set-pieces represents a significant attacking upgrade.

Physical

Durability is one of Wagner's standout qualities. Across seven MLS seasons he has been available for selection over 90% of the time, missing very few games through injury or suspension. This level of availability ensures clubs would gain not just a quality player, but a consistently present one, crucial across a 46-game Championship season with its intensity and physical demands. He covers ground efficiently, with the capacity to repeat sprints on the overlap while still recovering defensively. His conditioning allows him to maintain output late into games, reducing drop-off and ensuring reliability across congested fixture periods.

Tactical

Defensively, Wagner shows strong positional awareness and a good understanding of when to engage versus when to delay, making him a steady presence in one-v-one duels. He balances his attacking instincts with discipline, rarely leaving unnecessary gaps behind him, which would be vital in the Championship's transitional game. Offensively, he integrates well into structured build-up, stepping into midfield pockets to connect play or overlapping aggressively when space opens up. This tactical flexibility means he can adapt to both a back four or wing-back role, while still offering defensive solidity against the pace and directness of Championship opposition.

Psychological

Wagner brings maturity, composure, and a clear sense of responsibility. As Philadelphia Union's set-piece specialist, he has shown confidence in delivering under pressure and consistency across multiple seasons, reflecting both self-assurance and professionalism. His mentality is steady rather than erratic: he offers teammates reassurance in possession and resilience out of it. For Championship clubs, he would bring an experienced, dependable figure who thrives on consistency and who is accustomed to being trusted in high-stakes situations. His leadership through reliability, rather than vocal dominance, would add an understated but valuable edge to the squad.

Summary

A transformative addition to the Championship

Bringing in Kai Wagner would represent a decisive move for clubs both on and off the pitch. At 28, he is in his prime years and has already established himself as one of Major League Soccer's standout full-backs, consistently ranking among the league leaders for defensive reliability, progressive passing, and chance creation from wide areas. His signing would immediately raise the level of the left-back position, providing a proven two-way contributor who can deliver security out of possession and genuine attacking value through his distribution, crossing, and set-piece delivery.

Wagner's availability record is exceptional, making him a dependable performer across the long Championship campaign. His durability and conditioning mean he can handle the intensity and fixture congestion of English football, offering stability in a role where continuity is vital. This ensures not just quality but consistency, reducing risk and enhancing reliability in one of the most demanding positions.

Beyond the pitch, Wagner brings profile and marketability. As a leading MLS player moving into the Championship, his arrival would generate interest beyond a club's traditional fanbase, with potential to drive shirt sales and grow visibility in the North American market. Combined with his on-field impact, this makes the deal both a footballing and commercial opportunity.



Alternative Options

MLS Left Backs



Devin Padelford

St Louis City (Loan)

Age : 28
Position: Left Back
Nationality: United States
Height: 182cm / 6'0"
Weight: 78kg / 171lbs
Foot: Left
Contract Expiry: 31/12/2025

Strengths

Best Attributes

- Tackling
- 1 v 1 duels
- Heading
- Defensive Positioning
- Ball Carrying
- Composure

Season Stats

2024 – 2025

Appearances : 11
Minutes Played : 748
Defensive Duels per 90 : 7.22
Defensive Duels Won, % : 73.3%
Aerial Duels per 90 : 2.04
Aerial Duels Won, % : 52.9%
Assists : 0
xA per 90 : 0.07

Weaknesses

Areas to Improve

- Passing Range
- Attacking Threat
- Acceleration

Best Roles

Framework Scores



Defensive Fullback
8th in MLS



Balanced Fullback
20th in MLS



Attacking Fullback
11th in MLS

Devin Padelford vs Championship LB

MLS 2025 and Championship 24-25

Defensive Solidity: Strong in 1v1 duels and interceptions, giving Pompey extra reliability at the back. Reads the game well for his age, limiting the number of dangerous situations he allows opponents to create.

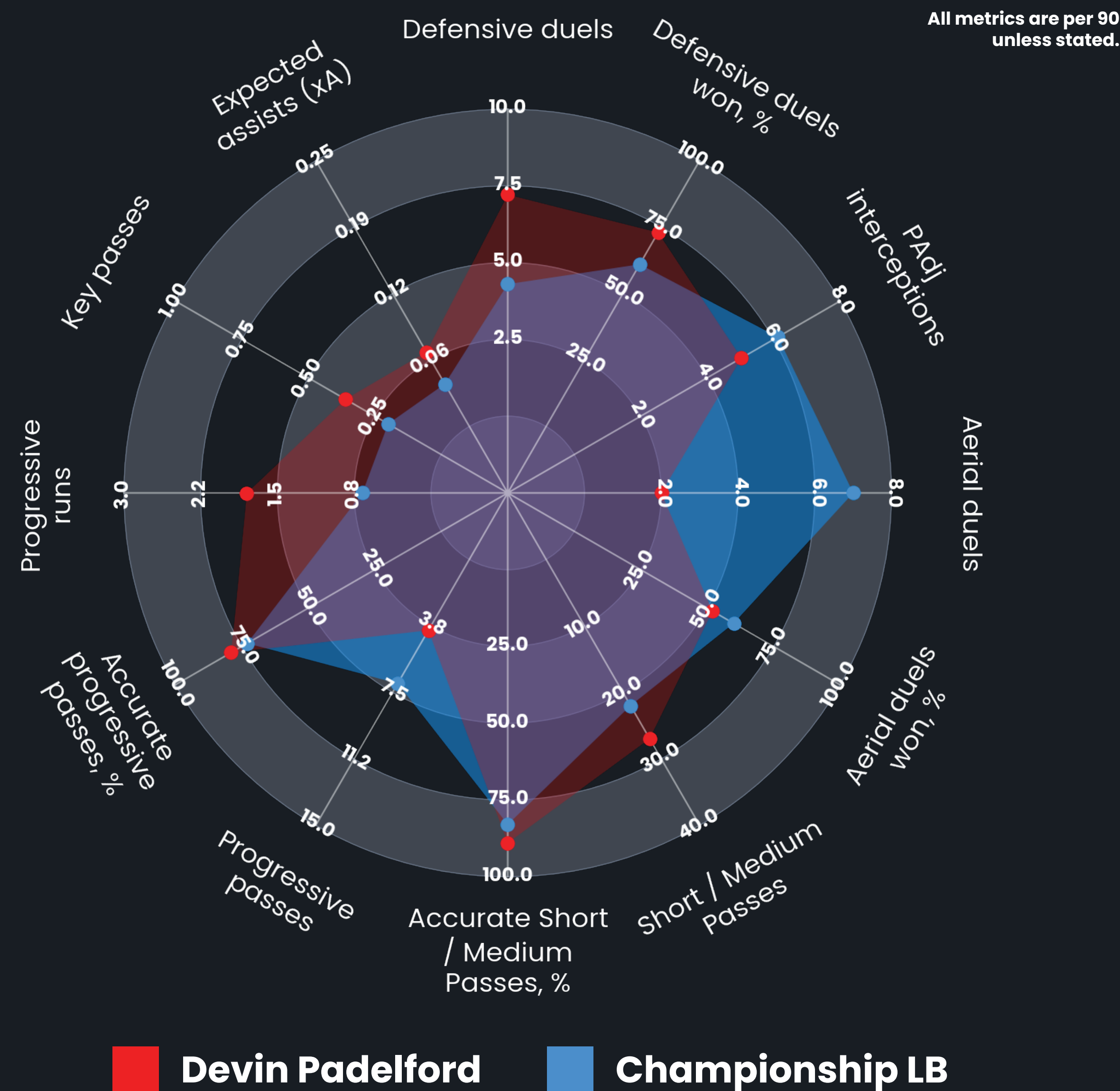
Physical Profile Suited to the Championship: At 6ft+ with solid aerial duel success, he brings presence in both defensive and attacking set-pieces. His physicality and work rate align with the demands of English football.

Attacking Contribution from Deep: Comfortable pushing forward from left-back, offering width and delivery from wide areas. His background as an attacker means he's confident overlapping, linking play, and supporting chance creation.

Room to Develop & Resale Potential: At 22, he is still developing, and a club could mould him into a long-term starter. Fits the model of buying emerging talent from outside the Championship with strong resale value.

Proven Durability & Adaptability: Featured consistently for Minnesota United, stepping into senior football without hesitation. His transition from forward to defender highlights tactical flexibility and coachability.

Mentality and Work Ethic: Coaches highlight his maturity and willingness to adapt, showing leadership qualities beyond his years. Brings a committed, team-first approach that aligns with Championship club culture.





Travian Sousa

Seattle Sounders

Age : 24
Position: Left Back
Nationality: United States
Height: 180cm / 5'11"
Weight: 79kg / 174lbs
Foot: Left
Contract Expiry: 31/12/2025

Strengths

Best Attributes

- Chance Creation
- Speed
- Pressing
- Passing Range
- Ball Carrying

Season Stats

2024 – 2025

Appearances : 16
Minutes Played : 1297
Defensive Duels per 90 : 6.38
Defensive Duels Won, % : 63.0%
Aerial Duels per 90 : 1.39
Aerial Duels Won, % : 30.0%
Assists : 1
xA per 90 : 0.22

Weaknesses

Areas to Improve

- Defensive Positioning
- Aerial
- Discipline

Best Roles

Framework Scores



Attacking Fullback
6th in MLS



Balanced Fullback
7th in MLS



Defensive Fullback
16th in MLS

Travian Sousa vs Championship LB

MLS 2025 and Championship 24-25

Defensive & Positional Strengths: Operates primarily as a left-back, providing reliable width and defensive coverage. Comfortable in 1v1 duels and capable of contributing in transition.

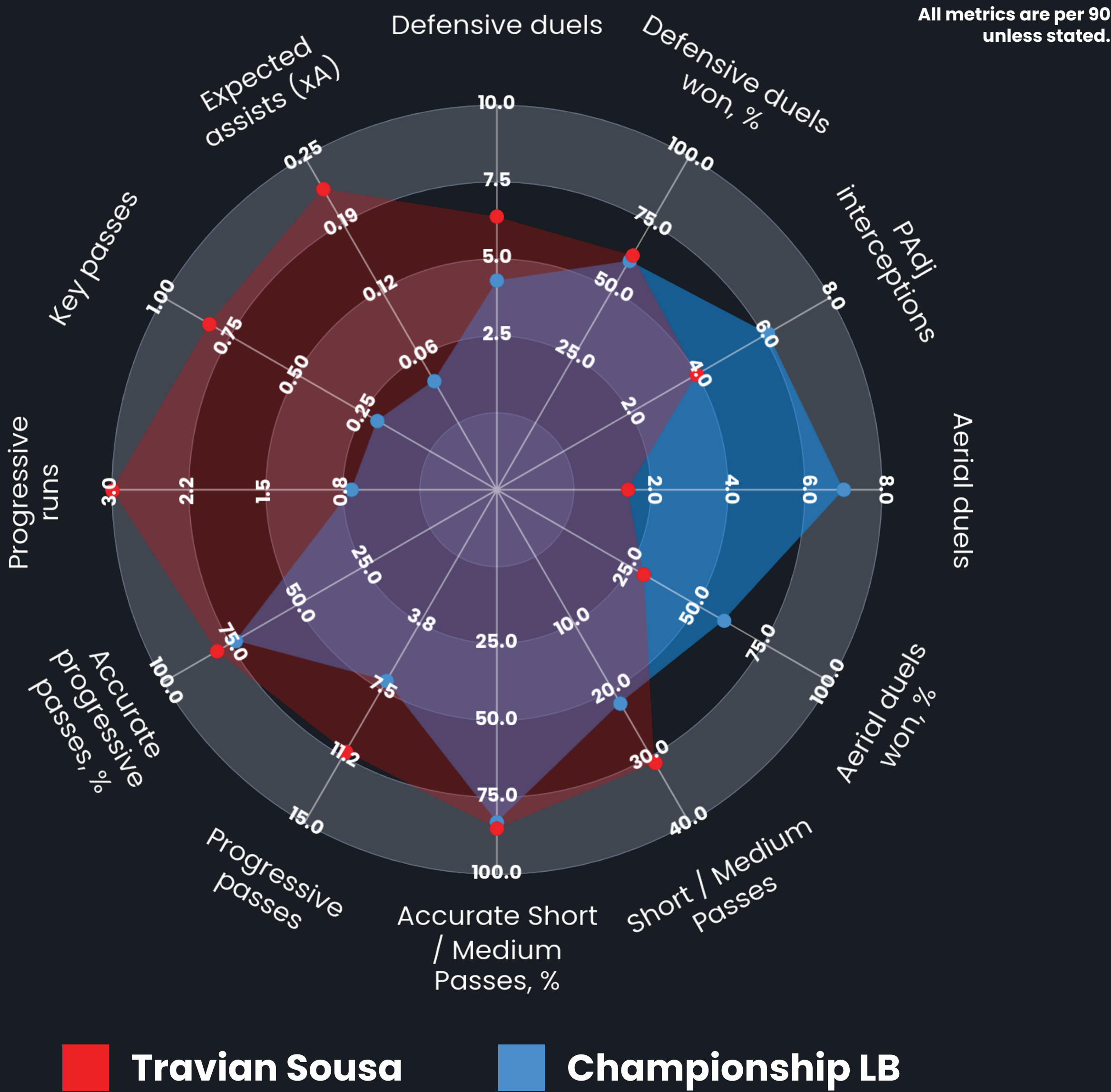
Physical & Athletic Profile: At 5'11" with a strong build, he combines mobility with physicality. His athleticism and energy allow him to support both defensive and attacking phases effectively.

Attacking Contribution from Wide Areas: Confident pushing forward to overlap and deliver crosses, while also offering link-up play in transition. Tulsa describe him as adding “another dimension” with his forward runs.

Experience & Adaptability: Developed through US academies before moving to Hamburg’s youth system in Germany. Has since played for Sporting KC II, Oakland Roots, Tacoma Defiance, and now Seattle/Tulsa, showing adaptability across different environments.

Past Behavioural Issues: His contract with Hamburger SV was terminated for disciplinary reasons, and Sporting KC II also ended his deal early. Has collected cautions and a red card at USL/MLS Next Pro level, discipline and mentality would need to be monitored closely.

Mentality and Work Ethic: Despite setbacks, has rebuilt his career path through hard work and persistence, earning a senior Sounders contract and loan to Tulsa. Shows resilience and determination to prove himself.



The Domestic Option

Homegrown Potential



Max Conway

Bolton Wanderers

Age : 22
Position: Left Back
Nationality: England
Height: 180cm / 5'11"
Weight: 73kg / 160lbs
Foot: Left
Contract Expiry: 30/06/2026

Strengths

Best Attributes

- Ball Carrying
- Tackling
- 1 v 1 Duels
- Concentration
- Passing

Season Stats

2024 – 2025

Appearances : 46
Minutes Played : 4078
Defensive Duels per 90 : 7.26
Defensive Duels Won, % : 57.1%
Aerial Duels per 90 : 4.1
Aerial Duels Won, % : 46.7%
Assists : 1
xA per 90 : 0.02

Weaknesses

Areas to Improve

- Physicality
- Aerial

Best Roles

Framework Scores



Balanced Fullback
2nd in League Two



Defensive Fullback
4th in League Two



Defensive Fullback
5th in League Two

Max Conway vs Championship LB

League 2 and Championship 24-25

Ball Carrying and Dribbling Ability: Highly rated for his dribbling, Conway is comfortable carrying the ball from deep and progressing play into advanced areas, a valuable trait for a modern full-back in possession-oriented systems.

Defensive Commitment: Strong in the tackle and willing to put his body on the line, showing concentration and awareness when tracking runners or blocking shots.

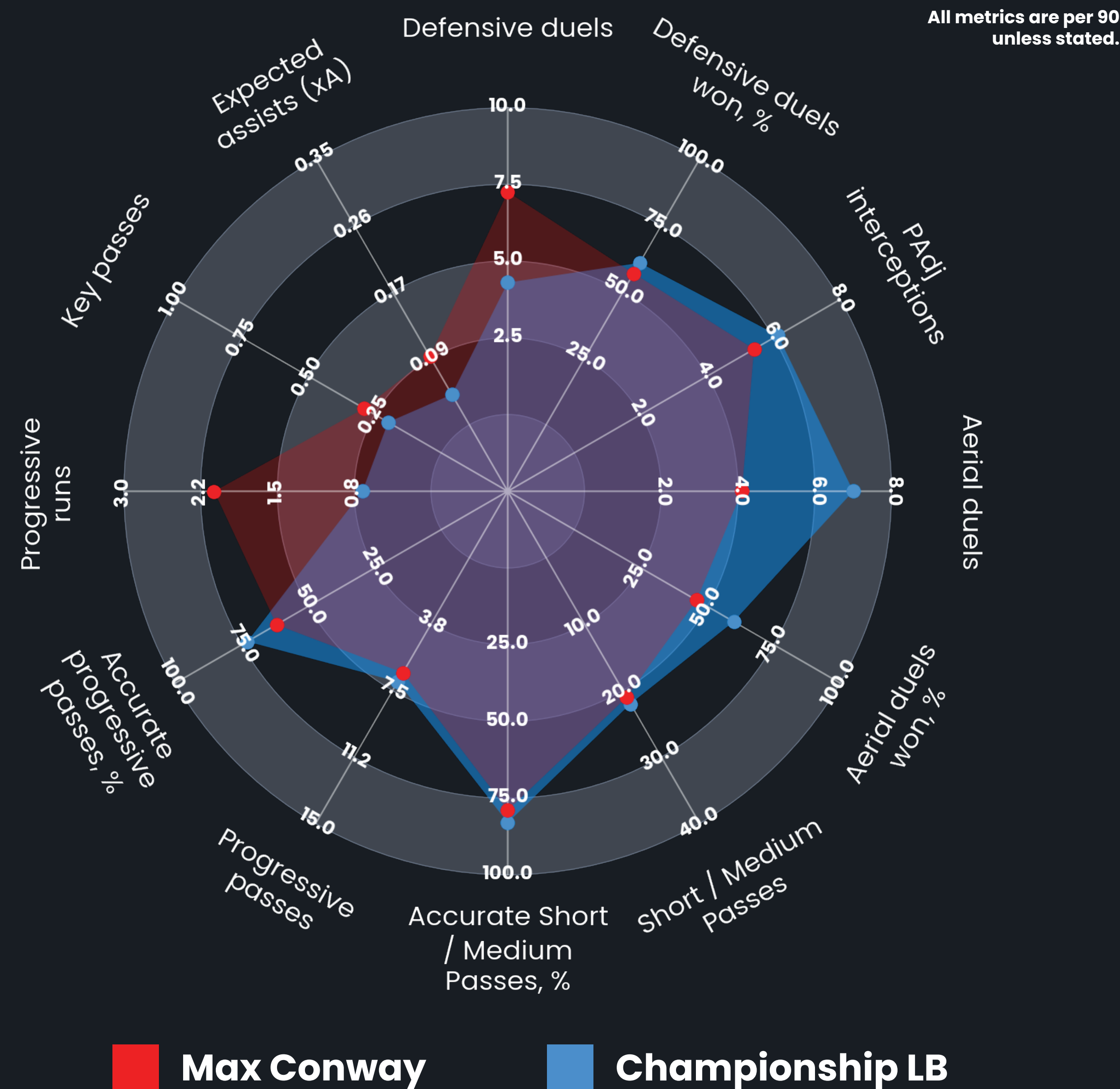
Engine and Stamina: Possesses excellent endurance, allowing him to contribute consistently up and down the flank across 90 minutes, ideal for the Championship's demanding schedule.

Positional Versatility: Capable of operating as a traditional left-back, wing-back, or in more advanced wide roles. Offers tactical flexibility in different systems.

Proven Pedigree League Two Young Player of the Year: Recognised as one of the standout young talents in the EFL, underlining both his performance level and potential ceiling.

Experience Across Levels: Despite being young, he has already gained valuable senior minutes through multiple loan spells in League Two and the National League, demonstrating adaptability to different environments and styles of play.

Room to Develop and Value Growth: At just 21, Conway is still developing his all-round game. With the right coaching and Championship exposure, he has potential to become both a long-term option and an asset with resale value.



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