



LEVEL 3 - COURSE WORKBOOK 2 OPPOSITION REPORT

NAME

Alexandre Bovey

DATE

14.09.2023

EXCLUSIVELY ENCLOSED BY **InStat**



MATCH REPORT

Focus of the report - Watford's performance

Bournemouth



Watford

SCOUT NAME

Alexandre Bovey

COMPETITION

Premier League

VENUE

Vitality Stadium

DATE

02.01.2019

KICK OFF

7:45pm

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Cold but no rain or snow

PITCH CONDITIONS

Good, dry



OVERVIEW & ASSESSMENT

- In this report, I explain Watford's formation, shapes, and their tactical approach in every phase
- They kept the same setup throughout the game : a 4-2-2-2 starting formation, which in practice translated into a 4-1-3-2 or 2-3-3-2, because their midfielders had different positional roles – Capoue as the deeper, defensive anchor, and Doucouré or Cleverley as the box-to-box playmaker moving a bit higher up the pitch (both in and out of possession).
- Offensively, their most important players are Deeney – on whose aerial ability they rely a lot to structure their game, for goalscoring and during set-plays – and Deulofeu – who has outstanding technical and creative ability, and is allowed to roam freely during attacking phases.
- Their progression in the first two phases consists mainly in two methods : long balls (from GK or defenders) and numerical overloads with dynamic combinations/triangles in the half-spaces and channels. This is how the first goal was created.
- During the the extraordinary first half (six goals), they showed moments of great collective quality and individual skill when launching attacks, while conceding two goals from (indirect) free kicks and one from being overwhelmed by a quick attacking sequence. The second half was less offensively productive for both sides.



Bournemouth

3

TEAM SHEETS

3

Watford

MANAGER Eddie Howe

NO	PLAYER	SUBBED	GOAL	RATING
27	A. Begovic			
19	J. Stanislas			
3	S. Cook (c)			
5	N. Aké		34'	
11	C. Daniels			
20	D. Brooks			
4	D. Gosling			
8	J. Lerma			
24	R. Fraser	82'	40'	
13	C. Wilson	81'	37'	
17	J. King			
NO	PLAYER	ON	GOAL	RATING
1	A. Boruc			
6	A. Surman			
9	L. Mousset	82'		
10	J. Ibe	81'		
18	J. Defoe			
21	D. Rico Salguero			
26	T. Mings			

MANAGER Javi Gracia

NO	PLAYER	SUBBED	GOAL	RATING
26	B. Foster			
21	K. Femenía ('Kiko')			
6	A. Mariappa			
15	C. Cathcart			
25	J. Holebas			
16	A. Doucoure	56'		
29	E. Capoue			
12	K. Sema	71'	38'	
37	R. Pereyra			
7	G. Deulofeu	90'		
9	T. Deeney (c)		14', 27'	
NO	PLAYER	ON	GOAL	RATING
1	H. Gomes			
3	M. Britos			
8	T. Cleverley	56'		
10	I. Success	90'		
11	A. Masina			
19	W. Hughes	71'		
20	D. Quina			

STARTING LINEUP

FORMATION



RECENT FORM

1-4 vs Man Utd

0-5 vs Spurs

2-0 vs Brighton

KEY INFORMATION

- Watford's starting lineup is a 4-2-2-2, because Pereyra (#37) and Sema (#12) generally stay in between the forward line and the central midfielders
- There weren't significant changes in formation during this game, and the substitutes slotted in the same positions of the player they replaced (Cleverley for Doucouré, Hughes for Sema, Success for Deulofeu)

GENERAL IN-POSSESSION SHAPE

FORMATION 2-3-3(1-2)-2



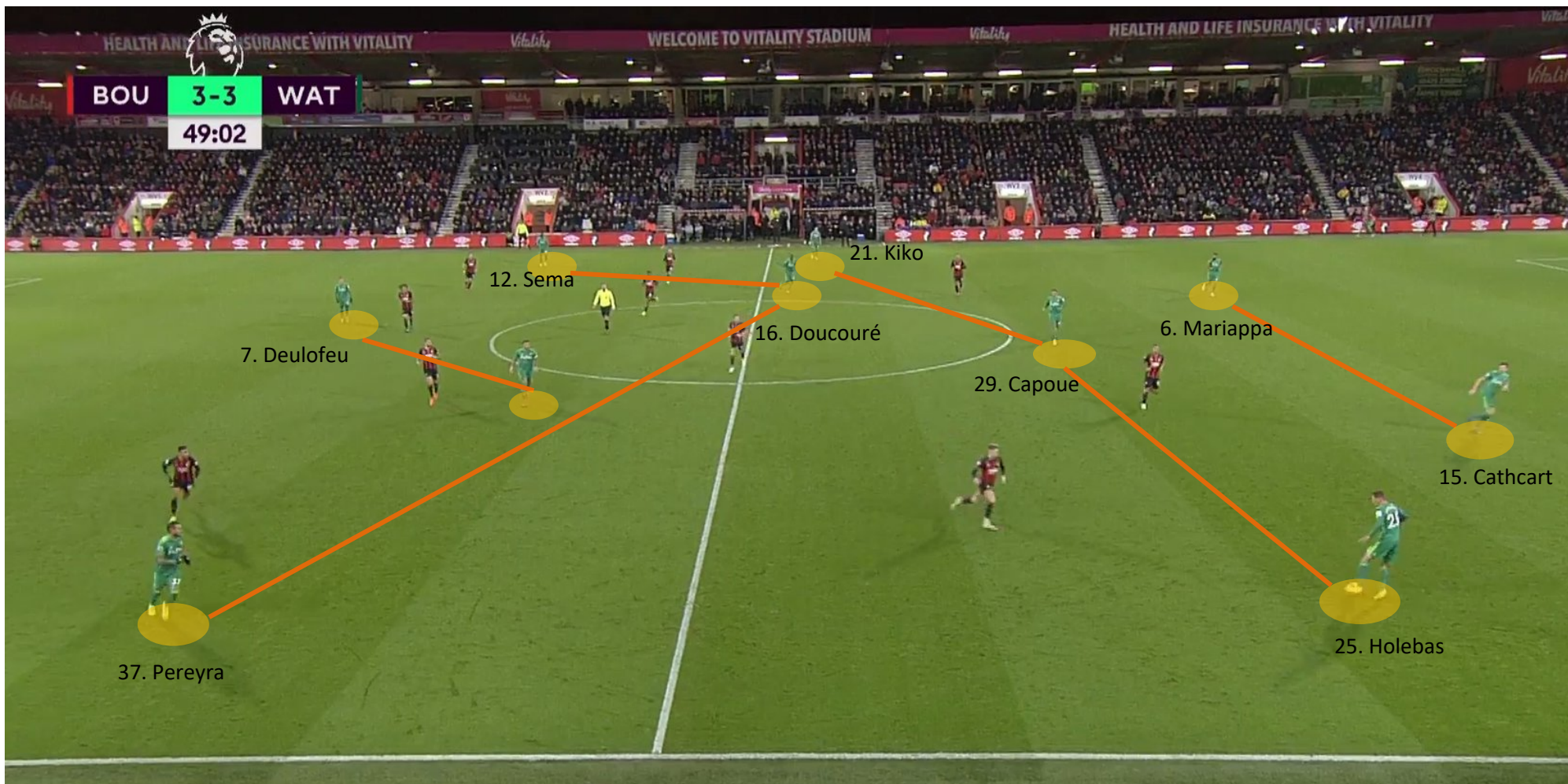
Average player positions (WhoScored, Sofascore)

- Watford's 4-2-2-2 most often takes the shape of a 4-1-3-2 or 2-3-3-2, with Capoue (#29) holding a deeper position than Doucouré (#16), who plays a box-to-box role.*
- Pereyra (#37) and Sema (#12) mainly play as inverted advanced midfielders in the left and right half spaces respectively, although they sometimes hold a wider position (like a traditional winger).
- Their use of wider areas is thus limited, but full-backs, Deulofeu (#7) and the left/right advanced midfielders, situationally/irregularly move there when there is an opportunity to combine with teammates and progress into the final third

*This shape is often observable out-of-possession as well, except in the defensive third

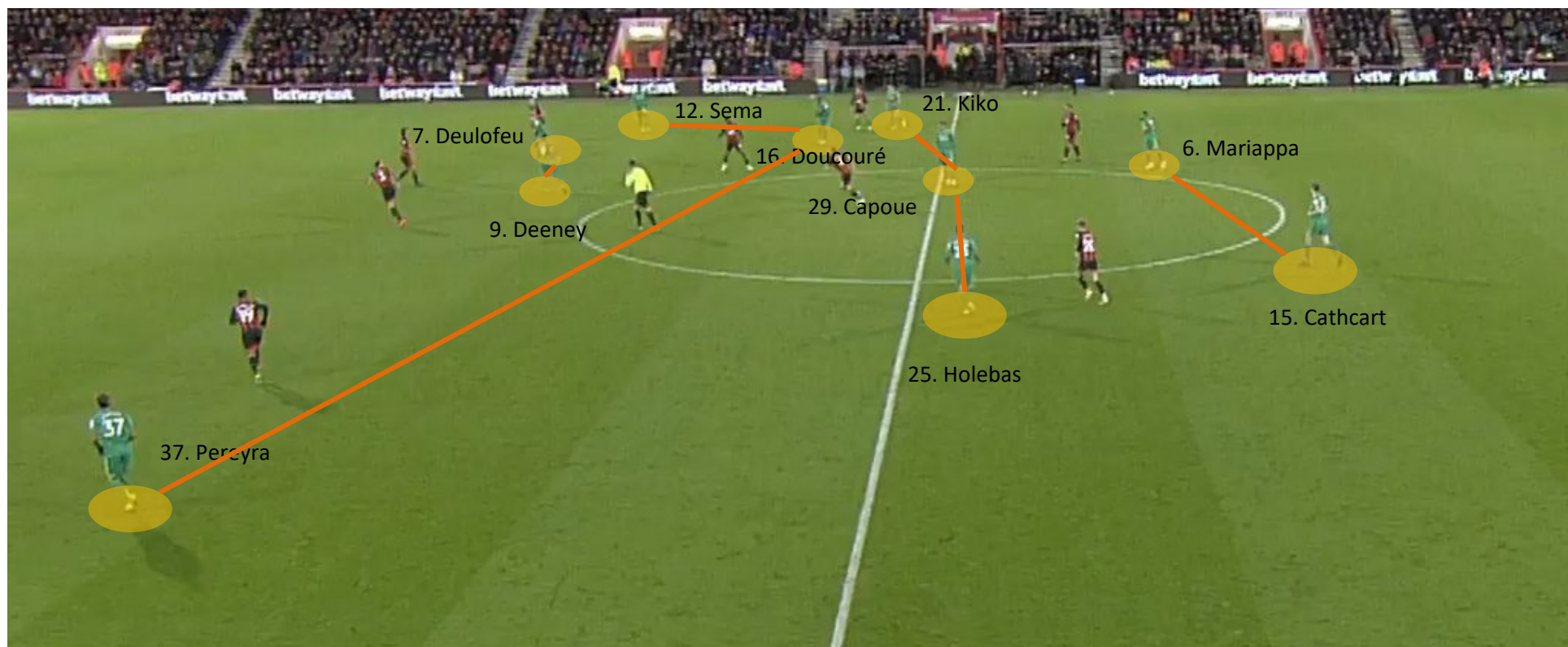
GENERAL IN-POSSESSION SHAPE

FORMATION



GENERAL IN-POSSESSION SHAPE

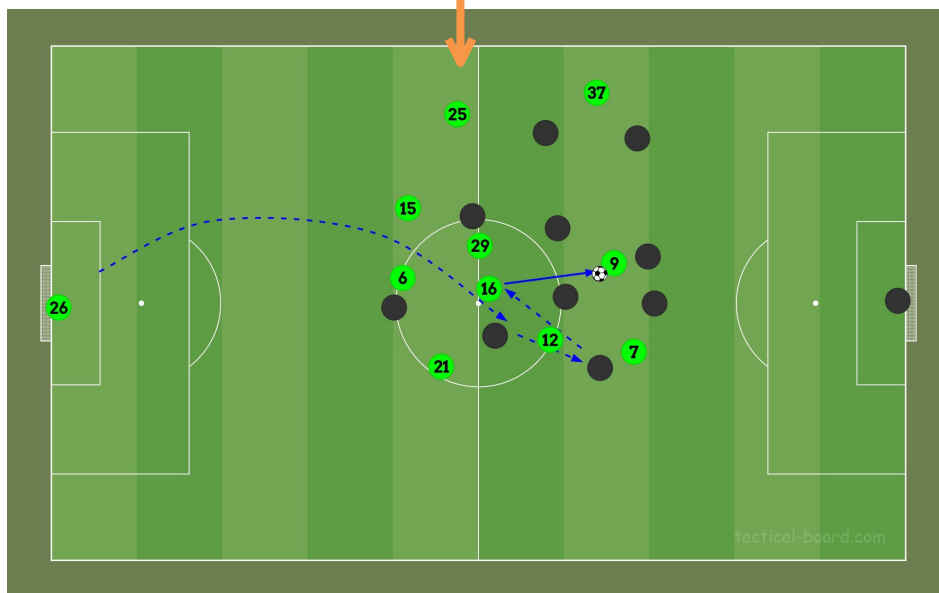
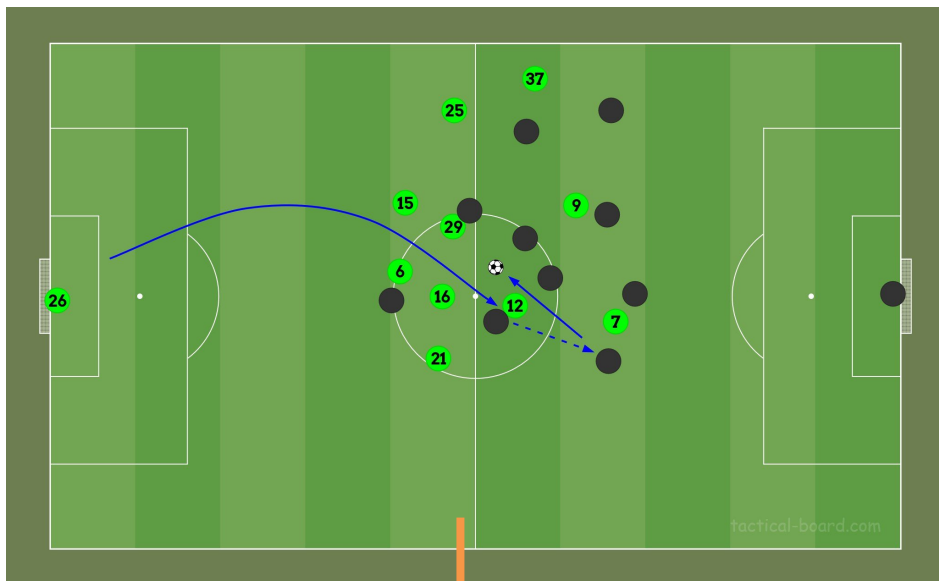
FORMATION



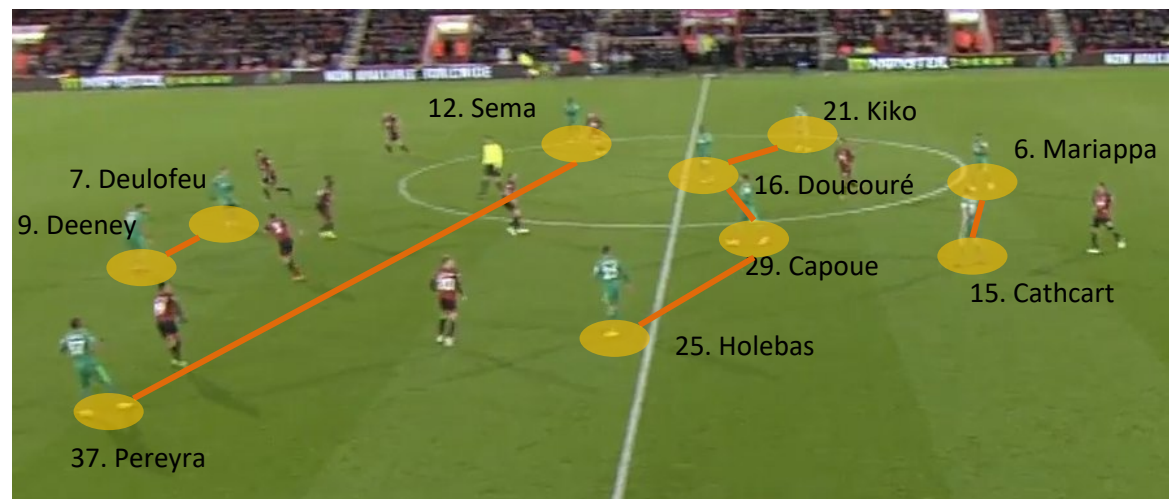
Timestamp : 52'18''

BUILD UP & 2nd PHASE : GK Restarts/Long Balls

Sequence from goal kick (2'55'')



- Both from goal kicks or in open-play restarts, goalkeeper Ben Foster (#26) almost always launches long balls into (or even over) the middle third, with the team relying both on Deeney's (#9) aerial ability and winning second/loose balls to then drive into the final third.
- Players are positioned in four lines within the middle third: see image below and starting setup in the 2'55'' sequence (left diagram)

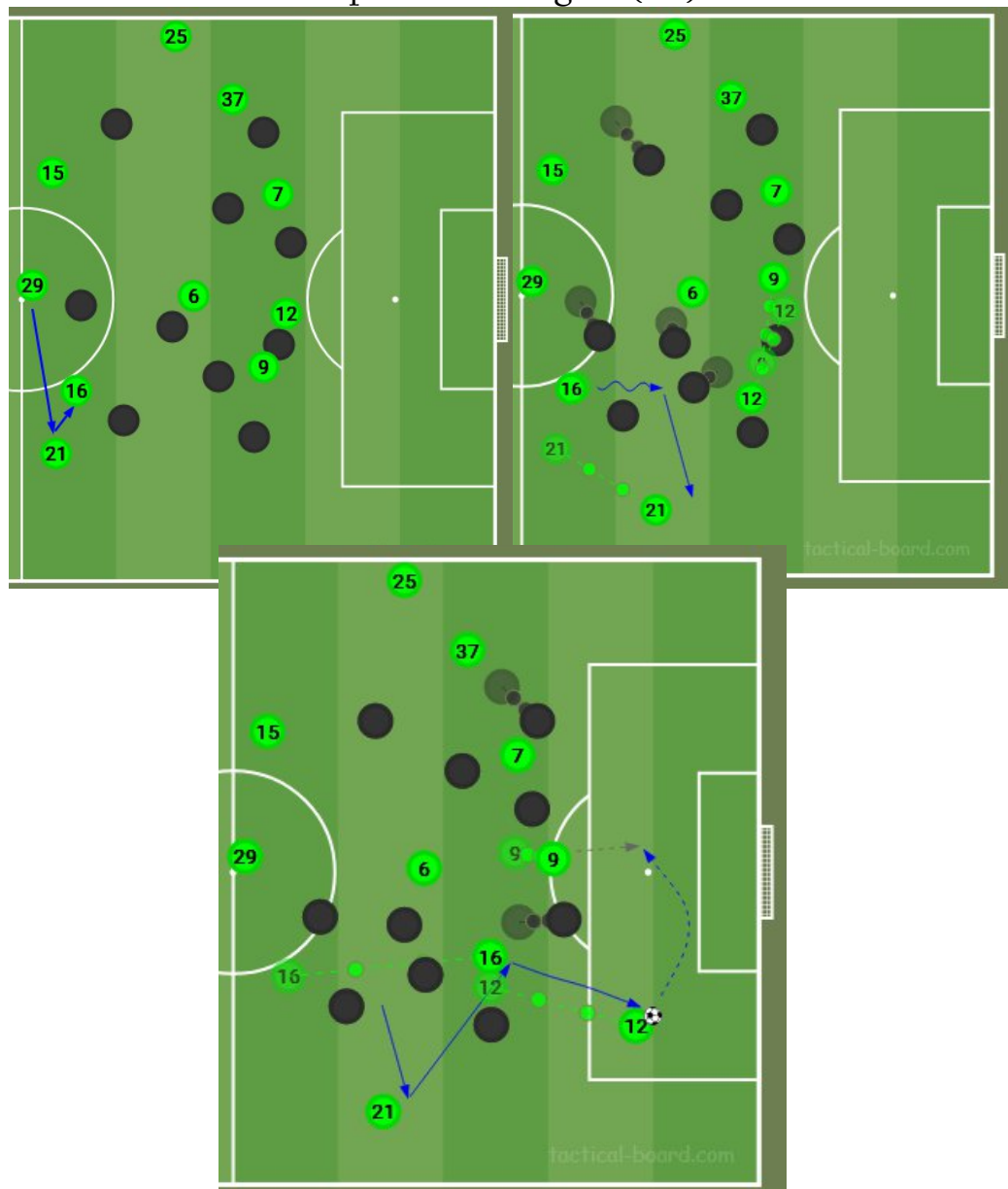


Timestamp : 51'44''

Deeney (#9) then passed to Sema (#12), who gave the ball to Deulofeu (#7) on the right wing, who tried a through ball into the box but overhit it.

BUILD UP & 2nd PHASE : Open Play

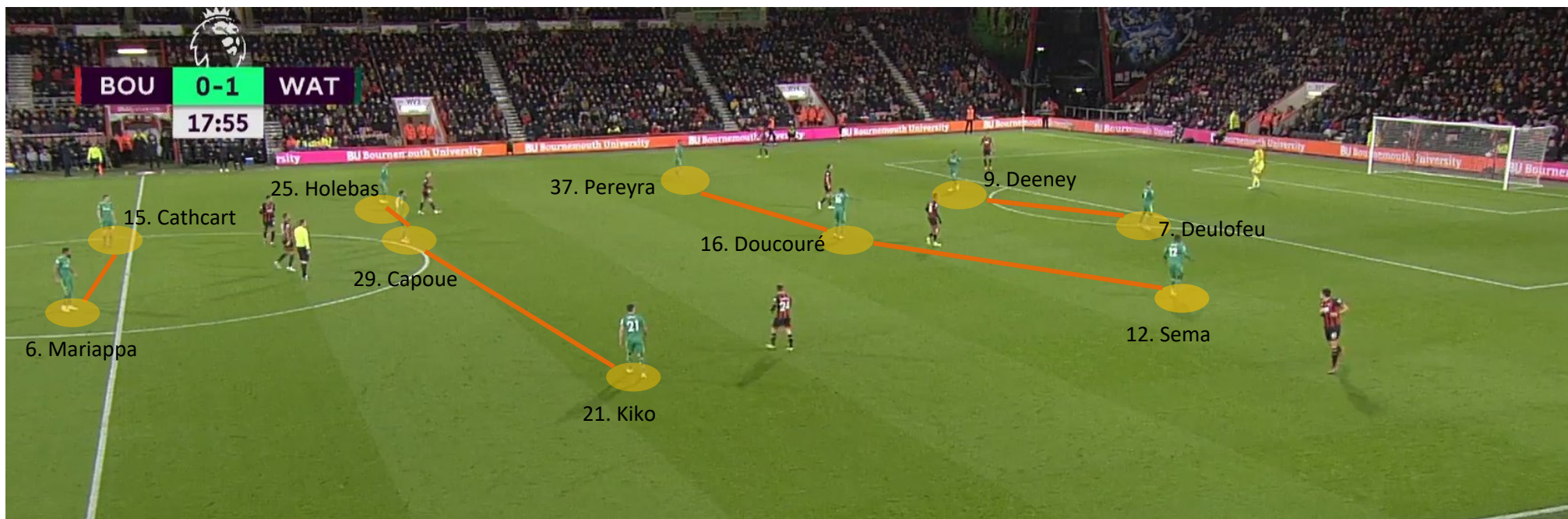
Build up to the first goal (13')



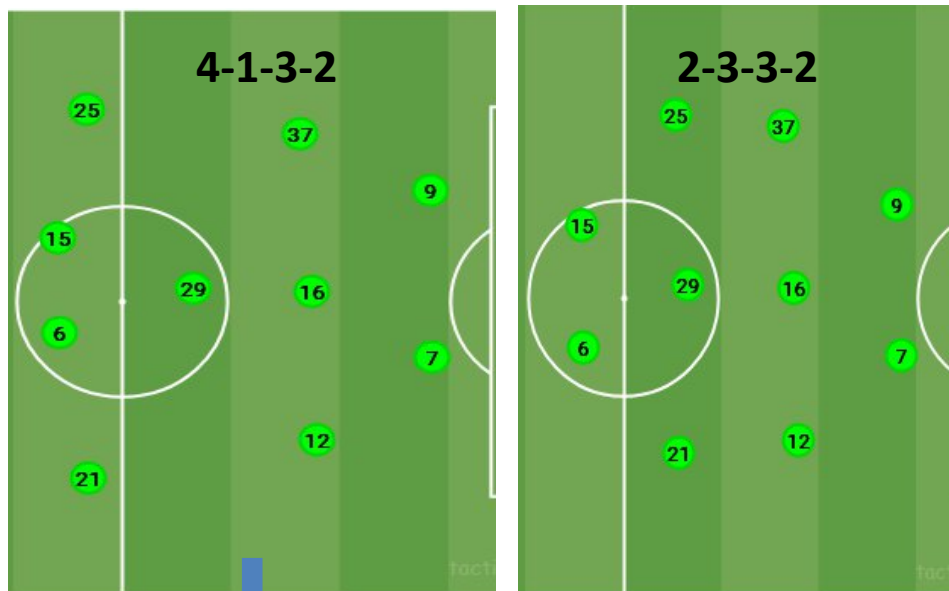
- Long balls – from goalkeeper and defenders – are often used, i.e. playing over the first two lines of the opposition, usually targeting Deeney (#9).
- Another pattern is full-backs, centre-midfielders and wide midfielders (or even one forward drifting to the side) combining in the channels and half-spaces to progress into the final third. This is how the first goal was engineered, as shown in the diagram.
- Rest defense : Usually one full-back stays back if the other joins play in the middle or final third, and occasionally one of the midfielders covers for a full-back moving up (e.g. Doucouré #16 did it a couple of times when Kiko #21 moved up).

DEFENSIVE SHAPE: From Opposition GK Open-Play Restarts

- Despite occasional (and individual) attempts at pressing opponents high up during their build up, it isn't a systematic strategy → cf. next page
- 2-3-3-2 shape

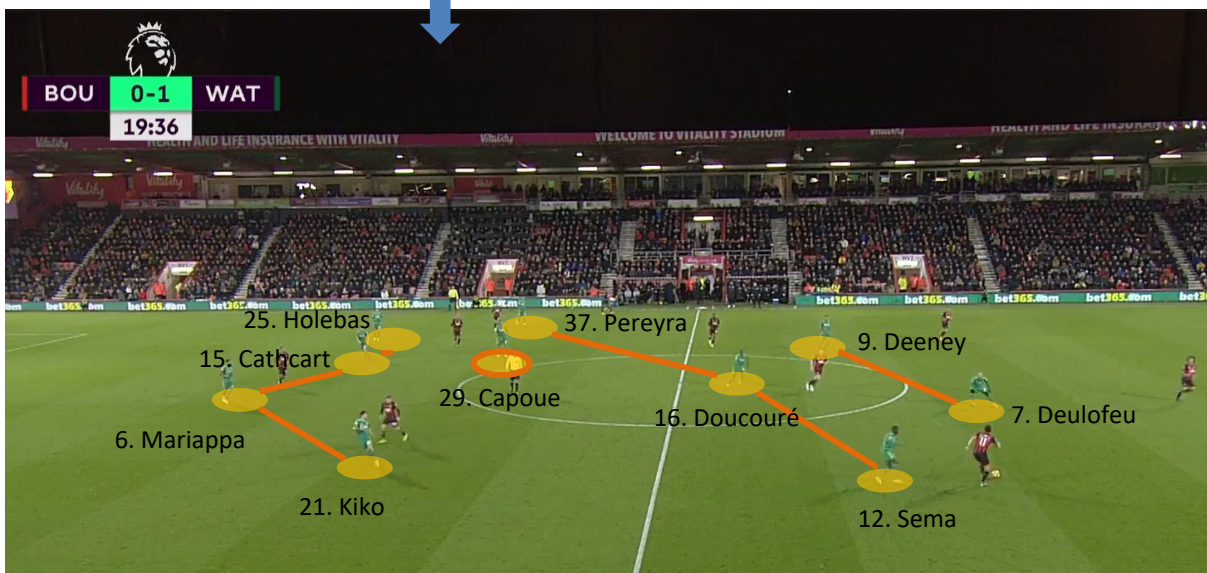


DEFENSIVE SHAPE: Open Play in Opp. Half & Middle Third



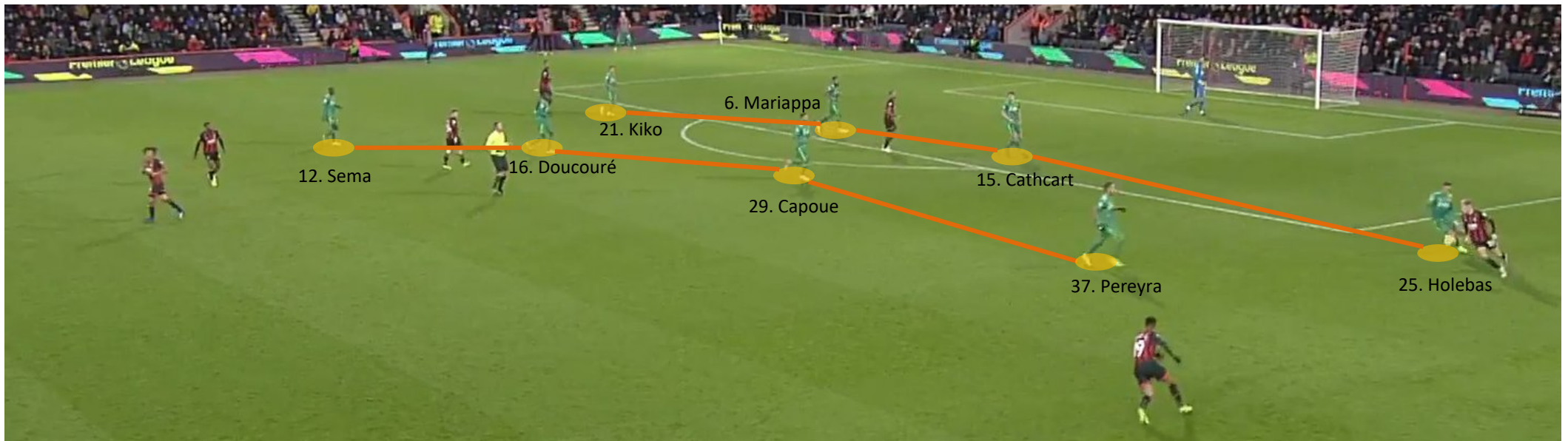
Sometimes a 4-4-2, with Capoue (#29) staying at the same level as Doucouré (#16)

- A high/mid block aiming to prevent progression into the middle third and defensive half. Sometimes applying pressure to keep opponent in their half/defensive third (high block), sometimes aggression starts in the middle third (mid block)
- Strategic pressing in opponent's half: loose balls/passes as pressing triggers and using the touchline (e.g. passes to the the opponent's full-backs are triggers for ball-side midfielders and full-backs to launch a press in those wide zones), but it isn't a sustained high-press, nor a systematic counter-press.
- Capoue (#29), full-backs (#25, #21) and centre-backs (#15, #6) ready to jump in and stop/intercept attempts at playing through the first line(s) of defense.



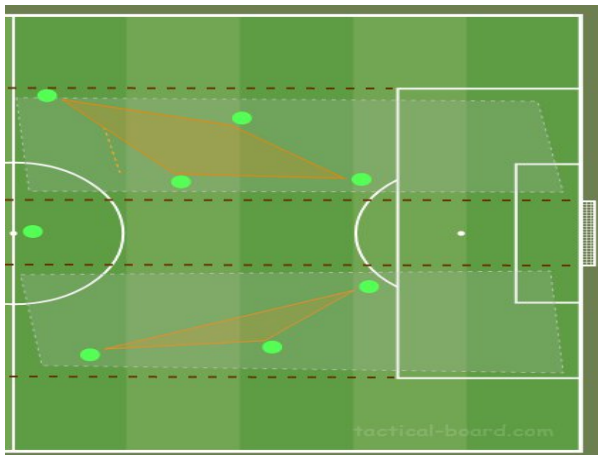
DEFENSIVE SHAPE: Defensive Third

In their own defensive third, Watford adopt a (4-4-2) standard setup with two compact lines of four defenders and four midfielders.



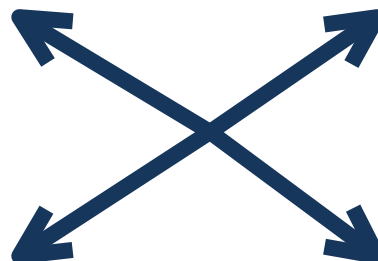
Timestamp : 50'40''

CHANCE CREATION & ATTACKING THREATS



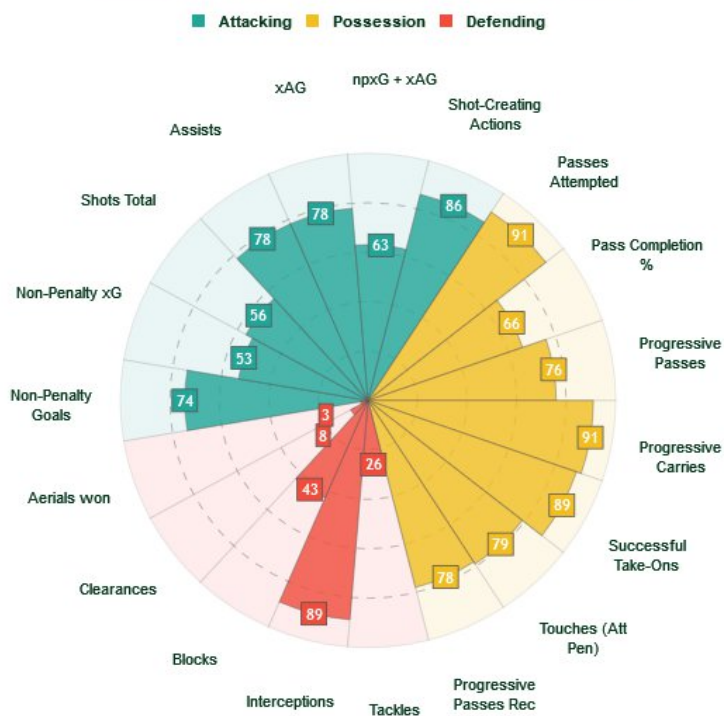
Half-space combinations/triangles to isolate one player in the crossing area or create cutbacks

Situations from long balls, set plays and counters



Deulofeu's creativity and dribbling

Percentile rank v.s. Forwards | 2066 minutes | 2018-2019 Premier League

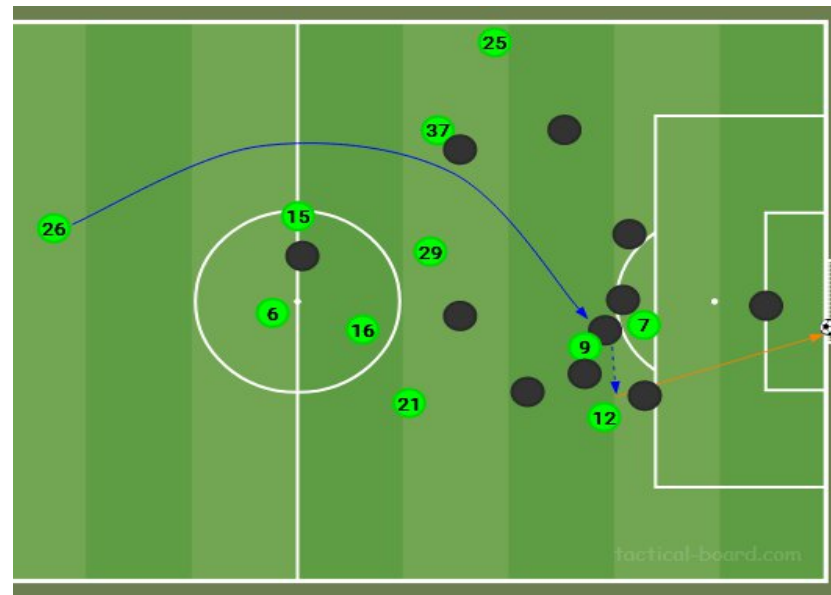
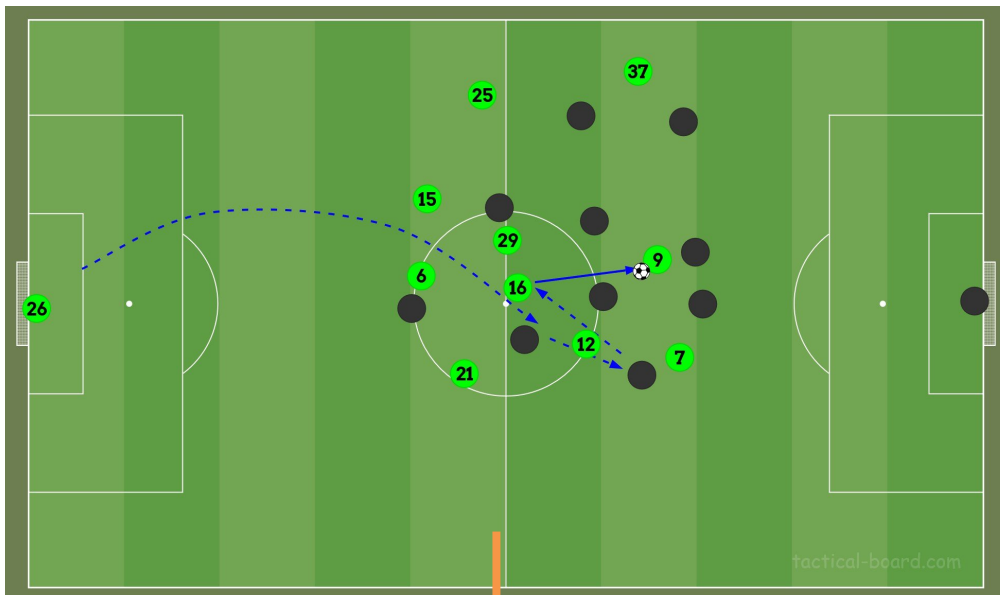


Troy Deeney's aerial ability is a major strength and tactical resource for Watford. He stands among the best forwards in the top 5 European leagues for average aerial duels won and % of aerial duels won :

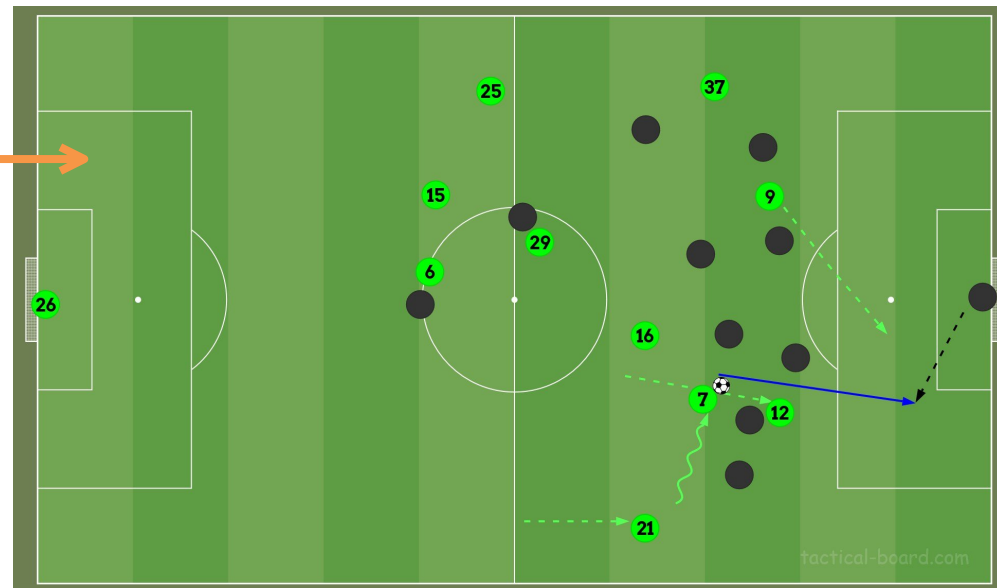
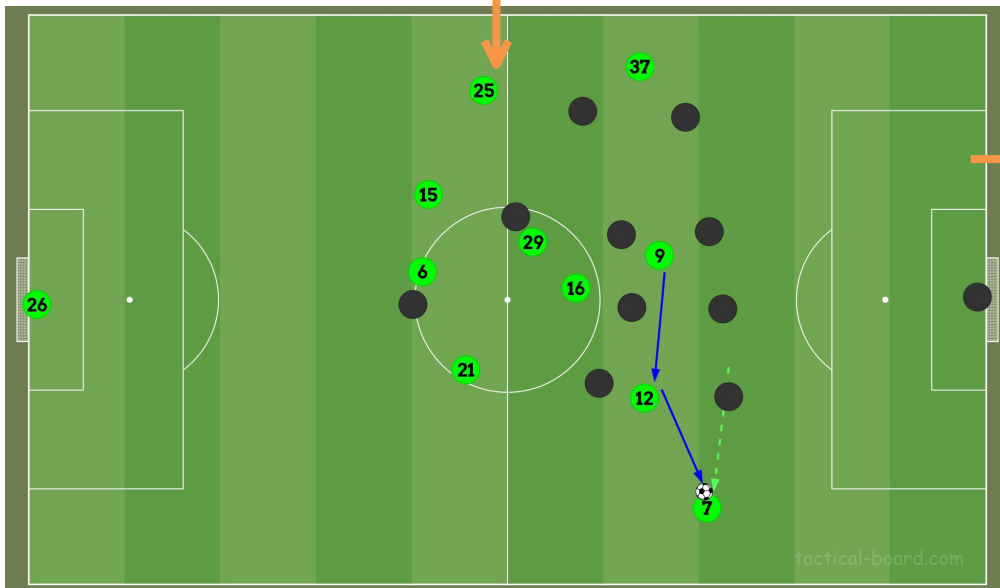
Aerials won	7.14	91	<div style="width: 91%;"></div>
Aerials lost	7.96	9	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>
% of Aerials Won	47.3%	78	<div style="width: 78%;"></div>

(source : FBRef, for 2018/19 Premier League season, per 90 values)

CHANCE CREATION & ATTACKING THREATS



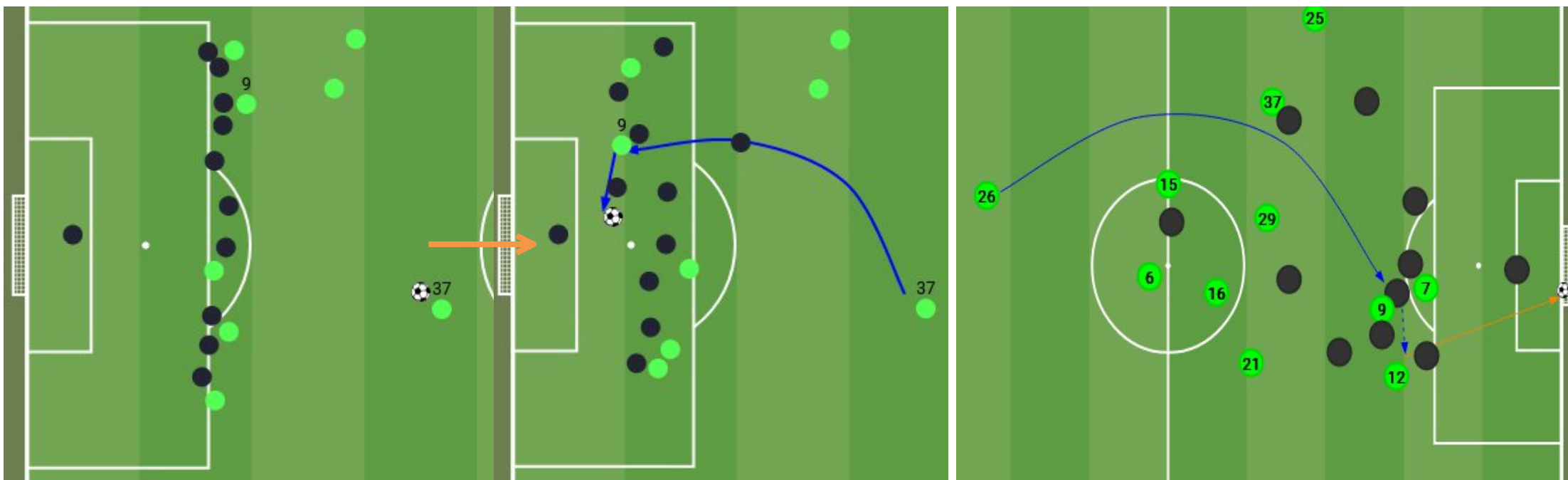
Third goal scored, from a free-kick (38')



Sequence from goal kick (3')

ATTACKING SET-PLAY ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

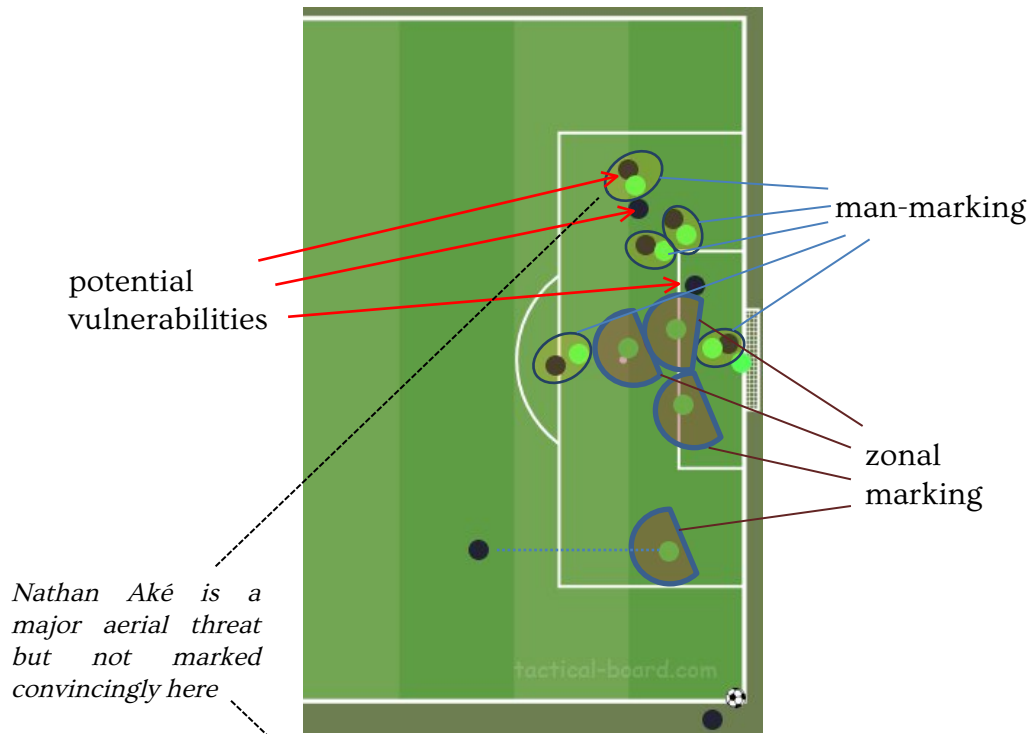
Like they do in open play, in indirect free-kicks Watford often use Deeney's ability to win/overpower opponents in aerial duels to create second-ball situations for teammates



Free-kick: 58'

Free-kick and third goal: 38'

DEFENDING SET-PLAY ANALYSIS DIAGRAM



- Hybrid marking with 5 defenders close-marking opponents and 3 players focusing on zones around the six-yard box (+one responsible for reacting to potential short/back pass)
- The outcome of this corner was a successful clearance, but considering that they conceded two goals largely because of poor marking, it is worth considering the gaps in their defensive set-up. (Bournemouth could have done better in this instance..)



Corner : 51'20''

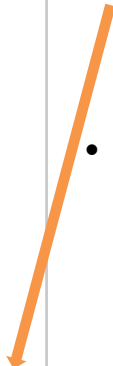
STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

STRENGTHS

- Deeney's aerial ability and strength coupled with Deulofeu's skills and creativity
- A strong midfield (defensively, technically, in-possession): Capoue, Doucouré, Cleverley, Hughes
- Combinations in the half-spaces + long balls to Deeney

WEAKNESSES

- Defending set-pieces (two first goals conceded in this game, cf. pictures below) → marking errors
- Facing fast transitions and counterattacks → defensive compactness and structure risks breaking down and defenders aren't very quick so they can fail to recover (third goal conceded in this game)



Free kick/goal conceded(37') : Wilson is left unmarked and has the time/space to execute a powerful leap and header unopposed



Free kick/goal conceded(33') : targeted player isn't marked and can run toward the right side of the box to cut it back to 6-yard box (which is then put in the goal after a save from Foster)



PLAYER ANALYSIS

No	NAME	COMMENTS
26	Foster	An experienced goalkeeper with good shot-stopping and very strong at sweeping and claiming crosses (FBRef : 98th percentile for def. actions outside pen. area, and 76th for crosses claimed %)
21	Femenía ('Kiko')	A two-way full-back with good technical ability, and an ability to contribute offensively
6	Mariappa	Traditional centre-backs with strength, physicality, aggression, discipline, etc.
15	Cathcart	
25	Holebas	Not particularly noteworthy in this game, contributed defensively but not so much offensively
16	Doucouré	A versatile box-to-box midfielder with a big engine, and good instincts in the final third
29	Capoue	A hardworking midfielder specialized in defending the middle/first thirds, with decent distribution. (FBRef : above average percentile rankings for all defensive metrics)
12	Sema	Not quick wingers, rather more 'advanced playmaker' roles with good technical/in-possession skills (but not particularly fast, dangerous on 1v1, or strong finishers). Take part in link-up in the half-spaces and delivering for the two forwards
37	Pereyra	
7	Deulofeu	A highly skilled forward with dribbling, carrying, and creative ability (cf. FBRef, above average for all these metrics)
9	Deeney (c)	A strong target man with excellent aerial ability and good link up and finishing ability



PLAYER ANALYSIS

No	NAME	COMMENTS
8	Cleverley	A well-rounded playmaking central midfielder, competent in all phases. Likes to shoot from distance.
10	Success	A creative forward with a very good passing/creative and carrying ability, and good defensive effort
19	Hughes	A reliable, tactically intelligent midfielder with a good defensive workrate



SOURCES

Match Reports :

- WhoScored : <https://www.whoscored.com/Matches/1285069/MatchReport/England-Premier-League-2018-2019-Bournemouth-Watford>
- Sofascore : <https://www.sofascore.com/bournemouth-watford/zskb#7828025>
- Sky Sports (Opta data) : <https://www.skysports.com/football/bournemouth-vs-watford/report/390958>

Others :

- Statistical player reports for 2018/2019 (Premier League) : <https://fbref.com>
- Percentile charts based on FBRef reports : <https://www.fbcharts.com/>

