



Left Backs

Positional cohort comparison, league benchmarking and squad metric analysis identifying a successor to Vitaliy Mykolenko

34 Premier League left backs · 141 Top 5 European league left backs

5 domestic targets · 10 European targets

Prepared by Darren Melling · 27 August 2026

Executive summary

The case for change at left back, in four findings.

01 Mykolenko is a below-median Premier League left back

Overall score 38.9 ranks 23rd of 34 in the PL cohort and 95th of 141 across the Top 5 leagues, against a PL average of 40.7.

02 The deficit is overwhelmingly in attack

Attacking score 28.5 sits 9.7 points below the PL average – 0.19 shots, 0.91 dribbles and 0.52 box touches per 90 are all bottom-quartile.

03 Passing and crossing are genuine strengths

8.43 progressive passes and 5.43 final-third passes per 90 both beat the league average, and his 40.5% cross accuracy is the standout number in his profile.

04 Replacement should upgrade the final third without losing the ball retention

The shortlist prioritises left backs who match or beat his passing score while adding attacking output – led by Neco Williams, Lewis Hall and Ramy Bensebaini.

Recommendation: proceed to detailed scouting on Williams, Hall and Bensebaini; hold Mykolenko as squad depth given contract cover to June 2029.

Method and scoring model

How every number in this dossier is produced.

Cohort definition

Two populations are used throughout: 34 left backs with Premier League minutes, and 141 left backs across the Top 5 European leagues. Every player is measured only against players in the same cohort.

Composite scores

Defending, Attacking and Passing scores are percentile composites of the underlying per-90 metrics within each cohort. The Overall score weights them 40% defending, 30% attacking, 30% passing.

Component	Weight	What it captures
Defending score	40%	Defensive and aerial duel volume and win rate, possession-adjusted tackles and interceptions, blocks
Attacking score	30%	Shooting and xG, crossing volume and accuracy, dribbles, progressive runs, box touches
Passing score	30%	Pass volume and accuracy, progressive and final-third passing, key passes, xA, deep completions
Overall score	100%	Weighted composite used for all cohort rankings in this dossier

Reading the radar charts

Metric radars are percentile-scaled against the 5th-95th percentile range of the Premier League cohort, so each spoke runs 0-100 and shapes are directly comparable between players.

Composite-score radars plot the raw Defending / Attacking / Passing / Overall values on a common axis.

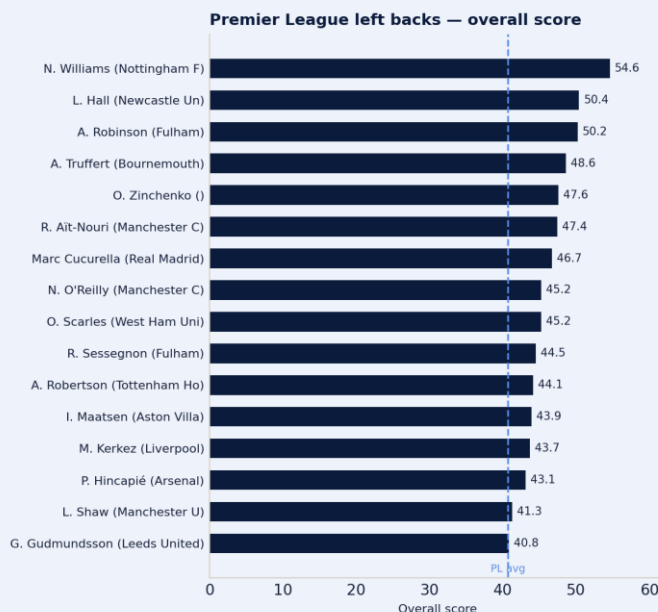
A larger, more balanced shape is better; a spike shows a specialist trait; a collapsed sector shows a functional weakness.

Caveats. Minutes vary widely across the cohort, and players with under ~1,000 minutes are excluded from the shortlists. Market values and contract dates are as supplied in the source workbook. Club badge tiles are colour-coded placeholders, not official crests.

Positional cohort – Premier League



Where the 34 Premier League left backs sit on overall score.



#	Player	Club	Age	Min	Def	Att	Pas	Ovr
1	N. Williams	Nottingham Forest	25	3541	66.8	53.1	39.8	54.6
2	L. Hall	Newcastle United	21	2479	52.7	48.1	49.8	50.4
3	A. Robinson	Fulham	29	1667	53.1	47.1	49.3	50.2
4	A. Truffert	Bournemouth	24	3776	55.6	43.1	44.9	48.6
5	O. Zinchenko	—	29	380	41.2	32.7	70.8	47.6
6	R. Aït-Nouri	Manchester City	25	1096	48.2	48.1	45.7	47.4
7	Marc Cucurella	Real Madrid	28	3047	51.4	38.6	48.6	46.7
8	N. O'Reilly	Manchester City	21	2924	45.3	53.5	36.8	45.2
9	O. Scarles	West Ham United	20	757	71.8	20.3	34.7	45.2
10	R. Sessegnon	Fulham	26	2042	50.9	49.8	30.7	44.5
23	V. Mykolenko	Everton	27	3268	44	28.5	42.4	38.9

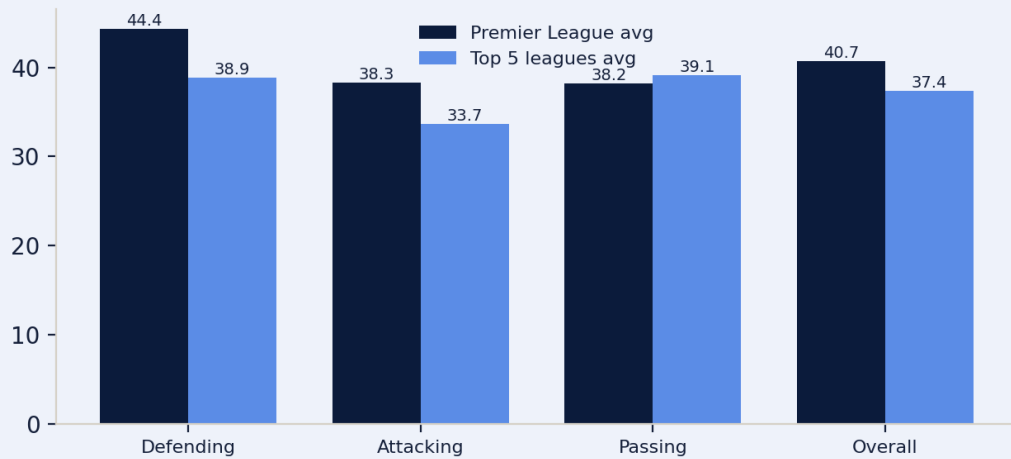
Mykolenko ranks 23rd of 34. The gap to the cohort leader, Neco Williams, is 15.7 points of overall score – the widest single-position gap in the Everton squad audit.

League benchmarking

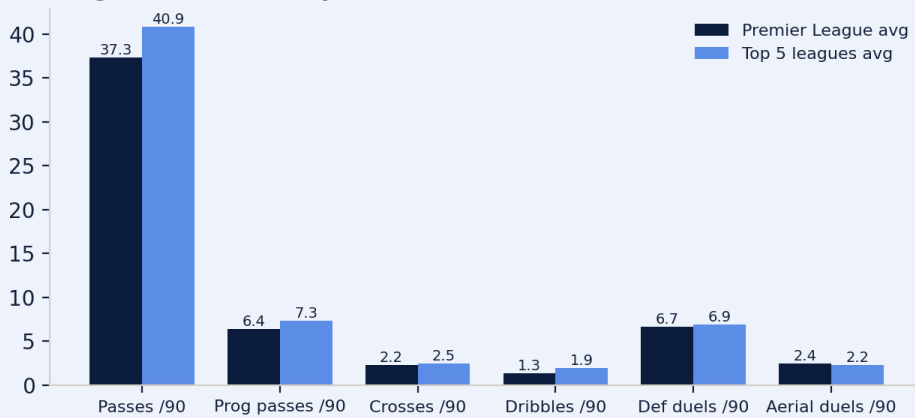


Premier League left backs against the Top 5 European average.

League benchmark — composite scores



League benchmark — per-90 volume

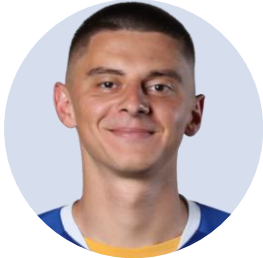


Benchmark metric	PL avg	Top 5 avg	Mykolenko
Defending	44.4	38.9	44.0
Attacking	38.3	33.7	28.5
Passing	38.2	39.1	42.4
Overall	40.7	37.4	38.9
Accurate passes %	82.0	81.3	80.3
Accurate crosses %	28.8	33.5	40.5

The Premier League cohort defends more and passes marginally less progressively than the wider European sample. Mykolenko clears both league averages for pass and cross accuracy.

Player dossier – Vitaliy Mykolenko

The incumbent: profile, workload and headline output.



V. Mykolenko

Everton · Left back · Left-footed

Age 27 · 180 cm · 33 apps · 3268 mins
Market value £28m · Contract to 2029-06-30



OVERALL

38.9

23rd of 34 in PL

DEFENDING

44.0

PL avg 44.4

ATTACKING

28.5

PL avg 38.3

PASSING

42.4

PL avg 38.2

Profile in one line

A durable, left-footed, retention-first full back who defends aerially well, progresses the ball reliably and crosses accurately, but generates almost no shooting, dribbling or box presence. Everton get 3,268 minutes of dependable width and very little threat.

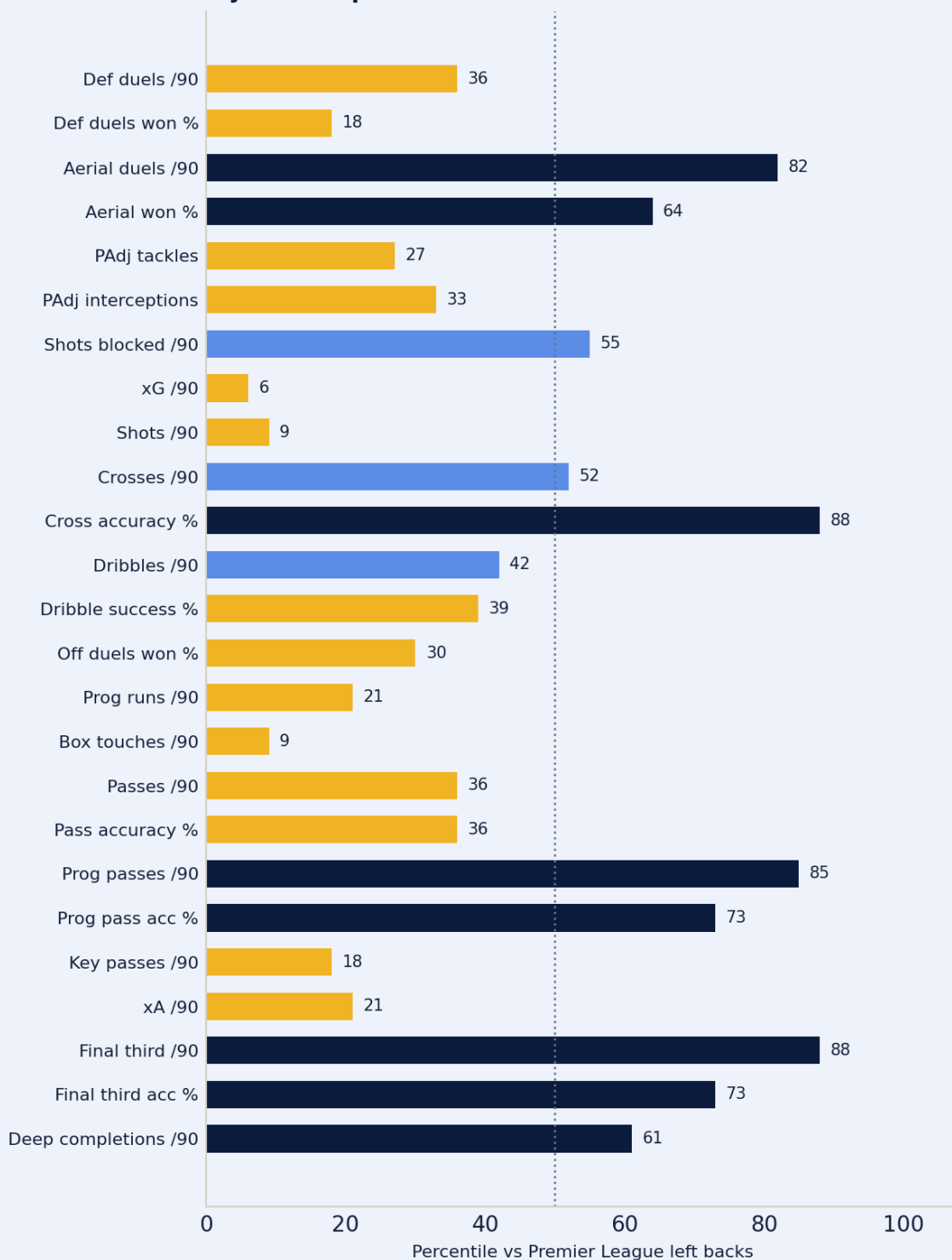
Attribute	Value	Attribute	Value
Age	27	Height	180 cm
Appearances	33	Minutes	3268
Foot	Left	Market value	£28m
Contract to	2029-06-30	PL overall rank	23rd of 34
Best metric	Cross accuracy 40.5%	Weakest metric	Shots 0.19 per 90

Percentile map

Every metric ranked against the 34-player Premier League cohort.



Mykolenko percentile rank — full metric set



Mykolenko vs league benchmarks

Composite scores against both cohort averages.



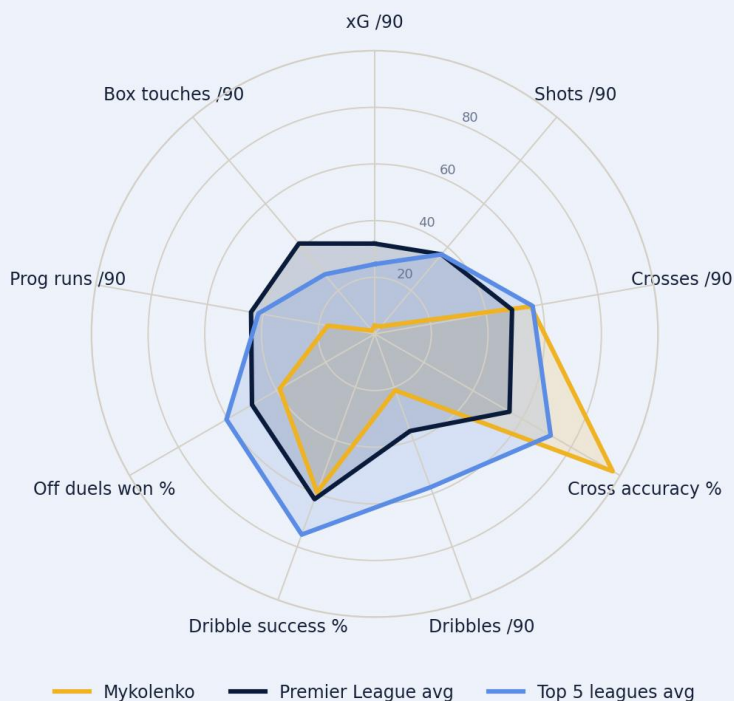
Composite	Mykolenko	PL avg	Δ vs PL	Top 5 avg	Δ vs T5
Defending	44.0	44.4	-0.4	38.9	+4.8
Attacking	28.5	38.3	-9.7	33.7	-7.4
Passing	42.4	38.2	+4.2	39.1	-8.3
Overall	38.9	40.7	-1.8	37.4	-2.8

Read: Mykolenko is close to par defensively and above par in possession, but the attacking composite is 9.7 points below the Premier League average and 7.4 below the European average – the single clearest argument for replacement. Against the wider European cohort his passing score also falls below par, indicating the profile is retention-first rather than creative.

Attacking metrics – Mykolenko vs benchmarks

Shooting, carrying and crossing output per 90.

Attacking profile — percentile-scaled vs PL cohort



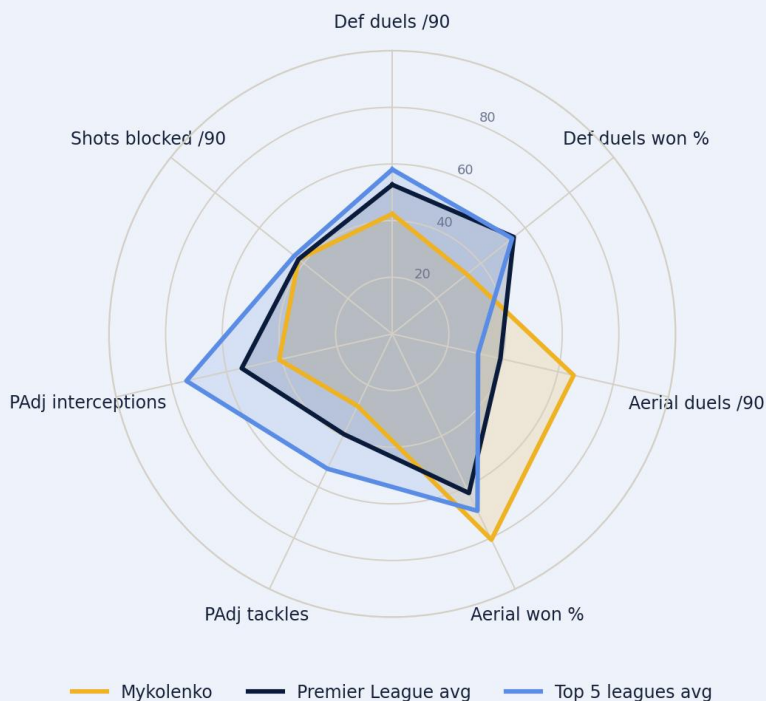
Metric (per 90 unless %)	Mykolenko	PL avg	Top 5 avg	PL %ile
xG /90	0.0	0.1	0.0	6
Shots /90	0.2	0.6	0.6	9
Crosses /90	2.5	2.2	2.5	52
Cross accuracy %	40.5	28.8	33.5	88
Dribbles /90	0.9	1.3	1.9	42
Dribble success %	51.5	52.5	57.5	39
Off duels won %	41.0	43.3	45.4	30
Prog runs /90	0.9	1.5	1.5	21
Box touches /90	0.5	1.3	1.0	9

Read: Only cross accuracy (40.5%, 91st percentile) sits in the top quartile. Shot volume, dribbles, progressive runs and box touches are all bottom-third — the profile contributes width but almost no penetration.

Defensive metrics – Mykolenko vs benchmarks

Duel volume, duel success and possession-adjusted recoveries.

Defensive profile — percentile-scaled vs PL cohort



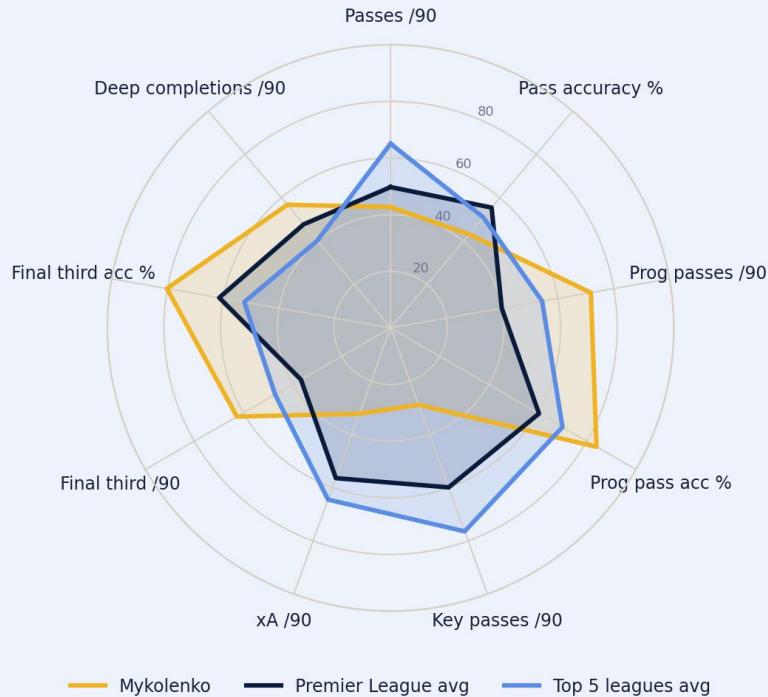
Metric (per 90 unless %)	Mykolenko	PL avg	Top 5 avg	PL %ile
Def duels /90	6.2	6.7	6.9	36
Def duels won %	57.1	60.5	60.4	18
Aerial duels /90	3.0	2.4	2.2	82
Aerial won %	50.9	45.3	47.5	64
PAdj tackles	0.2	0.3	0.4	27
PAdj interceptions	4.8	5.2	5.8	33
Shots blocked /90	0.3	0.3	0.3	55

Read: Aerially strong for the position (2.97 duels per 90 at 50.9%), but ground-duel success of 57.1% is 18th percentile and possession-adjusted tackles and interceptions both trail the league average.

Passing metrics – Mykolenko vs benchmarks

Volume, retention, progression and creation.

Passing profile — percentile-scaled vs PL cohort



Metric (per 90 unless %)	Mykolenko	PL avg	Top 5 avg	PL %ile
Passes /90	35.7	37.3	40.9	36
Pass accuracy %	80.3	82.0	81.3	36
Prog passes /90	8.4	6.4	7.3	85
Prog pass acc %	72.5	67.0	69.3	73
Key passes /90	0.1	0.3	0.4	18
xA /90	0.0	0.1	0.1	21
Final third /90	5.4	4.2	4.7	88
Final third acc %	79.2	73.0	70.1	73
Deep completions /90	0.6	0.6	0.5	61

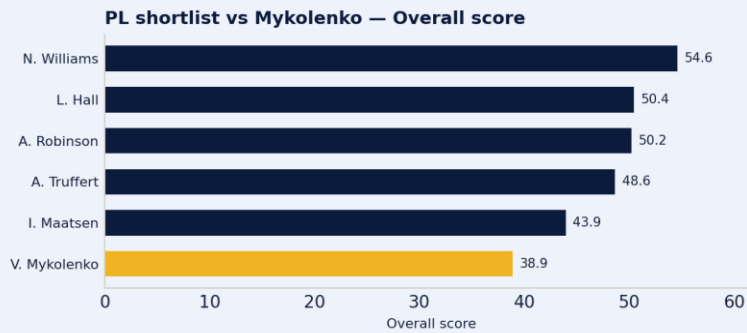
Read: The strongest sector: 8.43 progressive passes and 5.43 final-third passes per 90 with 79.2% accuracy into the final third all beat both league averages. Creation, however, is minimal — 0.14 key passes and 0.04 xA per 90.

Premier League shortlist

Five domestic left backs who upgrade the profile.



Player	Club	Age	Min	Val	Exp	Def	Att	Pas	Ovr
N. Williams	Nottingham Forest	25	3541	£17m	2029-06	66.8	53.1	39.8	54.6
L. Hall	Newcastle United	21	2479	£18m	2029-06	52.7	48.1	49.8	50.4
A. Robinson	Fulham	29	1667	£25m	2028-06	53.1	47.1	49.3	50.2
A. Truffert	Bournemouth	24	3776	£18m	2030-06	55.6	43.1	44.9	48.6
I. Maatsen	Aston Villa	24	1794	£40m	2030-06	46.9	47.8	36.2	43.9
V. Mykolenko	Everton	27	3268	£28m	2029-06	44.0	28.5	42.4	38.9



Premier League targets

All five domestic options, ranked by overall score.



01

N. Williams

Nottingham Forest · 25 yrs · 3541 mins · £17m · to 2029-06

The cohort leader. Elite defensive composite (66.8) with genuine attacking volume – 3.08 crosses and 3.0 dribbles per 90. Right-footed but plays left, so crossing angles differ from Mykolenko.

Def **66.8** +22.8

Att **53.1** +24.6

Pass **39.8** -2.7

Ovr **54.6** +15.7

NFO



02

L. Hall

Newcastle United · 21 yrs · 2479 mins · £18m · to 2029-06

Best age-profile fit at 21. Beats Mykolenko in all four composites, with 83.4% pass accuracy and superior progressive volume. Newcastle contract to 2029 makes him the hardest to prise away.

Def **52.7** +8.7

Att **48.1** +19.5

Pass **49.8** +7.3

Ovr **50.4** +11.5

NEW



03

A. Robinson

Fulham · 29 yrs · 1667 mins · £25m · to 2028-06

Proven Premier League volume crosser with a balanced 50.2 overall. At 29 he is a two-to-three-year solution rather than an asset purchase.

Def **53.1** +9.1

Att **47.1** +18.6

Pass **49.3** +6.9

Ovr **50.2** +11.3

FUL



04

A. Truffert

Bournemouth · 24 yrs · 3776 mins · £18m · to 2030-06

Highest minutes load in the cohort (3,776) and a strong 55.6 defending score. The most durable option and the closest stylistic match to Mykolenko with more end product.

Def **55.6** +11.6

Att **43.1** +14.6

Pass **44.9** +2.4

Ovr **48.6** +9.7

BOU



05

I. Maatsen

Aston Villa · 24 yrs · 1794 mins · £40m · to 2030-06

The most progressive passer of the group and a genuine attacking threat, but the £40m valuation and Villa contract to 2030 make this the most expensive route.

Def **46.9** +2.9

Att **47.8** +19.2

Pass **36.2** -6.3

Ovr **43.9** +5.1

AVL

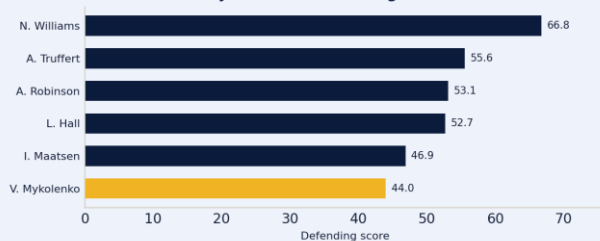
Chips show each composite with the delta versus Mykolenko. All five targets improve the attacking composite by at least 13 points.

Domestic shortlist — sector comparison

Defending, passing and metric-level detail against the incumbent.



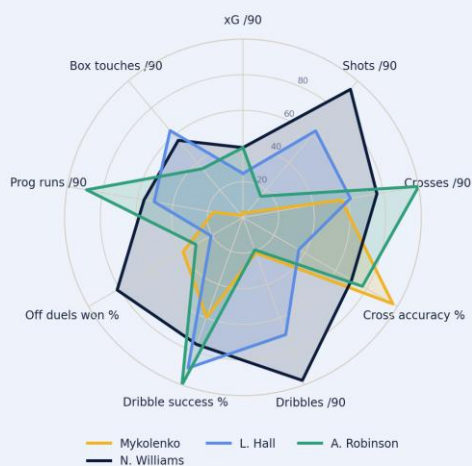
PL shortlist vs Mykolenko — Defending score



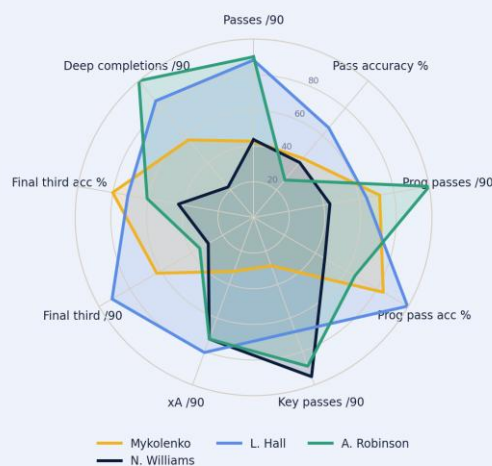
PL shortlist vs Mykolenko — Passing score



Attacking — Mykolenko vs top PL targets



Passing — Mykolenko vs top PL targets



Metric	Mykolenko	Williams	Hall	Robinson
Crosses /90	2.5	3.1	2.6	4.3
Cross acc %	40.5	33.1	23.6	35.0
Dribbles /90	0.9	3.0	2.3	0.9
Prog passes /90	8.4	6.6	8.0	10.5
Key passes /90	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.4
Def duels won %	57.1	59.2	63.6	60.1

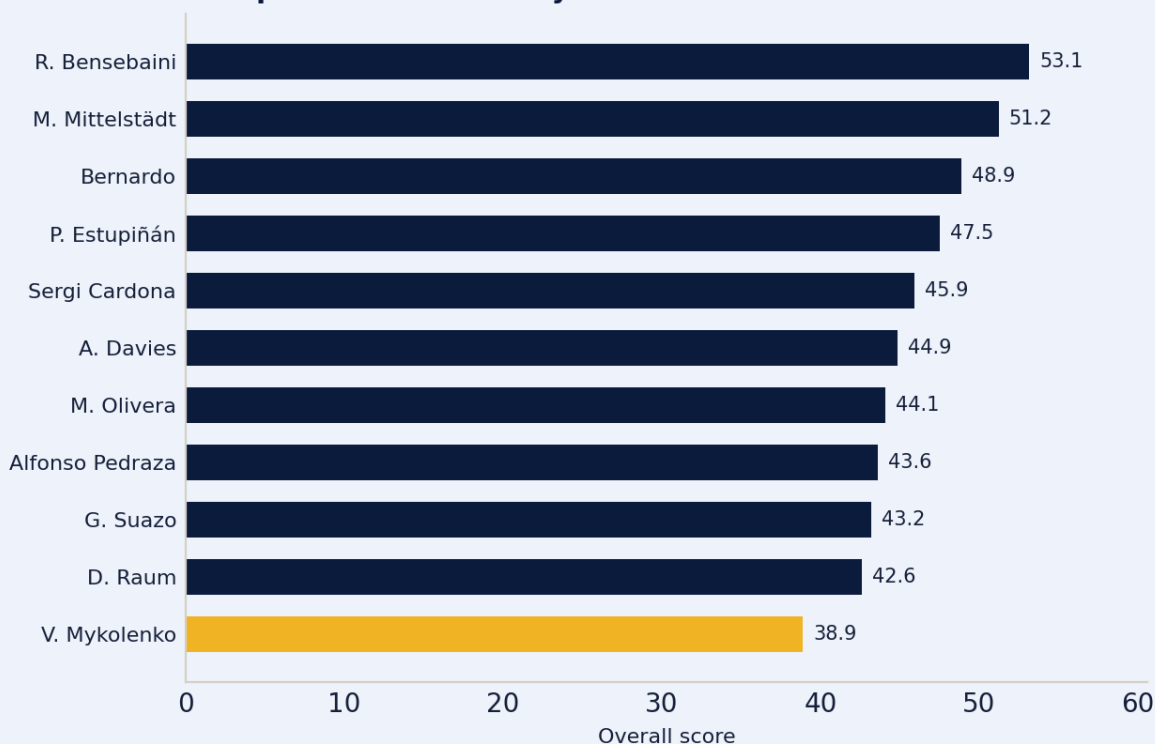
Williams and Hall both deliver more crossing volume and dribbling than Mykolenko while matching his progressive passing — the specific upgrade the squad audit calls for.

Top 5 European leagues shortlist

Ten continental left backs, ranked within the 141-player cohort.

Player	Club	Age	Min	Val	Exp	Def	Att	Pas	Ovr
R. Bensebaini	Borussia Dortmund	31	1171	£7m	2027-06	67.5	39.2	47.9	53.1
M. Mittelstädt	Stuttgart	29	2347	£17m	2028-06	47.4	48.7	58.8	51.2
Bernardo	Hoffenheim	31	3249	£6m	2027-06	79.0	25.1	32.5	48.9
P. Estupiñán	Milan	28	1391	£30m	2030-06	43.7	45.7	54.5	47.5
Sergi Cardona	Villarreal	27	3131	£6m	2027-06	51.8	37.5	46.5	45.9
A. Davies	Bayern München	25	2256	n/a	2030-06	34.7	49.9	53.4	44.9
M. Olivera	Napoli	28	1706	£15m	2030-06	47.5	33.2	50.4	44.1
Alfonso Pedraza	Lazio	30	1231	£5m	2029-06	37.5	54.4	41.1	43.6
G. Suazo	Sevilla	28	2594	£4m	2028-06	44.3	36.4	48.6	43.2
D. Raum	RB Leipzig	28	3018	£20m	2027-06	32.4	46.6	52.3	42.6
V. Mykolenko	Everton	27	2776	£28m	2029-06	43.7	26.2	30.8	34.6

European shortlist vs Mykolenko — Overall score



European targets (1-5)

Ranked by overall score within the 141-player European cohort.



01

R. Bensebaini

Borussia Dortmund · 31 yrs · 1171 mins · £7m · to 2027-06

Top-ranked left back in the European cohort (53.1). A 67.5 defending score is the highest of any target, and he adds set-piece and penalty threat. Age 31 and a 2027 contract make him a short-term, low-fee upgrade.

Def **67.5** +23.8

Att **39.2** +13.0

Pass **47.9** +17.1

Ovr **53.1** +18.5

BVB



02

M. Mittelstädt

Stuttgart · 29 yrs · 2347 mins · £17m · to 2028-06

The best passer on the list — 58.8 passing score with high progressive volume, plus a 48.7 attacking score. German international with two years to run at Stuttgart.

Def **47.4** +3.7

Att **48.7** +22.5

Pass **58.8** +28.0

Ovr **51.2** +16.6

VFB



03

Bernardo

Hoffenheim · 31 yrs · 3249 mins · £6m · to 2027-06

Outstanding pure defender (79.0, the highest single sector score in the dossier) across 3,249 minutes, but a 25.1 attacking score means he does not fix the final-third problem.

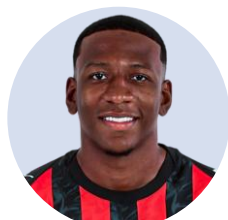
Def **79.0** +35.3

Att **25.1** -1.1

Pass **32.5** +1.7

Ovr **48.9** +14.3

TSG



04

P. Estupiñán

Milan · 28 yrs · 1391 mins · £30m · to 2030-06

Premier League-proven before his move to Milan, combining a 54.5 passing score with genuine attacking output. Valuation around £30m is comparable to Mykolenko.

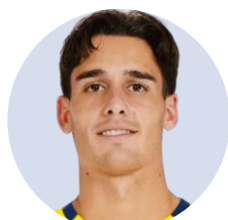
Def **43.7** -0.1

Att **45.7** +19.4

Pass **54.5** +23.7

Ovr **47.5** +12.9

MIL



05

Sergi Cardona

Villarreal · 27 yrs · 3131 mins · £6m · to 2027-06

The volume option — 3,131 minutes at Villarreal with a balanced 45.9 overall and a £6m valuation. Best value-for-fee profile on the list.

Def **51.8** +8.1

Att **37.5** +11.3

Pass **46.5** +15.7

Ovr **45.9** +11.3

VIL

Deltas are versus Mykolenko measured in the same European cohort (overall 34.6).

European targets (6-10)

Ranked by overall score within the 141-player European cohort.



A. Davies

Bayern München · 25 yrs · 2256 mins · n/a · to 2030-06

Highest ceiling in attack (49.9) and elite carrying, though the defending composite of 34.7 is below Mykolenko. Bayern contract to 2030 makes availability unlikely.

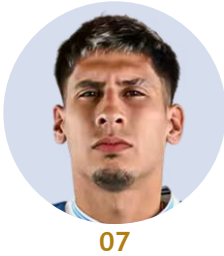
Def **34.7** -9.1

Att **49.9** +23.7

Pass **53.4** +22.6

Ovr **44.9** +10.3

FCB



M. Olivera

Napoli · 28 yrs · 1706 mins · £15m · to 2030-06

Serie A-hardened, 50.4 passing score and a solid defensive base. A steady like-for-like upgrade rather than a transformative one.

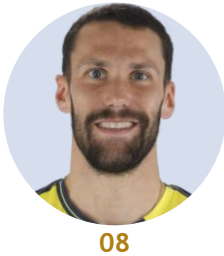
Def **47.5** +3.8

Att **33.2** +7.0

Pass **50.4** +19.6

Ovr **44.1** +9.5

NAP



Alfonso Pedraza

Lazio · 30 yrs · 1231 mins · £5m · to 2029-06

Best attacking composite of the European group (54.4). Age 30 and a £5m valuation make him the cheapest route to more final-third output.

Def **37.5** -6.2

Att **54.4** +28.1

Pass **41.1** +10.3

Ovr **43.6** +9.0

LAZ



G. Suazo

Sevilla · 28 yrs · 2594 mins · £4m · to 2028-06

2,594 minutes in La Liga with a well-rounded profile and a £3.5m valuation — the lowest-risk financial commitment on the shortlist.

Def **44.3** +0.5

Att **36.4** +10.2

Pass **48.6** +17.8

Ovr **43.2** +8.6

SEV



D. Raum

RB Leipzig · 28 yrs · 3018 mins · £20m · to 2027-06

Elite dead-ball and crossing volume from left back, 3,018 Bundesliga minutes, with a 2027 contract creating negotiating leverage.

Def **32.4** -11.3

Att **46.6** +20.3

Pass **52.3** +21.5

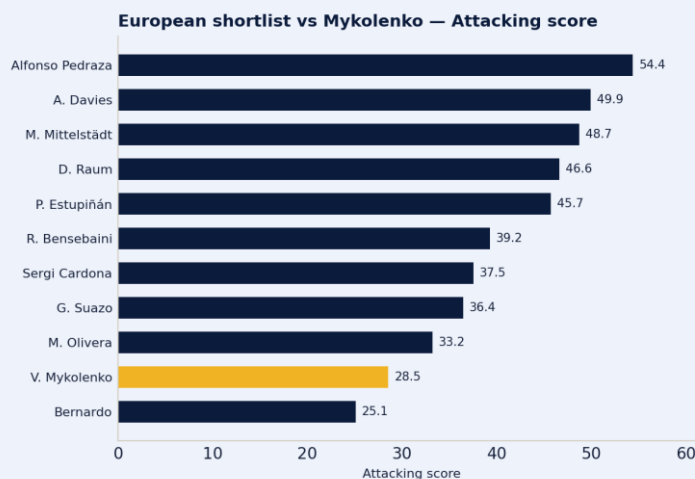
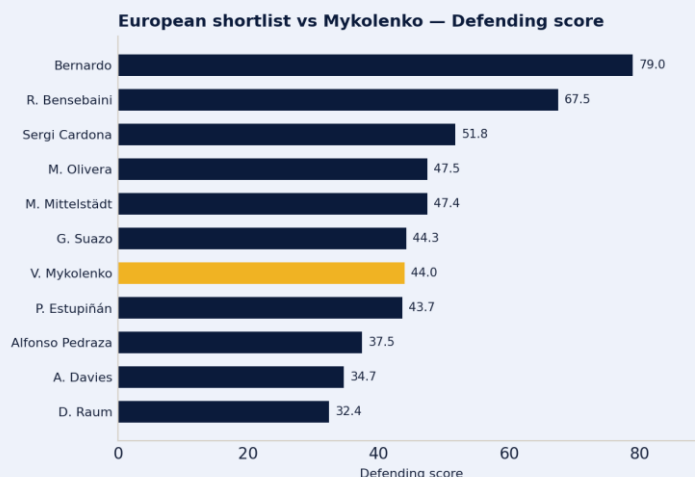
Ovr **42.6** +8.0

RBL

Deltas are versus Mykolenko measured in the same European cohort (overall 34.6).

European shortlist — sector comparison

Where each continental target adds value against the incumbent.



All ten European targets clear Mykolenko's European-cohort overall score of 34.6. Bensebaini and Bernardo transform the defensive floor; Mittelstädt, Estupiñán and Raum transform ball progression; Pedraza and Davies transform the final third. No single target leads all three sectors, so the choice is a deliberate trade-off against the intended system.

Recommendation

Priority order, rationale and next steps.

Tier 1 – pursue now

L. Hall, N. Williams, R. Bensebaini

Largest composite upgrade with an age or cost profile Everton can justify. Hall is the asset purchase; Williams the peak-years starter; Bensebaini the immediate, low-fee defensive fix.

Tier 2 – strong value

A. Truffert, Sergi Cardona, G. Suazo, D. Raum

High-minute, well-rounded profiles available at modest fees. Best options if the budget is redirected elsewhere in the squad.

Tier 3 – premium / opportunistic

I. Maatsen, P. Estupiñán, A. Davies, M. Mittelstädt

Clear on-pitch upgrades, but fee, wages or contract length make them dependent on a sale or a change in circumstances.

Next steps

- Commission live scouting reports on Hall, Williams and Bensebaini across the next four fixtures.
- Model wage and amortisation impact for each tier against the existing Mykolenko contract to June 2029.
- Test the two-window option: sign a Tier 2 profile now, retain Mykolenko as rotation, and revisit Tier 1 in the summer.
- Re-run this cohort model at the winter break to capture minutes and form movement across both samples.