FOOTBALL MANAGER 27 · MATCH ANALYSIS

FM TACTICAL MASTERY

What every match screen in Football Manager 27 is telling you, the one setting to change, and what that change costs. Every claim checked against the game or a published source.

UNOFFICIAL GUIDE · FOR FM27 ON PC

14
chapters, from the first screen to a full match routine

12
published sources cited, plus the game's own text

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

For FM27 on PC. It shows what each match screen tells you, the one setting to change, and what that change costs.

TRY IT NOW: 5 MINUTES

1. **Open any FM27 match you have played** and find the opponent's Shot Map. Each zone with a shot shows how many shots and their total xG.
2. **Take the zone with the biggest xG and divide it by its shots.** Two shots for 1.15 is about 0.57 each.
3. **Compare it with 0.25,** the xG bar in the game's own glossary entry for a clear cut chance. A zone above 0.25 in the middle of your box is a zone to close (Chapter 4).

IF YOU HAVE	READ
A match tomorrow	Chapter 8: read the Data Hub, set opposition instructions, plan the first change.
A problem right now	Chapter 13, the fix finder: what you see, the change to try.
An evening	Part one, then play one match with Chapter 14 open.
A setting you do not understand	Chapters 9 to 12.

THE ONE HABIT

Make one change at a time. Then check the same screen about 10 minutes of match time later, and keep or undo it. Two changes at once and you cannot tell which one worked.

WHAT THIS GUIDE DOES NOT PROMISE

Wins. Sports Interactive has not published how the match engine weighs each instruction. The game's text says what a setting asks for, not how well it works. Gaps we know of are listed at the back.

PART ONE · READ THE MATCH

READ THE MATCH

THE IDEA OF THIS PART

Every match screen answers one question. Learn the question, then pick one change.

AFTER THIS PART YOU CAN

- Say what each screen shows and what to look for.
- Pick one change, with its cost known.
- Check ten minutes later whether it worked.

CHAPTER 1 THE SCREENS AND XG IN PLAIN WORDS

Nine screens, one question each, and a fixed order to read them in. Most show xG, so it is explained here.

THE RULE THIS BOOK IS BUILT ON

Find out **what is happening**, then **why**, then change **one thing**. Look at the same screen again about ten minutes of match time later, then keep or undo it. Change five settings and you will not know which one turned the match.

FM27 measures **Tactical Complexity**: how many team, player and opposition instructions you have stacked up. Sports Interactive ties it to **Tactical Effectiveness**, how well your players carry out what you ask. The game's tooltip says a more complex tactic asks for better players and longer on the training ground before it works.

THE NINE SCREENS AND THE QUESTION EACH ONE ANSWERS

SCREEN	THE ONE QUESTION	CHAPTER
Match Stats	Do the headline numbers agree with the score?	2
Match Momentum	Who is on top right now, and since when?	3
xG Story	Is that pressure turning into good chances?	3

SCREEN	THE ONE QUESTION	CHAPTER
Shot Map	Where were the shots from, and how good?	4
Action Zones	Which third of the pitch has the play been in?	4
Pass Map	How does each team move the ball, and through whom?	5
Heat Map	Where did one player spend the match?	5
Ratings and condition	Who is playing badly, and who is tiring?	6
Data Hub	What is the pattern over many matches?	8

Eight of the nine names are the game's own labels; "Ratings and condition" is ours. You can swap the tiles on the match day screen, so your layout may differ from the screenshots.

THE ORDER TO LOOK IN

Some screens tell you **that** something is wrong, others **why**. Start with the first kind.



Figure 1.1. The reading order. Steps 1 and 2 say whether to act; step 3 says what to act on.

1. WHO IS ON TOP?

Match Momentum, Action Zones.

2. IS IT DANGEROUS?

xG Story, Match Stats.

3. WHERE AND HOW?

Shot Map, Pass Map, Heat Map, condition.

4. ONE CHANGE.

Then look at 1 and 2 again about 10 minutes later.

Pressure is not chances: one analyst line flags a side that has the territory but no meaningful chances. The game's post-match text also separates the result from the quality of the chances. Judge a change by momentum and xG first, the scoreboard last.

XG IN PLAIN WORDS

THE RULE

xG scores a chance, not a result. Every shot gets a number between 0 and 1: how often a shot like it goes in. Add them up and you know what a team's chances were worth, not who deserved to win.

FMPedia, the glossary inside FM27, says xG is how likely a shot is to end in a goal, taken just before the shot, from distance, angle and shot quality. It values each shot by how often similar shots are scored. A 0.3 shot goes in about 3 times out of 10. So 0.05 is about 5 goals from 100 such shots, and 0.70 is about 7 from 10.

The entry for Expected Goals Against (xGA) adds the shot's location and type, and the placing and number of defenders and the goalkeeper. Neither entry says how much each factor counts. Compare FM27 xG only with FM27 xG, never a website's figure.

SHOT	XG	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Everton, close to goal	**0.40**	Goes in about 4 times in 10, so missing it is the more likely outcome. One miss tells you little about a finisher.
Everton, outside the box	**0.03**	About 3 in 100. A bonus, not a plan.
A penalty	**0.7**	The glossary's typical penalty value.

ADDING XG UP

Match xG is the shot values added together. In the author's match the Shot Map zones add up exactly to the xG on the match stats. At 27 minutes Everton led 2-1 with chances worth 0.81; Spurs' were worth 1.36. Chapter 14 works through this match.

THE ONE SUM WORTH DOING: XG PER SHOT

xG per shot is xG divided by shots. FM27's text labels it "xG / Sht"; none of the author's screenshots shows that label. At 27 minutes: Everton 0.81 from 5 shots is 0.16, Spurs 1.36 from 4 is 0.34. With one fewer shot, Spurs had chances twice as good.

MEASURED IN FM27: A NORMAL XG PER SHOT

One save, one season, the game's own xG model: the author's Everton save, Premier League 2026/27 (the manager's own league), 380 matches, 8,801 shots.

- Average shot: 0.1247 xG; 0.1202 without penalties.
- 12.82% of shots scored; 46.14% on target.
- Clubs ranged from 0.1096 to 0.1431 xG per shot, median 0.1246.
- The middle half of the 20 clubs sat between 0.1161 and 0.1298 xG per shot.
- 54.53% of the league's shots came from outside the box.

The other four big leagues, played in the background, came to 0.1107 together. So compare against your own league and your own normal.

Learn your own normal. After ten matches, divide your total xG by your total shots. A match well below it means your shots got worse. Well above, you got into better positions. The match log in Chapter 14 has the columns.

CLEAR CUT CHANCES: THE GAME'S OWN LINE

Clear Cut Chances is a match stat on the stats tile and the Key Stats tab. FMPedia credits one when both tests pass:

1. **The xG test.** The shot the player takes, or could take, is worth 0.25 xG or more.
2. **The position test.** The player is clean through (no defender between them and the keeper) or no more than eight yards (7.3 metres) from goal.

A 0.30 shot from twelve yards with two defenders in the way fails the second test.

The game also has the label Half Chances. We found no game definition of a half chance, so this book does not guess one.

WHAT XG CANNOT SEE

- **Attacks that end without a shot.** xG is given to shots, and an xA value only appears when the receiver shoots. Twenty minutes in your box can add almost nothing. For that pressure, use Match Momentum (Chapter 3) and Action Zones (Chapter 4).
- **Who took the shot.** The game's factor lists do not include the shooter's finishing. Treat xG as the chance's value for an average taker.
- **What happened after the strike.** xG is taken before the shot, so a top corner finish and a scuff from the same spot start equal. The glossary's "quality of the shot" factor is not explained.
- **Penalties.** One adds about 0.7 and can swamp a quiet match. Read Non-Penalty Expected Goals (NpXG) to judge open play.

LUCK AGAINST SKILL

One match of xG tells you who made the better chances, not who deserved the points. Some drift from the expected number is bound to happen. Five matches give a first hint. Ten give a working normal for your team. The game's xG table comments make the same point over a run: a team well ahead of its expected points is told it is overperforming.

YOUR STRIKER MISSES A LOT

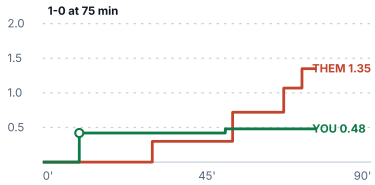
A striker on 0.6 xG a match who scores 0.3 over five matches is getting into the right places. That is the hard part. In real football data, finishing skill differs from average for only a handful of players.

YOUR TEAM WINS WITHOUT CHANCES

Five wins from low xG is a warning. Fix the chance creation while results are good.

PATTERNS

DURING THE MATCH You lead, but they have the big chances



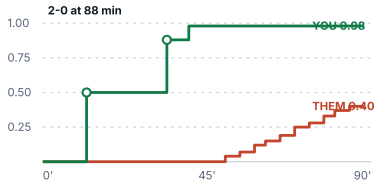
WHAT YOU SEE. Example, invented data. 1-0, but their four big steps reach 1.35 against your 0.48: their goal is likely.

WHAT TO CHANGE. Find their route on the Shot Map (Chapter 4) and Pass Map (Chapter 5), then close it. Balls behind: **Defensive Line: Lower**. Press beaten through the middle: tweak **Press Less Aggressively**. One player getting the chances: **Marking: Mark Tighter**.

WHAT IT COSTS. Space in front of the defence; more time on the ball for them; quick players can turn Mark Tighter.

HOW TO CHECK. Their line flattens. A new tall step means the route is still open.

DURING THE MATCH 2-0 up, their line climbs in tiny steps



WHAT YOU SEE. Example, invented data. 2-0 up; ten tiny steps for them after the break, 0.40 in total.

WHAT IT MEANS. Your defence is doing its job: they shoot from poor positions.

WHAT TO CHANGE. Nothing tactical; fresh legs at the back if condition drops (Chapter 6). At 1-0 late on, staff may suggest tweak **Disrupt**.

WHAT IT COSTS. Nothing. Disrupt may limit your own chances.

HOW TO CHECK. Watch only for a tall red step.

YOU SEE	CHANGE	IT COSTS
They take over, 0-0. They found a way through, or your press stopped working. Big red xG steps: act. Flat: wait.	**Defensive Line** one step lower; **Trigger Press: Less Often**; or tweak **Press Less Aggressively**.	A lower line leaves space in front of your defence; pressing less gives them more time on the ball.
Late fade. Your bars shrink, theirs grow. Often tiredness: check condition (Chapter 6).	Fresh legs; or **Press Less Aggressively**, which the assistant suggests when players are tired with under 20 minutes left.	More time on the ball for them; a substitution uses one change.
A red card, bars small and even. Their red: your tactic is not using the spare man. Your red: a steeper slope is expected.	Their red: **Attacking Width: Wider**, tweak **Exploit the Width**, or a one-step more attacking mentality. Your red, protecting a draw: **Mentality: Cautious**, or **Press Less Aggressively**.	Wider play: harder counter-pressing, fewer short options. Attacking mentalities are more open to counters; Cautious leans on counter-attacks for chances. Pressing less gives them time on the ball.

PART TWO · BEFORE THE MATCH

BEFORE THE MATCH

THE IDEA OF THIS PART

Read the report in a fixed order and pick at most three actions, each with its cost known.

AFTER THIS PART YOU CAN

- Find the parts of the report that help a decision.
- Turn them into one change with its cost.
- Set opposition instructions on one or two players.

CHAPTER 8 PREPARE FOR THE MATCH

Five steps for the day before a match: open the report, read it, pick a change, set opposition instructions, write a card.

STEP 1. OPEN THE REPORT

The Data Hub is where your analysis staff store charts and written observations. The opposition report is your scouting team's **Team Report** on the opponent, linked before the match as **Next Opposition Report**. The Data Hub also sends key findings to your inbox. In the screenshots, **Data Hub** is the last item in the second menu row under Tactics; **Team Report** is a menu on the opponent's club page.

The report feeds **Next Match Info** in **Tactical Effectiveness**: **Quality of Next Opposition Report** (tied to the staff member who delivers it) and **Opposition Player Knowledge**. No report: read the **Next Match Info** advice line and get one first. A weak analyst team can explain a missing chart.

PART FOUR · PUT IT TOGETHER

PUT IT TOGETHER

THE IDEA OF THIS PART

From a problem on screen to one change, then a routine for a whole match.

AFTER THIS PART YOU CAN

- Go from a pattern on a screen to one first change.
- Pick the change that fits the score.
- Keep a log of what works.

CHAPTER 13 FIX FINDER

Keep this open during a match. Find what you see, then read the chapter named for the cost.

HOW TO USE IT

Pick the one row for your biggest problem, change only that, and look at the same screen about ten minutes later. If two rows fit, take the cost you can live with. The first change is our advice to test. The cost column is the game's own wording, shortened.

MATCH MOMENTUM AND XG STORY

WHAT YOU SEE	FIRST CHANGE TO TRY	WHAT THE GAME SAYS IT COSTS	CH.
Their bars run and their xG takes big steps	Find the zone on their Shot Map, then use the Shot Map rows	Depends on the change	3, 4
Their bars run but xG stays flat; or they push after your goal	Nothing. Look again in ten minutes	None	3, 14
Your bars for 20 minutes, your xG climbs in tiny steps	**Patience: Work Ball Into Box**	Needs technical quality. Likely fewer chances.	3, 11

WHAT YOU SEE	FIRST CHANGE TO TRY	WHAT THE GAME SAYS IT COSTS	CH.
Your xG climbs in big steps, no goal yet	Nothing tactical. At most a fresh striker	None	3
Your bars shrink from about 60', theirs grow	Substitute your hardest runners, or the tweak **Press Less Aggressively**	The tweak sits deep and holds shape in place of pressing.	6, 7
Tiny bars both ways, xG flat, you need a goal	The tweak **Play With More Urgency**, or one step up in **Mentality**	Urgency: more low-quality chances. Mentality: Positive is a bit more open to counters; Attacking is more open, with more turnovers.	7, 9

SHOT MAP

WHAT YOU SEE	FIRST CHANGE TO TRY	WHAT THE GAME SAYS IT COSTS	CH.
Their biggest xG zone is the middle of your box	**Pressing Trap: Trap Outside** (or Balanced, from Trap Inside)	Trap Outside: counters start further from goal; more open to switches of play.	4, 10
The same, and you already defend narrow	Give one midfielder a screening role	Too many screening or holding roles leave you short of pressers.	12
Their chances are balls in behind	**Defensive Line** one step lower	More space in front of the defence and on the edge of the box.	10
Their chances are crosses	**Cross Engagement: Stop Crosses**	Defenders dragged out of position. More space in the middle.	10
Their shots are all from distance, with small xG	Nothing. Your defence is doing its job.	None	4
Most of your shots are from outside the box	**Shots from Distance: Discourage**	Relies on creating chances inside the box. Lets the opponent sit deeper.	4, 11
Your shots are headers from high crosses, small xG	**Crossing Style: Low Crosses**	Intercepted more often, and the shots blocked more often.	11
All your shots come from one side	Leave it if it creates chances; if not, **Progress Through** the quiet side	Less effective if the opponent's defenders on that side play well.	5, 11

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

WHAT THE FULL GUIDE HOLDS

You have read 11 pages: the start, the contents, Chapter 1, one Match Momentum pattern, the opening of the match preparation chapter and the first two pages of the fix finder. The page numbers on them are the full guide's numbers.

95	pages in A4, plus a US Letter edition (99 pages)
14	chapters, from reading each match screen to the routine you run every match
1	full chapter on preparing for a match: what to read in the Data Hub and how to set opposition instructions
29	screenshots from a real FM27 match, with every marker explained
12	published sources, plus the game's own text

Also inside: every team instruction and role with what each option asks and what it costs, a full worked match (Everton v Spurs), a 7-day plan, a glossary, a page on what we could not confirm, and a match log spreadsheet that works out your normal xG per shot and flags matches that stray from it.

Full guide: EUR 9.99, PDF plus match log spreadsheet.
Get it from the same page where you downloaded this sample. It is a download, so all sales are final.

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