



PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

2025/26

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INTRODUCTION



Barcelona's impressive 4-0 victory over OL Lyonnes in the final of the 2025/26 UEFA Women's Champions League was a fitting conclusion to a successful competition that further underlined the technical and tactical advancements at the elite level of the women's club game in Europe.

The aim of the report is to underline the importance of football fitness and to provide information of value to all those involved in preparing female footballers for top-level competition.

The information in this report is relevant to a broad audience – not only fitness and technical coaches at both senior and development levels, but also coach educators, technical directors and performance analysts. It provides a deeper understanding of the benchmark physical demands on players and encourages reflection, investigation, and practical application.

Across the competition, many teams displayed distinct tactical approaches for different phases of the game, adopting varied styles for in and out of possession moments.

To do so, players needed to display advanced technical and tactical skills, but also highly developed physical capabilities. Over the coming pages, we will highlight some of the main physical demands placed on players - with a particular focus on running outputs - from the quarter-finals through to the final. Further, we will make some initial links between these physical demands and a team's overall tactical approach.

The importance of peak physical demands

Understanding peak physical demands is central to the analysis of the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26. From a physical development perspective, it is important to consider not only the intensity of a single peak action, but also the volume of activity and how much time players spend at higher intensities. While high-speed actions occur at important parts of the match, identifying the time spent close to the peak average speed can provide insight into the repeatability of the peak and how this differs between positions and teams.

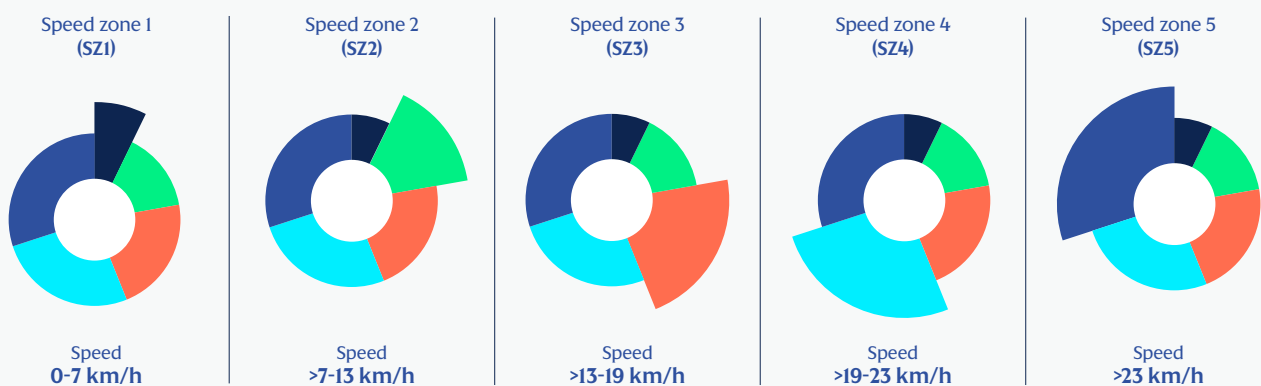
Recreating peak demands during training sessions may allow the players to be better conditioned for the most demanding periods of competition. Equally, understanding the time spent close to the peak demands can help evaluate training preparation to better expose players to prolonged higher-intensity activity during training across the year.

OBJECTIVES

Overall distances covered (metres), distances within specific speed zones and peak speeds were assessed across matches (90-minute duration, excluding extra-time). Integrated running demands, within the context of possession state and area of the pitch, were also analysed as well as peak demands and time spent close to the average peak intensity. These have been analysed by position and team throughout. At times in the report, analysis has been broken down into starters vs substitutes.

Speed zones

Consistent with previous UEFA reports, the below speed thresholds were applied:





METHODOLOGY

Tracking data was collected for all players during the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26 knockout stages using a commercially available multi-camera, optical tracking system (Hawkeye). Optical tracking technology uses multiple cameras situated around the stadium to provide a 360-degree view of the pitch. Computer vision technology automatically tracks players and the ball on a frame-by-frame basis at no lower than 25 images per second. Quality assurance software raises instances within each match recording that require a review for confirmation of individual players. The Hawkeye operations team is responsible for reviewing these instances and feeding them back into the quality assurance pipeline. Once the tracking of a given match is complete, an automated quality check runs over the data to confirm a high level of accuracy. The data is then exported for analysis using the Hawkeye platform.

Tactical Definitions

Research has demonstrated that understanding contextual factors relating to playing style and tactics is essential to understanding the physical demands of play. The physical analysis was therefore combined with contextual data to provide a more integrated description of match demands. The tactical components focused on possession states: in possession; out of possession; and ball out of play. This was completed on a team-by-team basis. The area of the pitch in which peak demands occurred was also considered.

Term	Definition
Ball in play	The ball is considered in play whenever it is inside the field of play and the match has not been stopped by the referee.
In possession	Possessions are defined as one or more sequences in a row belonging to the same team. Sequences are defined as passages of play which belong to one team and are ended by defensive actions, stoppages in play or a shot.
Out of possession	The opposing team has control of the ball.
Own half	The half of the pitch a team is defending, closest to their own goal.
Opposing half	The half of the pitch a team is attacking, closest to the opponent's goal.
Attacking third	The third of the pitch nearest to the opponent's goal, where a team aims to create scoring opportunities.
Penalty area	The rectangular area in front of each goal where the goalkeeper may handle the ball and where defensive fouls can result in a penalty kick.



Player Inclusion

For team analysis, all players including starters and substitutes were included in team totals. The data was computed for 90-minute portions of matches only (excluding extra-time), unless otherwise stated. For positional comparisons, only player observations of more than 70 minutes for starters were included (n = 222). This was to avoid reducing the reported volume of activity (e.g. total distance) due to reduced playing time. For substitute analysis, only substitutes playing more than 20 minutes were included (n = 57). This was to minimise any influence of short playing duration on intensity variables. Both 70-minute (starters) and 20-minute (substitutes) thresholds were chosen as this is consistent with previous UEFA physical reports and would allow direct comparison between tournaments.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

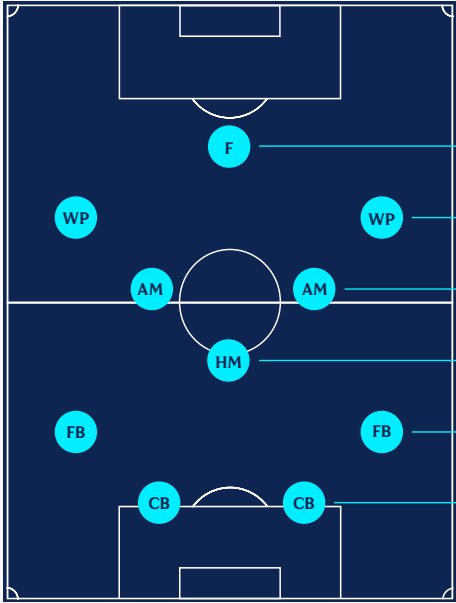
This section presents a descriptive analysis of the physical performance characteristics observed across UEFA Women's Champions League matches 2025/26. The purpose of this analysis is to provide an overview of the key physical metrics and establish baseline performance profiles before examining the influence of contextual factors.

Descriptive statistics are used to summarise the distribution, variability, and central tendencies of physical outputs across players, positions, and matches. By quantifying the typical demands of competition, this analysis offers an important foundation for understanding the physical requirements of elite European football and identifying patterns that may inform subsequent contextual and comparative analyses.

It should be remembered that fitness is not the only factor that determines a team's physical output. The physical demands of the match are influenced by contextual factors such as playing formation, scoreline or percentages of ball-possession. For example, a team whose strategy is based on a deep, compact defensive block may cover less total distance, depending on their counterattacking and transition styles of play.

Positional Breakdown

TABLE 1: Total distance and average total distance covered in each speed zone by position. The standard deviation is shown in brackets. Distance is reported in metres.

	Total (m)	SZ1 (m)	SZ2 (m)	SZ3 (m)	SZ4 (m)	SZ5 (m)
 Forwards	10019 (1071)	3084 (335)	4085 (586)	2092 (430)	505 (99)	252 (122)
Wide players	9193 (1320)	2979 (480)	3519 (745)	1918 (351)	540 (130)	236 (134)
Attacking midfielders	10108 (1111)	2949 (441)	4144 (597)	2329 (501)	503 (143)	183 (117)
Holding Midfielders	10223 (1096)	3006 (478)	4298 (611)	2420 (449)	408 (124)	91 (55)
Full-backs	9890 (726)	3088 (293)	4072 (495)	2005 (357)	496 (115)	229 (95)
Centre-backs	9607 (668)	3081 (280)	4110 (450)	1921 (321)	365 (91)	130 (64)



1

DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL RUNNING DEMANDS



This section presents a descriptive analysis of the physical performance characteristics observed across UEFA Women's Champions League matches 2025/26. The purpose of this analysis is to provide an overview of the key physical metrics and establish baseline performance profiles before examining the influence of contextual factors.

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1. DESCRIPTIVE PHYSICAL RUNNING DEMANDS

Figures 1, 2 and 3 (below) show the benchmarks in highest maximum speed, total distance and high-speed running in a match (excluding extra time), listing the leading three players in each category.

Notably, the three highest speeds were all recorded by players from French side and finalists OL Lyonnes. Attacker Tabitha Chawinga registered the highest overall speed (31.5 km/h), closely followed by teammates Melchie Dumornay (31.37 km/h - attacking midfielder) and full-back Ashley Lawrence (31.20 km/h).

Arsenal and England forward Alessia Russo registered the greatest distance covered in 90 minutes (excluding extra time) with over 12 km. Russo was followed by Manchester United and Norway holding midfielder Lisa Naalsund (11.75 km) and OL Lyonnes midfielder Korbin Shrader (11.63 km). The greatest distances of high-speed running were recorded by Barcelona wide attacker Salma Paralluelo (1323m), Bayern München full-back Franziska Kett (1216m) and Barcelona forward Ewa Pajor (1196m). The data reflect a variety of positions and roles among the top performers' styles of play.

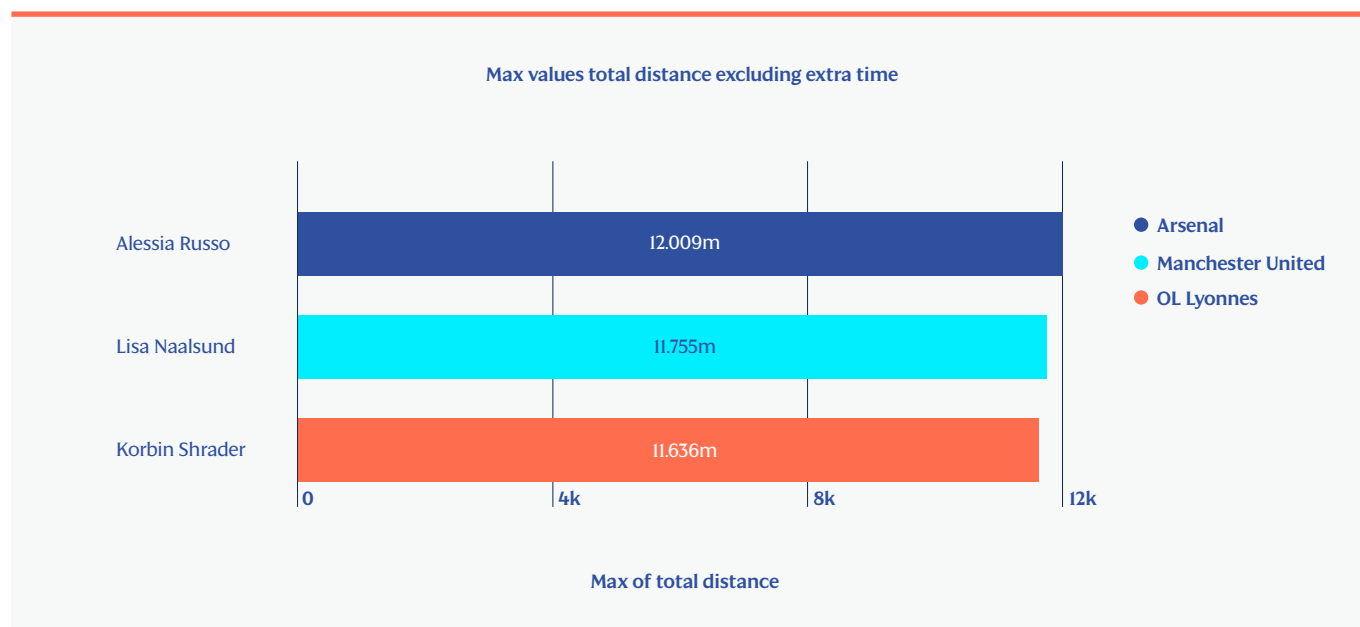


FIGURE 1: Max values total distance excluding extra time.

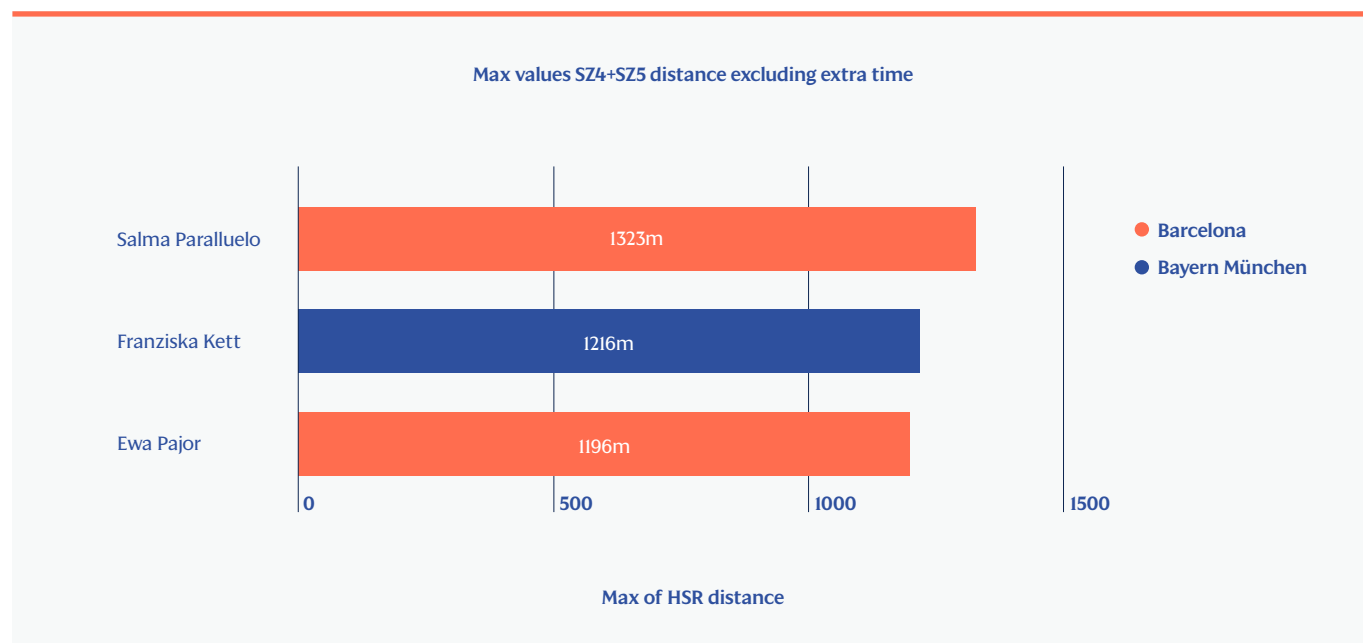


FIGURE 2: Highest SZ4+SZ5 distance recorded in the tournament.



FIGURE 3: Highest max speeds recorded in the tournament.

Positional Differences In Running Demands Between Starters And Substitutes

The tables below compare the distance per minute (m/min) in each speed zone by position for starters and substitutes.

TABLE 2: Starters (>=70 min) - Distances per minute (m/min)

	N	Total (m/min)	SZ1 (m/min)	SZ2 (m/min)	SZ3 (m/min)	SZ4 (m/min)	SZ5 (m/min)
Forwards	20	108.7 (7.0)	33.4 (1.9)	44.3 (4.8)	22.7 (4.2)	5.5 (1.1)	2.7 (1.2)
Wide players	18	104.5 (7.9)	33.8 (3.3)	40.1 (7.3)	21.8 (3.1)	6.1 (1.1)	2.6 (1.3)
Attacking midfielders	70	110.4 (7.4)	32.1 (3.0)	45.3 (5.4)	25.5 (5.6)	5.5 (1.4)	2.0 (1.2)
Holding midfielders	17	111.0 (7.2)	32.5 (3.2)	46.6 (5.0)	26.4 (5.0)	4.4 (1.3)	1.0 (0.6)
Full-backs	48	104.5 (7.5)	32.6 (2.2)	43.1 (5.3)	21.2 (4.1)	5.2 (1.2)	2.4 (1.0)
Centre-backs	49	100.1 (6.2)	32.0 (1.8)	42.9 (4.8)	20.0 (3.3)	3.8 (0.9)	1.4 (0.7)

TABLE 3: Substitutes (>20 min) - Distances per minute (m/min).

	N	Total (m/min)	SZ1 (m/min)	SZ2 (m/min)	SZ3 (m/min)	SZ4 (m/min)	SZ5 (m/min)
Forwards	20	97.2 (23.4)	29.2 (7.7)	38.2 (10.7)	21.6 (6.5)	6.1 (2.4)	2.2 (1.4)
Wide players	8	103.8 (12.6)	32.4 (3.5)	38.5 (7.7)	22.9 (4.2)	6.7 (1.7)	3.4 (1.2)
Attacking midfielders	14	91.2 (39.6)	24.5 (11.1)	36.6 (17.7)	23.6 (12.1)	4.9 (2.3)	1.5 (1.2)
Holding midfielders	3	109.5 (1.1)	28 (0.2)	45.3 (3.3)	27.3 (2)	6.5 (0.1)	2.5 (1.4)
Full-backs	8	103.7 (18.7)	29.5 (6.7)	43.1 (8.1)	22.8 (4.7)	6 (1.6)	2.4 (1.2)
Centre-backs	4	102.3 (1.8)	30.2 (1.8)	46.8 (3.7)	20.5 (2.5)	3.6 (1.7)	1.1 (1.2)



Wide players, forwards, and full-backs ran significantly higher-speed meters per minute than centre-backs and holding midfielders. Substitute holding midfielders, wide players and forwards covered more high-speed running per minute than starting players in the same position. This is likely related to their tactical role in the game.

PHYSICAL RUNNING DEMANDS COMPARISON WITH UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2025

The overall distances covered and distance covered at high-speed during the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26 were slightly lower than at the UEFA Women's EURO 2025.

This may be explained by differences in tactical organisation and competition context. For example, the knockout nature of a major international tournament may contribute to higher physical demands and greater transitional movements which are associated with higher physical outputs. Similarly, research has also consistently shown that physical demands tend to increase as the standard of competition rises, with higher-level competition requiring greater running outputs and high-speed actions.



2

CONTEXTUALISED PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Traditional analyses based solely on absolute physical outputs may fail to account for the contextual factors that influence match activity. Contextualised physical demand analysis considers variables such as possession state (in and out of possession) and area of the pitch. By examining physical performance within these specific contexts, practitioners can better identify the demands placed on players during elite European competition and develop more targeted training, monitoring, and performance strategies. The following section will explore the contextualised physical demands in relation to different technical and tactical considerations.

Team quadrant plots

Team quadrant plots below illustrate distance covered (m/min) versus SZ4 and SZ5 (m/min) distance covered (intensity) when the ball is in play, when teams are in and out of possession and with the attacking third and penalty area. Each club crest represents the mean value for a team across all matches, calculated from starter players only (≥ 70 min played). Vertical and horizontal dotted lines indicate the tournament mean.

Teams in the upper left quadrant (OL Lyonnes and Real Madrid)

focused more on intensity (high-speed running) than volume (total distance). Teams in the lower right quadrant (Arsenal and Wolfsburg) displayed more volume than intensity. Teams in the upper right quadrant (Barcelona and Bayern München) displayed both high volume and high speed. Teams in the lower left quadrant (Chelsea and Manchester United) displayed relatively low values of volume and intensity. The even split of teams across each quadrant underlines the varied physical demands faced by the quarter-finalists.



FIGURE 4: Quadrant plot showing volume versus higher-speed running for teams who reached the quarter-finals. This reveals which teams were more volume-based (total distance) and which focussed more on high-speed running (intensity) in SZ4 and SZ5 (speeds in excess of 19km/h.)

Team physical demands by possession state

The quadrant plots below (figure 5) show that teams reaching the quarter-finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26 faced distinct physical demands when in and out of possession. Displaying the in and out of possession quadrant plots side-by-side highlights how teams adopted different approaches for in and out of possession phases of the game and the subsequent physical demands required to play in this way. Total distance covered by teams was significantly higher when in-possession than out of possession (~ 5 m/min) with no significant differences in SZ4+SZ5 between in and out of possession states.

Notable variation in approach to in and out of possession moments of the game

Across the teams reaching the quarter-finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26 there was notable variation in the physical demands between in and out of possession phases of the game, which likely represents different styles of play and tactical strategies.

Barcelona had one of the lowest average speed values and SZ4+SZ5 when in possession, but this markedly changed when out of possession, where they are in the top right quadrant, showing a higher average speed and SZ4+SZ5 distance.

Bayern München's style of play when in possession was reflected in high distances for SZ4+SZ5. In contrast, beaten finalists OL Lyonnes displayed a style of play associated with significantly more SZ4 + SZ5 when out of possession. Manchester United displayed more consistency, increasing average speed when out of possession but maintaining high-speed in possession.

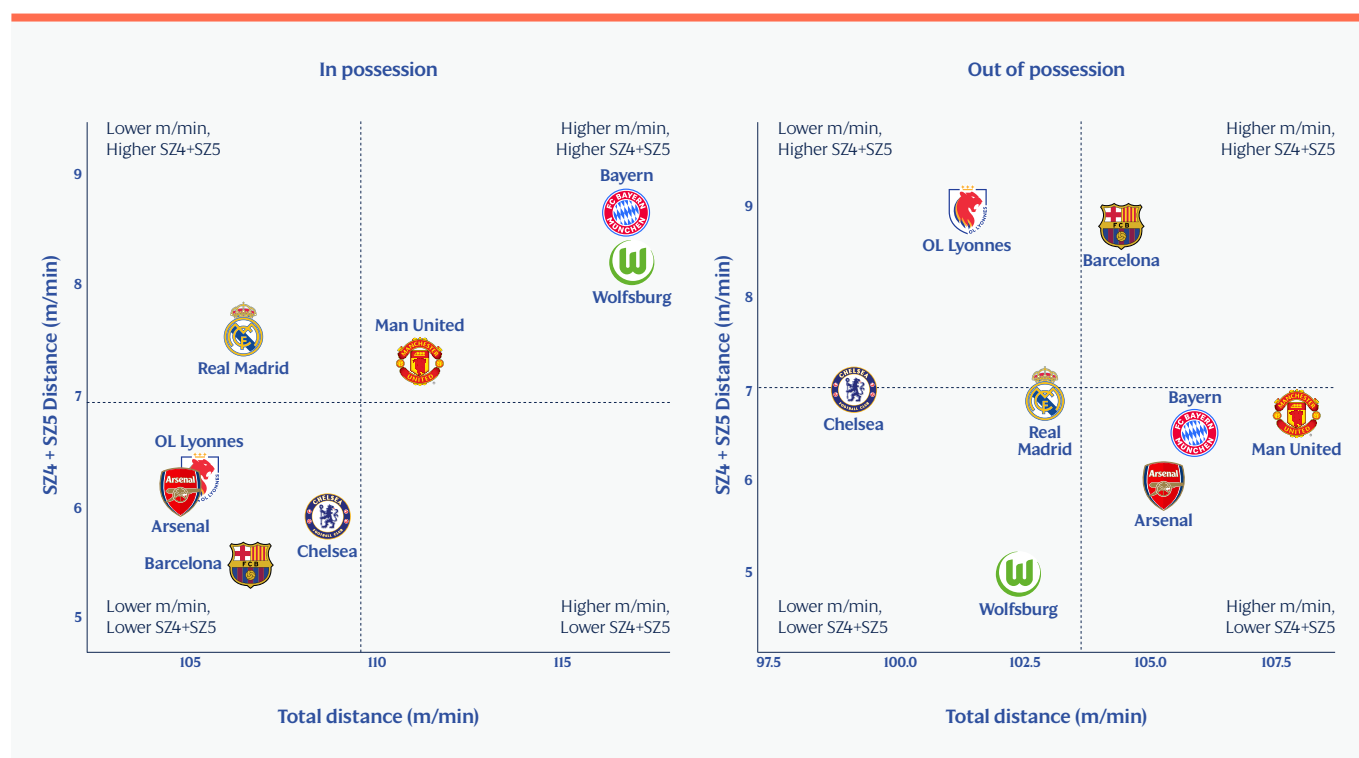


FIGURE 5: Team quadrant plot for distance covered (m/min) versus SZ4 and SZ5 (m/min) distance covered while in and out of possession. Each club crest represents the mean value for a team across all matches, calculated from starter players only (≥ 70 min played). Vertical and horizontal dotted lines indicate the tournament mean.

Bayern München display speed in and out of possession

During in possession phases of the game Bayern München, who were beaten 5-3 on aggregate by Barcelona in the semi-finals, displayed a high physical output in possession. This included: overall volume, total distance covered and high-speed work. Out of possession, München worked at high-speed to regain the ball without covering long distances. This combination of high-speed but lower volume when out of possession indicates a team working with intent to quickly regain the ball.

Implication for coaches: understanding an opponent's physical output

Understanding a team's average physical output both in and out of possession can help opposition coaches prepare appropriately ahead of a fixture.

If the forthcoming opposition's physical profile demonstrates high physical output in possession, practice sessions can be created to replicate these demands. Similarly, amending the volume of training completed ahead of this type of fixture may also be considered given the expected level of output during the game.

Figures 5 and 6 show how Bayern München produced high speed both in and out of possession, and in both halves of the pitch.

In comparison, Manchester United displayed a more consistent approach in terms of intensity and volume in both halves.

Team physical demands by area of pitch

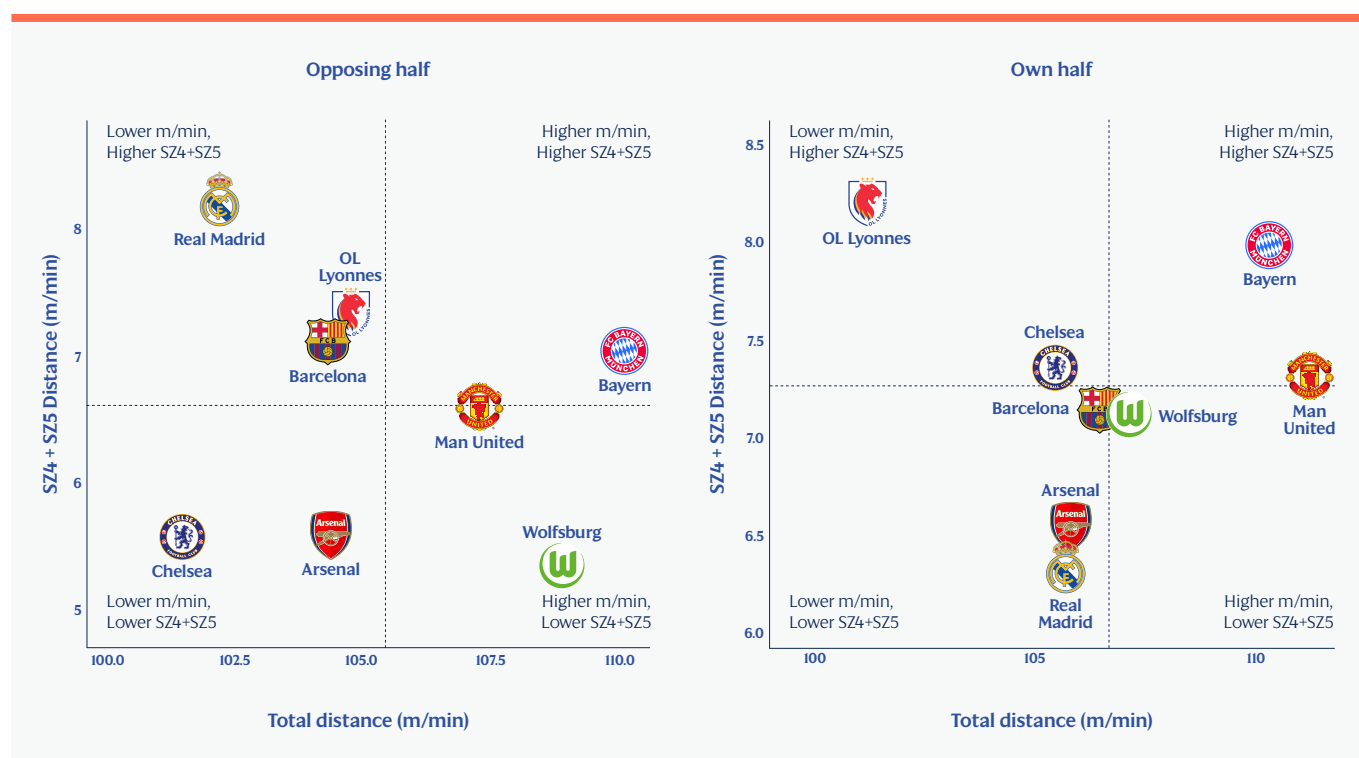


FIGURE 6: Team quadrant plot for distance (m/min) versus SZ4 and SZ5 (m/min) distance covered while in opposition or own half. Each club crest represents the mean value for a team across all matches, calculated from starter players only (≥ 70 min played). Vertical and horizontal dotted lines indicate the tournament mean.

In addition to München's high work rate in both halves of the pitch, they also displayed intensity in the attacking third [see figure 7 below].

There were trivial-to-small associations between team total distance and SZ4 and SZ5 distance across most contextual phases, including ball-in-play, when in own or opposition half, when in attacking third or when not in possession. This suggests teams had different physical styles during these phases. However, the association was more substantial out of possession ($r = 0.80$) and in the penalty area ($r = 0.70$), where teams that covered greater total distance tended to cover greater SZ4+SZ5 distance.

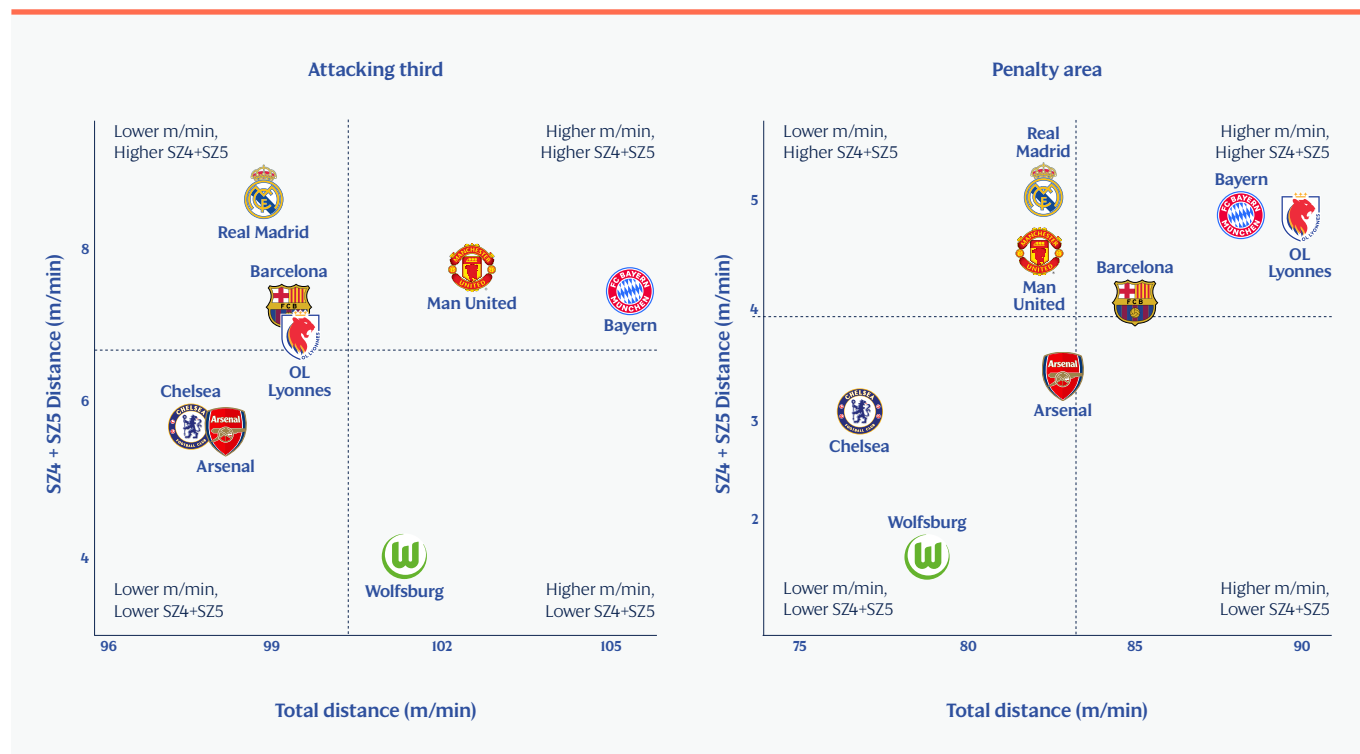


FIGURE 7: Team quadrant plot for distance (m/min) versus SZ4 and SZ5 (m/min) distance covered while in the attacking third or penalty area. Each club crest represents the mean value for a team across all matches, calculated from starter players only (≥ 70 min played). Vertical and horizontal dotted lines indicate the tournament mean.

Transitions

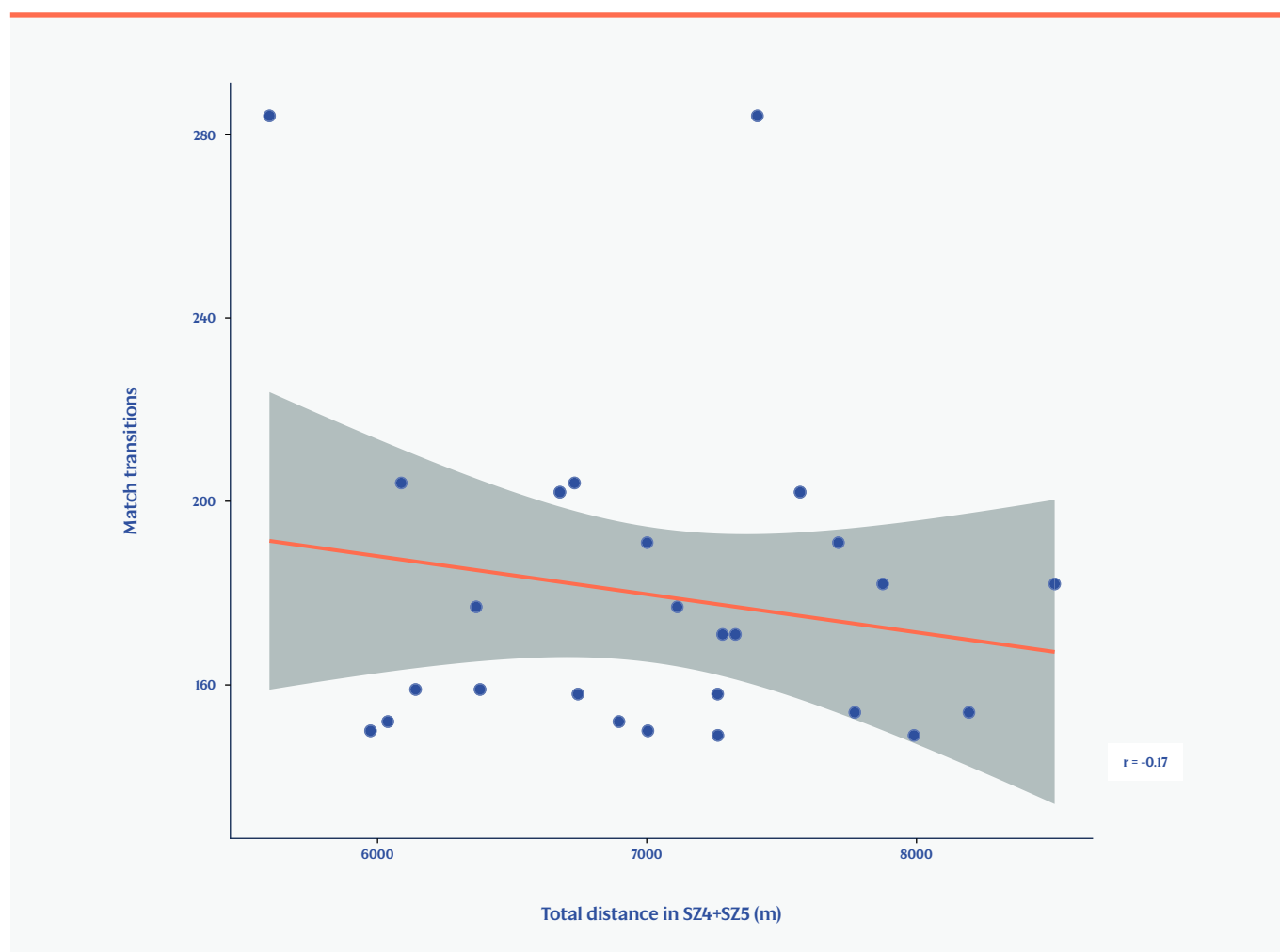


FIGURE 8: Association between match transitions (y-axis) and team total distance in SZ4 and SZ5 (x-axis).

Figure 8 above shows the association between team transitions per match and totals of distance covered by high-speed running (SZ4 and SZ5).

There was only a weak association between the number of transition periods a team encountered in a match and their SZ4+SZ5 distance. This contrasts with observations from UEFA Women's EURO 2025, where a much stronger relationship was reported.

Several factors may explain this discrepancy. First, the nature of transition periods may differ between competitions. While transition frequency was similar, transitions in the present dataset may have been shorter in duration, less intense, or occurred in areas of the pitch that did not require extensive high-speed running.

Consequently, a greater number of transitions would not necessarily translate into substantially higher SZ4+SZ5 distances.

Match context may also have contributed to the weaker association. The home and away fixture approach to the UEFA Women's Champions League format versus the extra-time format observed in UEFA Women's EURO 2025, may also have affected the observed difference in relationship between transitions and high-speed running. Therefore, while transition frequency has previously been identified as an important determinant of high-speed running performance, the current findings suggest that the quality and tactical execution of transitions may be more influential than their quantity alone.



3

PEAK MATCH
DEMANDS



Peak locomotor demands occur in the most critical periods of play and can therefore influence the match outcome. These peak outputs can not only vary significantly between players and positions but are also dependent on the team’s tactical formation and can vary from match to match, especially when performing in the higher speed zones.

While the peak demand for a given duration (e.g., SZ4 distance over a five-minute period) can be useful as a reference point for evaluating the intensity of technical-tactical training, it can be equally important to evaluate how long players, positions and teams can repeat and maintain time close to these peaks across a match.

The following section analyses the peak demands across varying durations by position and team, along with a review of the time that teams and positions spent close to the average peak demand. On a team level, this analysis can help to identify methods that might achieve more sustained intensity across the match.

METHODOLOGY

To establish the peak match demands, the raw data (x and y coordinates) were analysed for each player across rolling time windows. The maximal value for each window was taken as the peak demand for each player and fixture. To demonstrate how the demands fluctuate, one-, three-, five- and ten-minute windows were analysed. To minimise any potential effect of substitutions on the peak data reported, substitutes were omitted from positional and team analysis.

To calculate the time (in minutes) spent close to the UEFA Women’s Champions League peak demand, a threshold was applied and the time spent above this threshold calculated for each player for all matches. The threshold applied was based on previous analysis for the Women’s European Championships 2025 (Table 4 below). For example, for a three-minute peak, the tournament mean (UEFA Women’s European Championship 2025) was 154 metres per minute (Table 4). A meaningful change in peak output for that tournament was 15 metres per minute. Therefore, the time spent > 139 metres per minute was calculated for each player, position and team per fixture and then further analysed.

TABLE 4: Mean peak average speed across one, three, five and ten-minute peak demands and thresholds for meaningful change (UEFA Women’s EURO 2025)

Duration (min)	Mean peak average speed demand for all positions (m·min-1) estimate for all positions	Threshold for meaningful change in peak average speed demand (m·min-1)	Range for time spent above threshold (m·min-1)
1	196 m·min-1	26	> 170
3	154 m·min-1	15	> 139
5	143 m·min-1	13	> 130
10	133 m·min-1	11	> 122

Positional analysis of peak demands

TABLE 5: Peak demands for starters across one-, three -and ten-minute windows. All values are metres per minute.

Position	Average Speed			SZ4			SZ5		
	1 min	3 min	10 min	1 min	3 min	10 min	1 min	3 min	10 min
Centre-back	182 ± 11	142 ± 10	121 ± 7	37 ± 9	17 ± 4	9 ± 2	33 ± 13	13 ± 5	6 ± 2
Full-back	190 ± 12	147 ± 11	125 ± 8	43 ± 9	21 ± 5	11 ± 3	41 ± 12	17 ± 6	8 ± 3
Pivots/6s	196 ± 11	156 ± 9	134 ± 8	42 ± 10	20 ± 6	10 ± 3	29 ± 10	11 ± 4	4 ± 2
8s/10s	198 ± 13	156 ± 10	132 ± 9	45 ± 10	22 ± 5	12 ± 3	36 ± 13	15 ± 6	7 ± 3
Wide Players	194 ± 18	149 ± 13	126 ± 11	44 ± 9	24 ± 5	13 ± 3	41 ± 14	17 ± 5	8 ± 3
Forwards	194 ± 21	150 ± 9	129 ± 9	41 ± 8	21 ± 4	12 ± 2	46 ± 25	19 ± 9	9 ± 4

Peak running demands for players playing in different positions

Table 5 above shows how central defenders are required to produce significantly lower physical output over a one-minute average period, compared to those players playing in other positions. There were no significant differences across other positions for SZ4 and SZ5 running.

The greatest physical differences between positions occur as duration increases. For example, central midfield players – pivots/6s, 8s and 10s – are required to sustain an overall higher physical output for longer durations.

Players in these positions perform more overall activity than others with a requirement to repeat their physical peak over a longer duration of time. This demand is reflected in the time those positions spend close to the peak.

For longer durations of ten minutes, central midfield players spend approximately 13 minutes of the game within the peak threshold range. This underlines the importance of preparing players in these roles to sustain peak performance and repeatability.

POSITIONAL DEMANDS: THE MULTI-FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF THE MODERN MIDFIELDER

The varied physical demands placed on the modern midfielder and their responsibilities in all phases of the game were noted by UEFA Technical Observer Nora Häuptle.

“Physically, players must sustain high volumes of intense, high-speed running, often covering large distances between lines,” explained Häuptle. “Explosivity in the first steps is crucial for accelerating into spaces and dictating tempo changes. Maximum speed is important for attacking depth and threatening the space behind the defensive line.

“Defensively, the modern attacking midfielder [8/10 positions] also carries significant responsibility,” adds Häuptle. “They must understand pressing structures, transitioning effectively from zonal coverage to direct opposition pressure.

Discipline is crucial in defensive transitions, particularly in recovering positions to maintain team compactness and protecting vulnerable zones such as cut-back areas.”

OL Lyonnes’ attacking midfielder, Melchie Dumornay, who registered the second highest running speed from the quarter-finals onwards with 31.37 km/h, was highlighted by Häuptle for her physical, tactical and psychological attributes. “Individually, she has it all: explosiveness, repeated sprint ability, cognition, an excellent touch, mentality and determination to run the extra metre in both offence and defence. After intense attacking actions, she is disciplined in tracking back defensively. That underlines her determination and proves she is a complete player in all phases of the game.”

3.3. Repeatability of peak average speed demands across the match by position

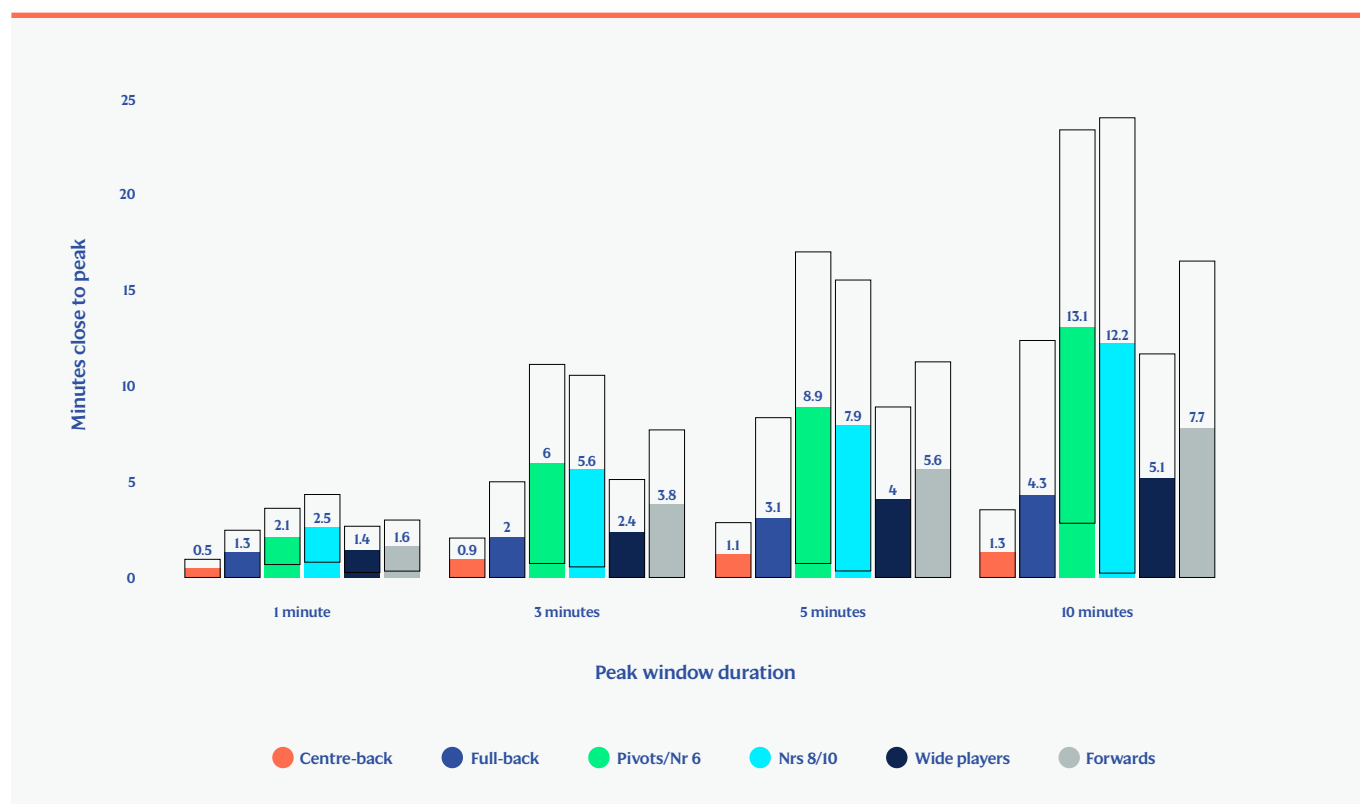


FIGURE 9: Time (minutes) spent close to tournament peak demand for one, three, five and ten-minute windows by position. Coloured bars and values represent the average. Black outlined rectangles represent +/- one standard deviation range for that positional group and duration.



Pivots/6s spent the most time close to the peak average speed output across all durations. Central defenders spent the least amount of time close to the peak average speed.

Within each position considerable variability was recorded for time spent close to the peak average speed. For example, pivots/6s spent an average of 13 minutes close to the ten-minute peak average speed.

However, within one standard deviation of the average, they could complete as much as 23 minutes close to the average speed, or as little as two minutes.

The visual above shows significant variation in the time spent close to the peak for each position. These values can be used to evaluate training sessions to ensure that players are equipped to repeat intensities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COACHES: PREPARING PLAYERS TO REACH PEAK DEMANDS OVER A SUSTAINED PERIOD

Understanding the peak demands players and teams face during games can help coaches and practitioners design training sessions that replicate this demand. However, reaching a single peak for a single duration of time in training does not truly replicate the demands faced by players during a game.

The peak intensity a player reaches within a game should be understood as part of overall sustained activity. How long players and teams spend near to the peak demand for longer durations is an important consideration. When designing practice sessions, coaches must develop training drills that both expose players to the peak demand as well as a specific duration in terms of maintaining this output.

MAINTAINING PERFORMANCE OVER LONGER DURATIONS

A player's ability to recover during a game and their movement economy at lower intensities of physical work are crucial to maintaining peak performance over longer durations.

For a player to be able to sustain high-intensity outputs, they require a strong base of aerobic fitness to aid recovery from high-speed efforts. Efficient recovery during lower intensity moments of the game can allow players to have a greater impact on higher speed output.

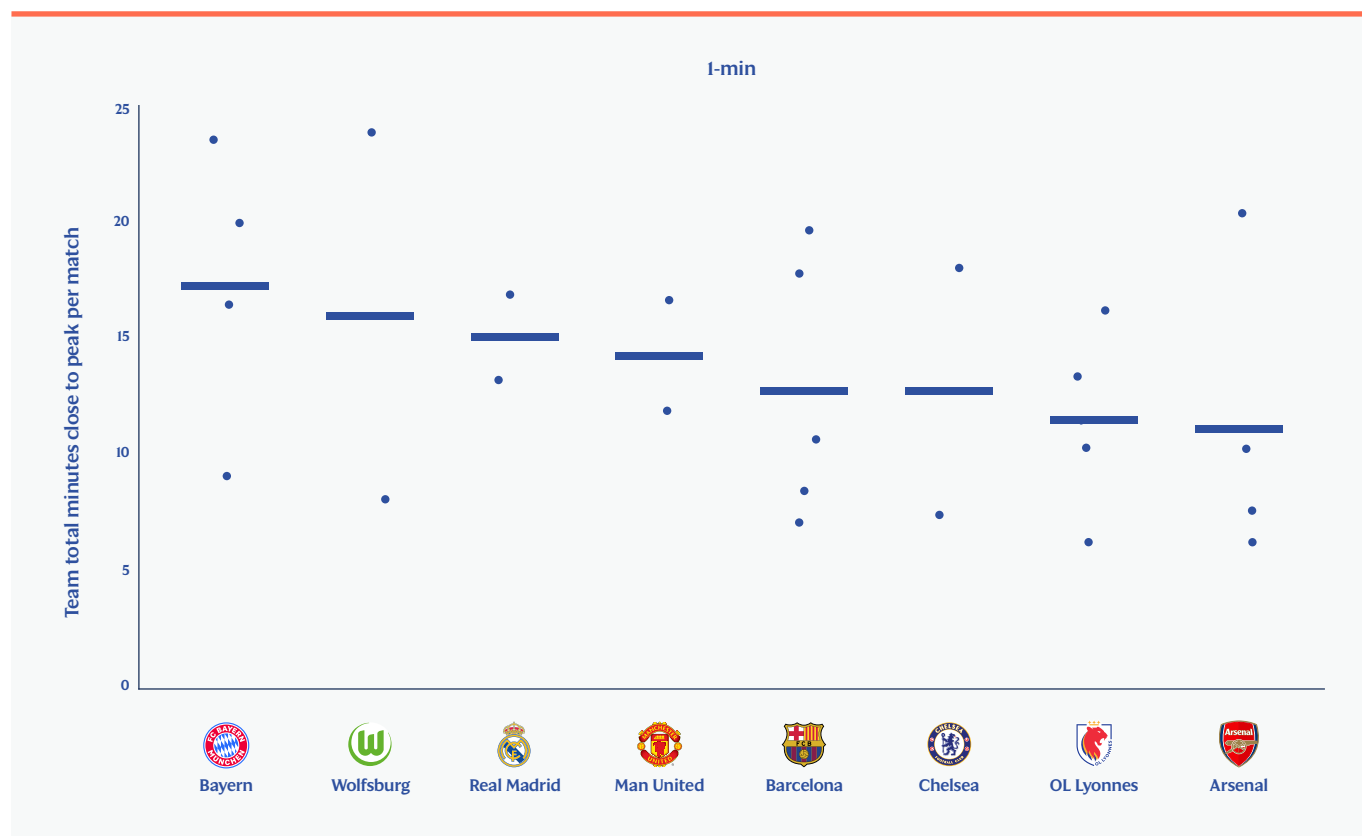


FIGURE 10: Average time spent close to peak one-minute average speed by team (blue line) across the tournament. Blue dots represent the sum of peak one-minute average speed per fixture for each team.

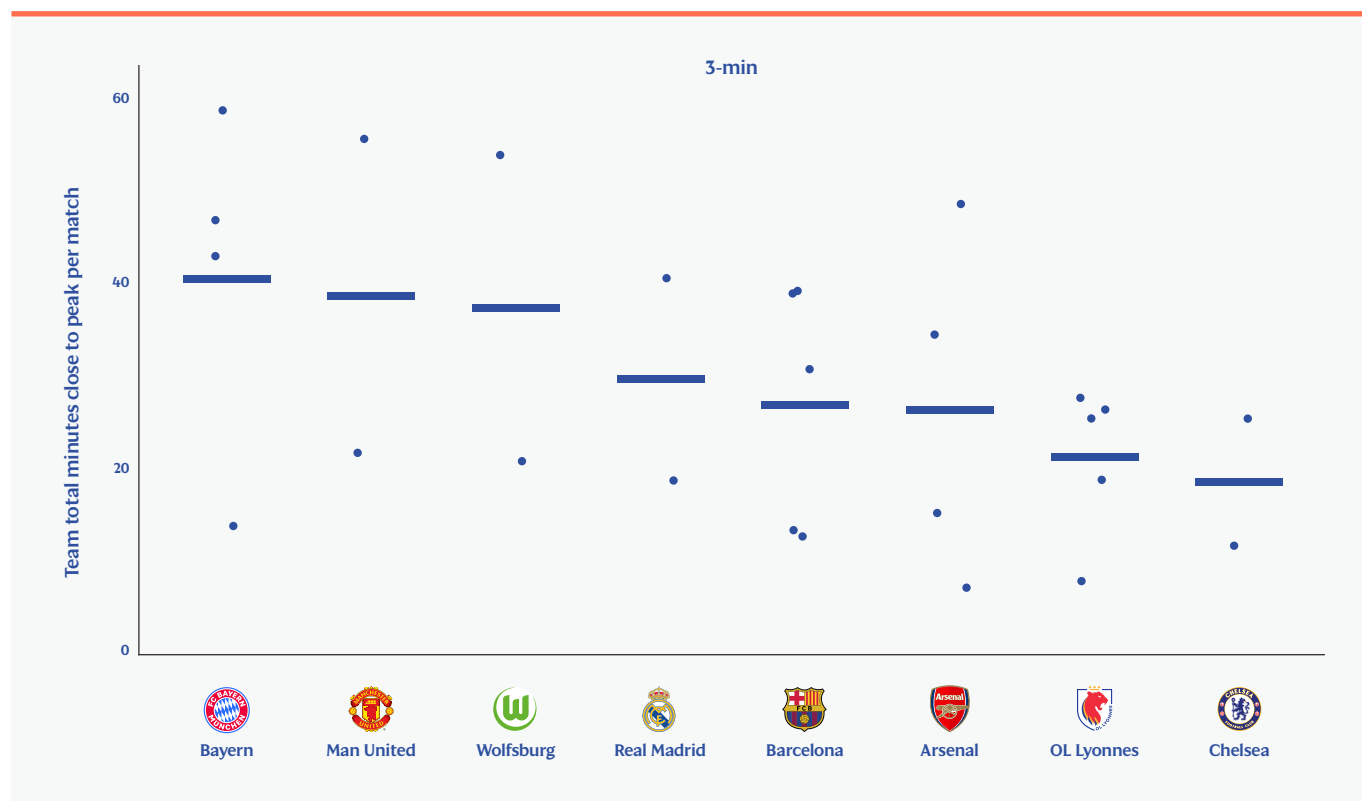


FIGURE 11: Average time spent close to peak three-minute average speed by team (blue line) across the tournament. Blue dots represent the sum of peak three-minute average speed per fixture for each team.

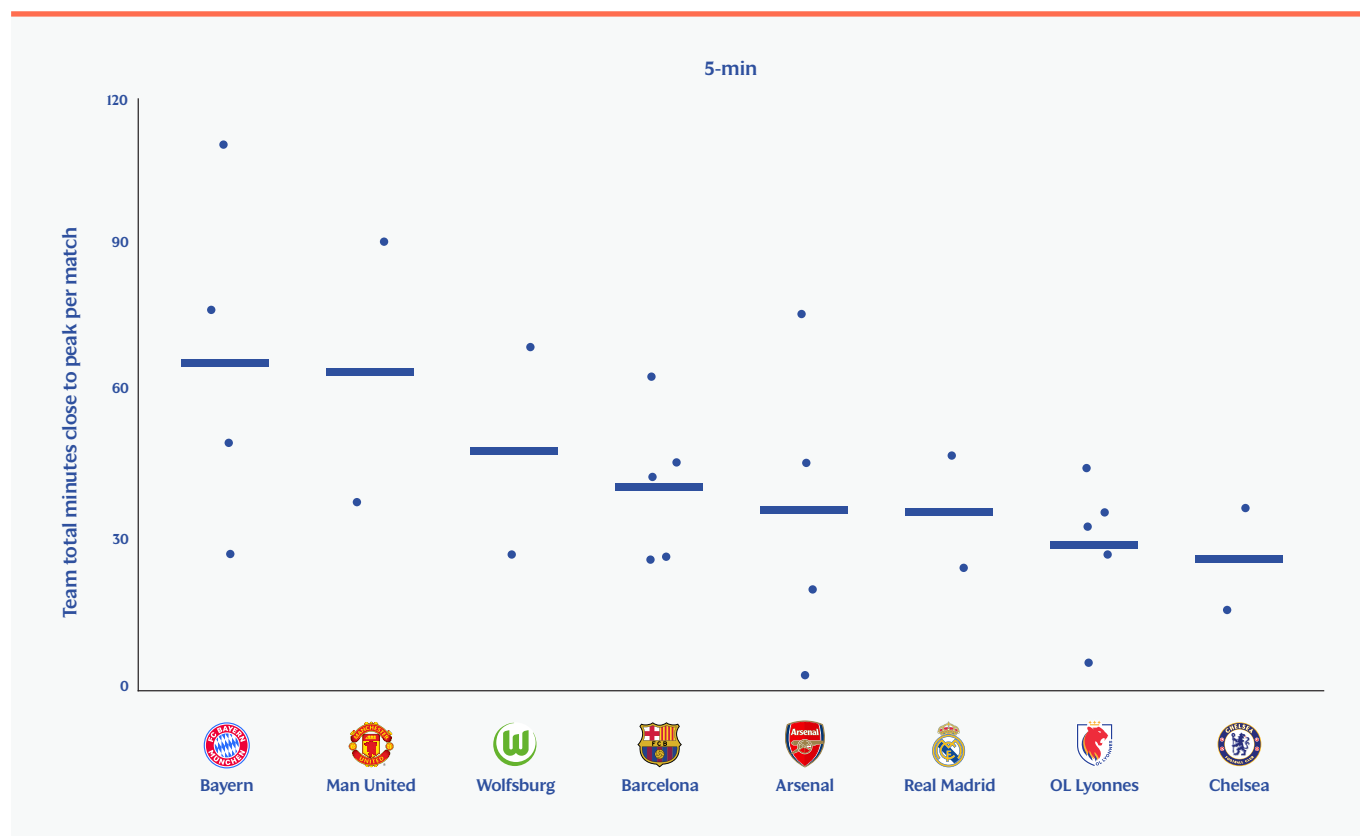


FIGURE 12: Average time spent close to peak five-minute average speed by team (blue line) across the tournament. Blue dots represent the sum of peak one-minute average speed per fixture for each team.

Across the quarter-finalists there were no significant differences for time spent close to the peak average speed for one, three, five and ten-minute periods. The only team that did standout was Bayern München who spent moderately greater time close to the peak, particularly at longer duration.

In one fixture, Bayern München spent around ten minutes close to the one-minute peak average speed. During another, this increased to approximately 25 minutes. These figures highlight the importance of understanding the variation alongside the average.

Time in the match when peak demands occurred

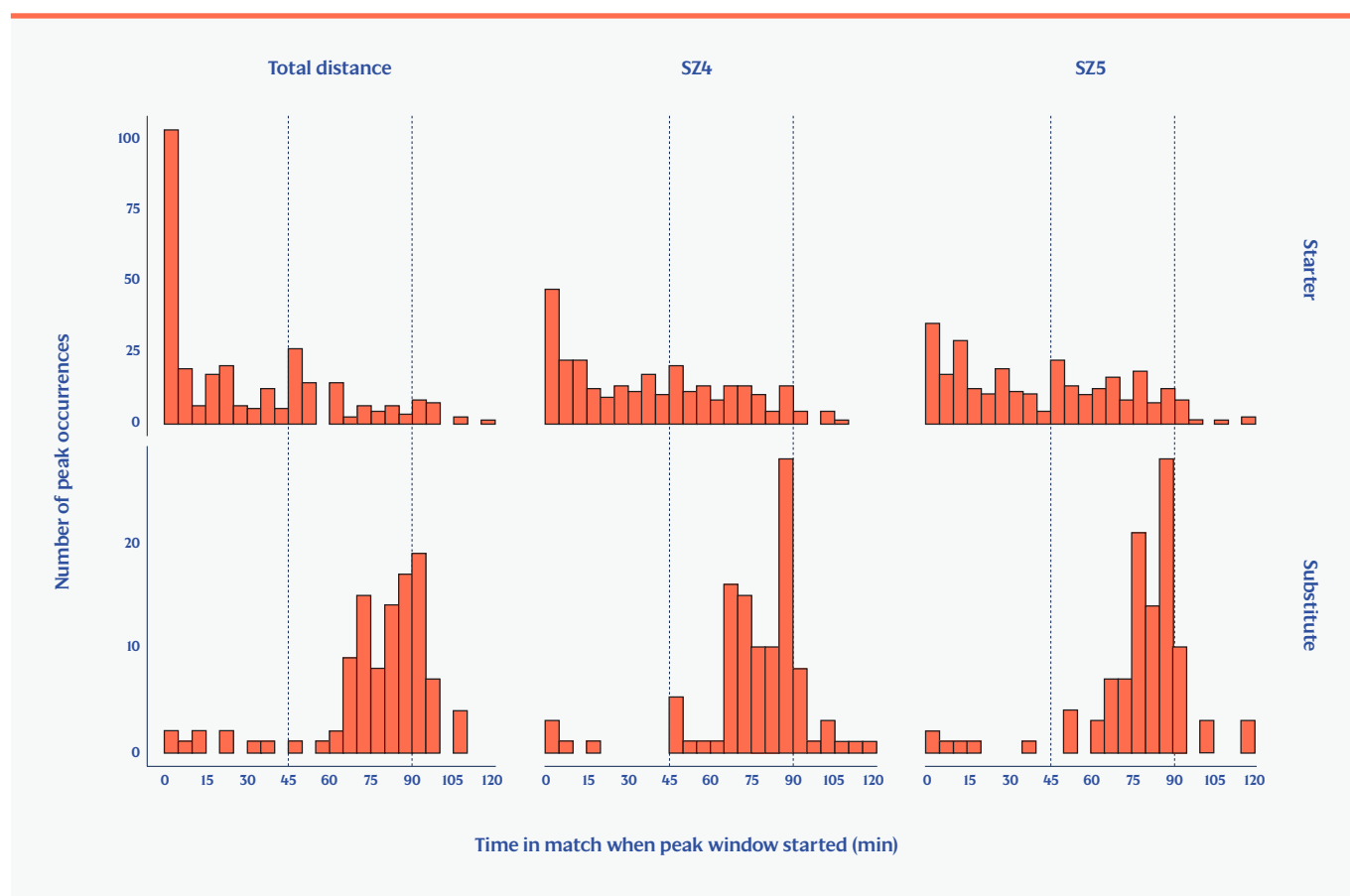


FIGURE 13: Times of peak outputs for peak three-minute average speed (left panel), SZ4 (middle panel) and SZ5 (right panel) for starters (top row) and substitutes (bottom row).

No fixed moment for the peak demand to occur

Other than the consistent peak at the start of the game and, later in the second-half when substitutes are introduced, there is no set period in which the peak demands placed on individuals and teams occur.

As such, players should be prepared for peak demands to occur at different stages of the game. Coaches must be aware that preparing for the peak demand at the start of the game requires different preparation than if the peak demand occurs at the end of the game with the additional consideration of accumulated fatigue.

Comparison of physical demands on starting players versus substitutes

Figure 13 above shows how the introduction of substitutions – most likely in the second-half – results in a peak in physical output. It is likely that the remaining starting players have already registered their peak output by the time substitutes enter the field. In most cases, substitute players can perform at a higher physical level than starting players and can compensate for a potential decrease in work rate from players who remain on the pitch. Coaches should consider how this aspect of the game can be prepared for.

Contextualised peak demands: possession state and ball in play



FIGURE 14: Percentage of time spent with the ball in play (top row) and out of play (bottom row) for each position during the peak one minute (left panels) and three minute (right panels) average speed. Each small point represents a player's average during the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26. Larger circles represent the average for the position.

Contextualised peak demands: possession changes during peak periods

Understanding the number of possession changes during a given time period provides context to the state of the game in which peak demands occur.

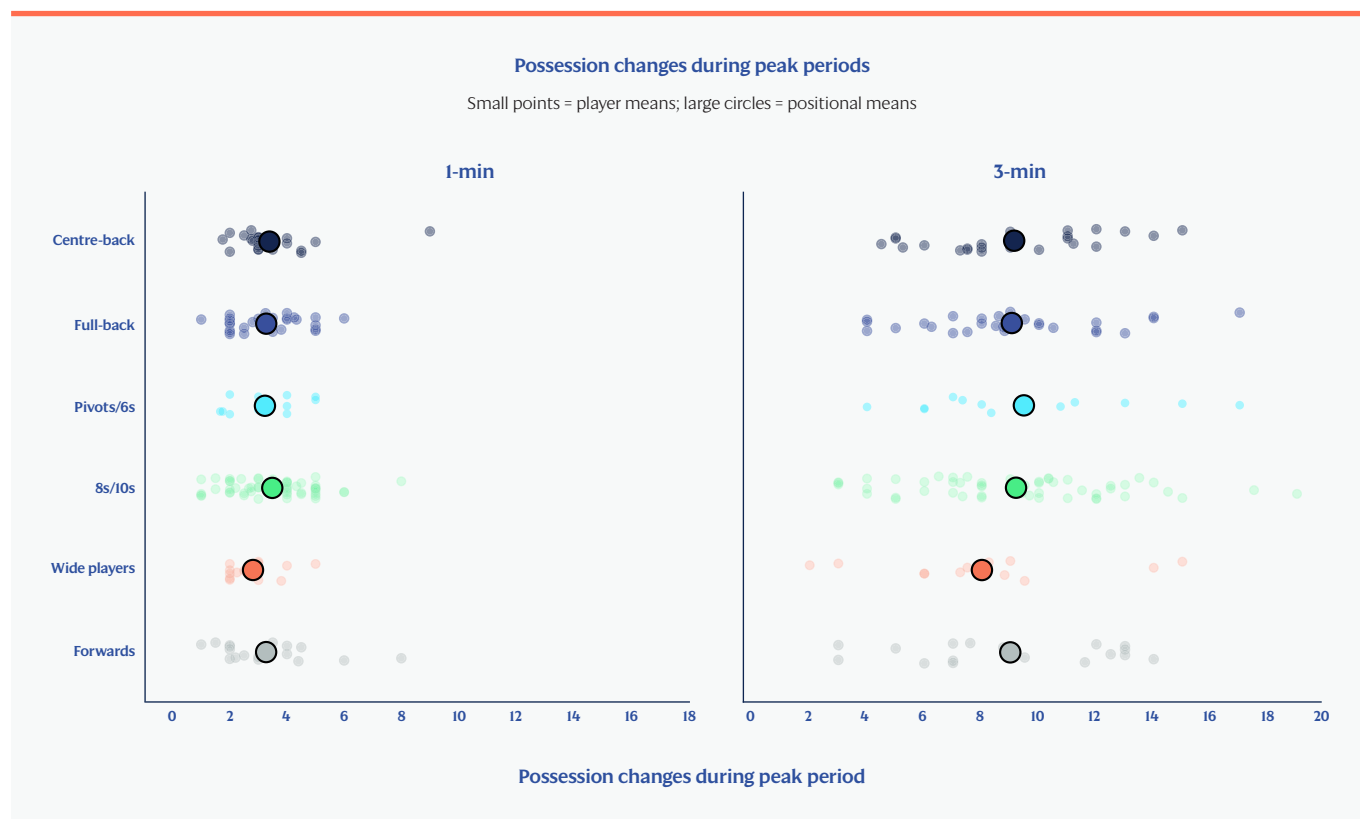


FIGURE 15: Number of possession changes during the peak one minute (left panel) and three -minute average speed periods by position. Each small point represents a player's average during the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26. Larger circles represent the average for the position.

Across a 90-minute game, the mean number of possession changes was 1.64 per minute (2 possession changes). For the one-minute peak period, this rose to 3.1 possession changes per minute, and approximately maintained at 2.9 per minute during the peak three-minute period. Therefore, there were almost twice as many possession changes during the peak one- and three-minute periods than the rate across a full game. The peak three-minute period saw possession changes every 20 seconds.

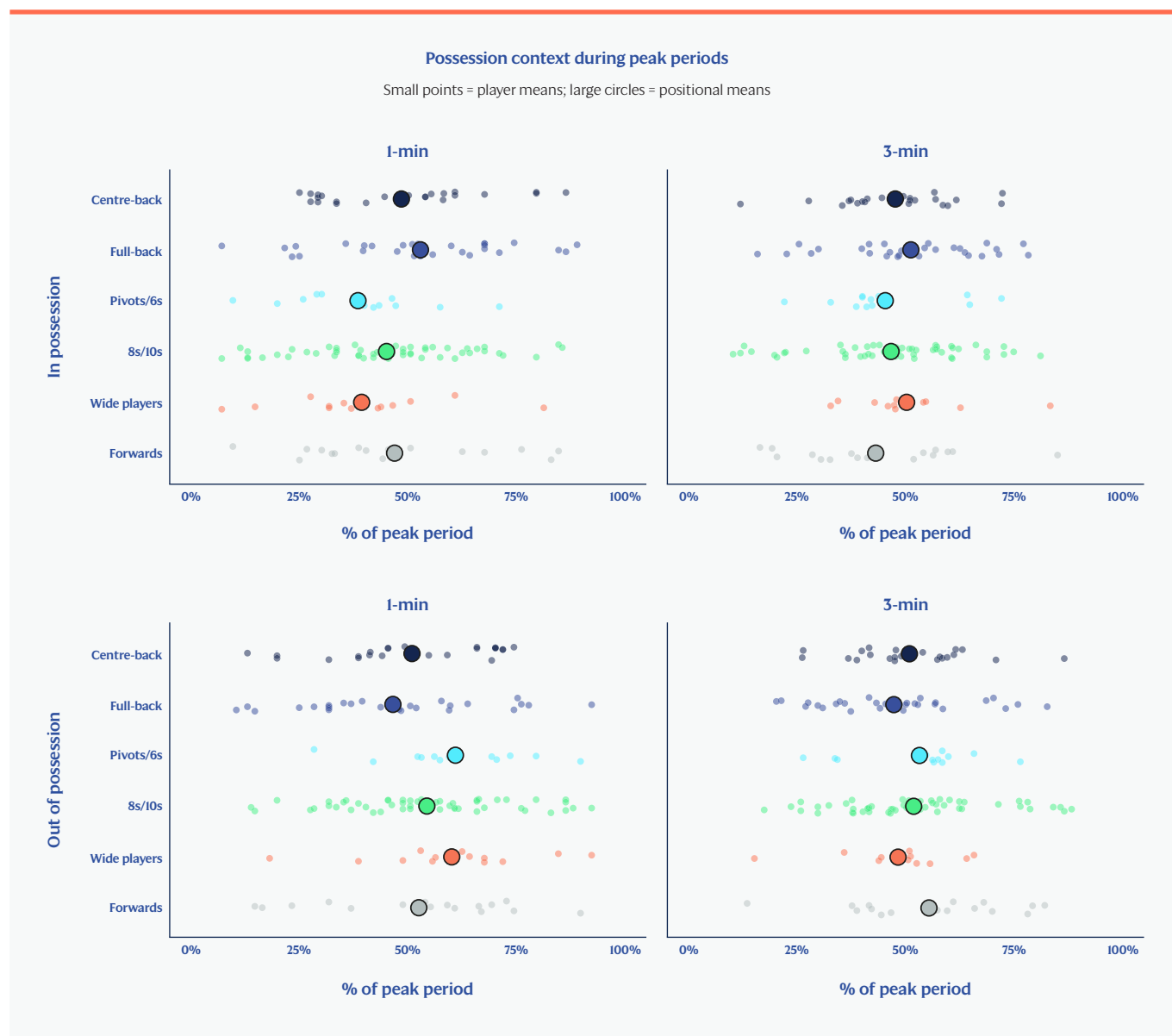


FIGURE 16: Percentage of time spent in (top row) and out (bottom row) of possession for each position during the peak one-minute (left panels) and three-minute (right panels) average speed. Each small point represents a player's average during the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26. Larger circles represent the average for the position.

Pivots/6s and wide players perform more of their peak one-minute window physical activity out of possession than centre-backs or full-backs. In other words, over a short, explosive one-minute peak, wide players and pivots are more likely doing their hardest work while defending or pressing, not while their team has the ball.



SUMMARY AND TAKEAWAY MESSAGES



Summary

This report aims to offer valuable insights into the physical demands of the UEFA Women's Champions League 2025/26 and to provide coaches and staff with actionable data to optimise training and recovery strategies, with a view to helping players to perform at their peak levels while minimising injury risk. By reviewing the competition's specific physical challenges, professionals across the game can tailor programmes to effectively meet the rapidly-evolving demands of elite competition.

Takeaway Messages

From a physical development perspective, it is important to consider not only the intensity but also the volume of activity and how much time players spend at higher intensities. While high-speed actions occur at important parts of the match, identifying the time spent close to the peak average speed can provide insight into the repeatability of the peak and how this differs between positions and teams.

The peak output for a given duration can assist in evaluating the intensity of technical-tactical training drills such as small, medium and large-sided games. This can help to evaluate the structure of the session (for example the duration of drills, recovery periods, frequency or coaching times within the drill) when targeting higher-intensity training sessions.



ABBREVIATIONS

Max V	Maximum speed
HSR	High speed running
M	Meters
Km/h	Kilometers per hour
SZ	Speed zone
N	Number
CV	Coefficient of variation
IP	In possession
OOP	Out of possession
BOOP	Ball out of play
GK	Goalkeepers
F	Forwards
WP	Wide players
AM	Attacking midfielders
HM	Holding midfielders
FB	Full-backs
CB	Centre-backs

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