

Match points: Manchester City v Crystal Palace



Key battles

Kevin de Bruyne v Yohan Cabaye

City have scored 22 goals this season and de Bruyne has none of them, yet the Belgian has been excellent. As he moves into a deeper midfield role, he is ever more of a creator and less of a scorer. Cabaye is his counterpart, the Palace playmaker. But with City averaging the most possession in the league, 64.3 per cent, he will have to do his duties off the ball.



Nicolas Otamendi v Christian Benteke

Guardiola admitted last year that he was concerned about Benteke's aerial ability. If his fellow Belgian Vincent Kompany is not ready to make a comeback, then the striker may be patrolled by the erratic Otamendi. The Argentinian's performance against Liverpool must rank among the worst by a player whose side won the game 5-0.



Sergio Aguero v Mamadou Sakho

Aguero's hat-trick in the 6-0 thrashing of Watford took him to 175 goals, two behind Eric Brook's club record. He has done that while setting up a goal for Gabriel Jesus in the 5-0 demolition of Liverpool and allowing Raheem Sterling to take a penalty last week. Palace have six clean sheets in Sakho's nine starts. The £26 million (\$\$47.4 million) signing promises improvement.



Key statistics

Goal-starved Eagles



Crystal Palace are the only club in England's top four leagues without a league goal this season.



Days since Palace's last league goal.



Sergio Aguero has 10 hat-tricks for Manchester City, including last week's treble at Watford.

Goals rush in



Goals per game

Aguero and Gabriel Jesus have scored 16 goals in the eight games they started together.



Goals per game

City have plundered 14 goals in their last four games in all competitions.

Early openings



Palace conceded within the first six minutes of their last two league games against Southampton and Burnley.