

Match points: Manchester City v Arsenal



Key battles

John Stones v Alexis Sanchez

Pep Guardiola was emphatic when asked recently about reports he would try and sign Sanchez for a second time. "The journalist is a liar," he said. But the electric Sanchez is a better player now than he was at Barcelona. Stones was harried into a mistake by another speedy striker, Jamie Vardy, last week when his stray backpass cost a goal.



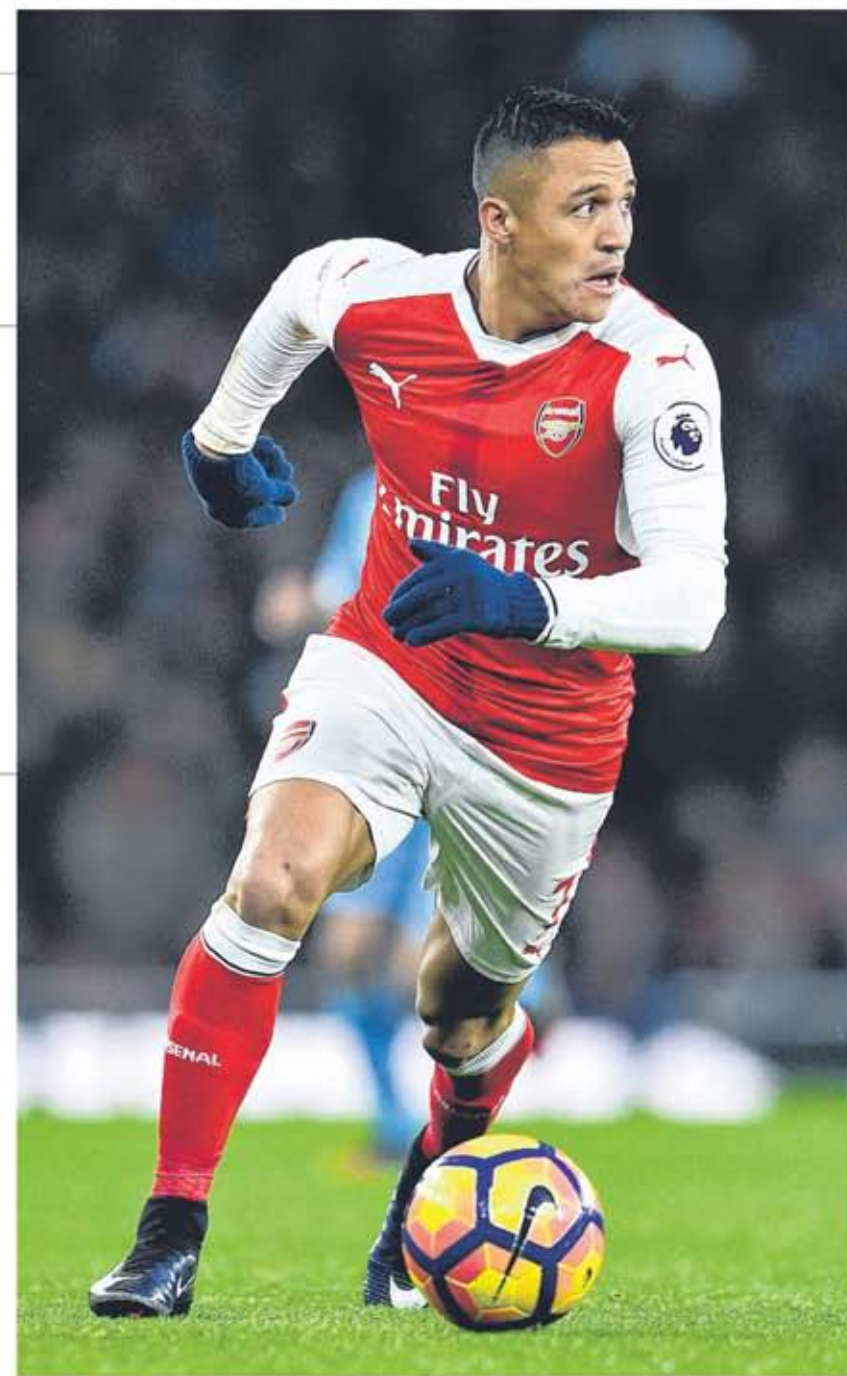
Nolito v Gabriel

Two deputies clash. Winger Nolito is likely to stand in as a striker while Sergio Aguero serves his suspension. Gabriel is a specialist centre-back but a less reassuring figure than the injured Shkodran Mustafi. He can excel, but is more erratic. He is less of a communicator. Arsenal are more likely to be dragged out of position as a result.



Fernando v Mesut Ozil

With Fernandinho suspended and Ilkay Gundogan injured, Fernando seems certain to start as City's defensive midfielder, though he struggled horribly in the 2-0 defeat by Tottenham Hotspur. He will be charged with tracking Ozil, who has started to burst beyond striker Sanchez. It is why he is in his most prolific season as a Gunner.



Key statistics

Citizens cower against Arsenal

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Manchester City have not won in their last five league meetings with Arsenal, losing twice.

Arsene's men adept on the road

Away form

Played 13
Won 6
Drew 6
Lost 1

The Gunners' midweek 1-2 loss to Everton was just their first away defeat since February.

Ready to fire

Alexis Sanchez

4

Goals the Chilean scored in Arsenal's last two away league games against Everton and West Ham.

Olivier Giroud

3

Goals the French striker has scored against City in as many of his past meetings with them.

Ex-Gunners in Manchester

393

Combined games for Arsenal

Between them, City defenders Gael Clichy and Bacary Sagna made 393 league appearances for Arsenal.