



Maresca's Manchester City Challenge

Following Pep

A quantitative analysis ahead of the new Premier League season

Pep Guardiola
Enzo Maresca
Mikel Arteta
Arne Slot

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1. Executive Summary

This report provides a quantitative assessment of Enzo Maresca, Pep Guardiola, Mikel Arteta and Arne Slot. Its principal focus is the scale of the challenge facing Maresca as he succeeds Guardiola at Manchester City and prepares for the new Premier League season.

The managers have been selected to provide three relevant points of comparison. Guardiola represents the performance benchmark established by Maresca's predecessor at Manchester City. Arteta and Slot are included because each won the Premier League during the period in which Maresca has worked as a head coach in English football.

Across the three-season blended analysis, Arteta is the highest-rated of the four managers. He records the strongest Objective Achievement Rating (312.64), Overall Rating (106.7) and Attacking Coefficient (25.66). Maresca, by comparison, records a blended Objective Achievement Rating of 245.14 and an Overall Rating of 80.36. The model therefore identifies a substantial performance gap between Maresca and Arteta, particularly across the outcome, strategic, tactical and attacking measures.

The analysis also illustrates the standard Maresca inherits from Guardiola. Guardiola considerably outperforms Maresca on blended Strategic Intelligence (69.48 versus 54.64), Tactical Command (4.63 versus 3.32) and Overall Rating (103.0 versus 80.36). Maresca's principal comparative strength is defensive efficiency: his Opposition Shot Conversion Rating of 24.67 is the strongest in the four-manager cohort.

Slot provides an additional benchmark for the immediate impact achieved by a head coach during the period covered by the analysis. He led Liverpool to the 2024/25 Premier League title in his first season, recording an Overall Rating of 115.5—comfortably above Maresca's best single-season score. Although Slot is no longer Liverpool head coach, his title-winning campaign remains a relevant measure of the performance required to achieve immediate success at the highest level of English football.

2. The Quant Headlines: What the Numbers Reveal About Maresca's Manchester City Challenge

- **Maresca has a mountain to climb as he follows Guardiola at Manchester City.** City's new manager begins the post-Pep era 22.64 points behind his predecessor in the three-season Overall Rating.
- **Peak Guardiola was operating at a level Maresca has never reached.** Guardiola's best single-season Overall Rating is 119.2, compared with Maresca's peak of 87.6—a difference of 31.6 points.
- **Maresca could not have been handed a tougher first competitive assignment.** Community Shield opponent Arteta is the highest-rated manager in the report and holds a 26.34-point Overall Rating advantage over the new City boss.
- **The apprentice has overtaken the master.** Carteret's three-season analysis now places former Guardiola assistant Arteta ahead of his mentor on overall performance, objective achievement and attacking football.
- **Maresca ranks bottom for match preparation and in-game management.** His Strategic Intelligence and Tactical Command ratings are the lowest among the four managers analysed.
- **Could Maresca's defensive record offer some salvation?** He records the best Opposition Shot Conversion Rating in the report, outperforming Guardiola, Arteta and Slot, but it is debatable whether this will cover for his weaknesses or whether the City fans will accept a more defensive style of play.
- **Slot's story shows how quickly a dream start can unravel.** He went from winning the Premier League in his first season to suffering a 51.3-point ratings collapse in his second—and subsequently leaving Liverpool.

3. Season-by-Season Analysis

Exhibit 1 summarises the key quantitative ratings and performance metrics for Enzo Maresca, Pep Guardiola, Mikel Arteta and Arne Slot. The Glossary provides an explanation of each rating and metric used in the analysis.

Exhibit 1: Key quantitative ratings and performance metrics for each head coach, highlighting their comparative strengths and weaknesses as at 9 July 2026

	Objective Achievement Rating	Strategic Intelligence Rating (Home)	Strategic Intelligence Rating (Away)	Strategic Intelligence Rating	Tactical Command Rating (Home)	Tactical Command Rating (Away)	Tactical Command Rating	Attacking Coefficient (Home)	Attacking Coefficient (Away)	Attacking Coefficient	Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient (Home)	Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient (Away)	Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient	Shot Conversion Rating	Opposition Shot Conversion Rating	Shot Creation Ratio	Possession Goal Conversion (Home)	Possession Goal Conversion (Away)	Possession KME Creation (Home)	Possession KME Creation (Away)	Overall Possession (Home / Away)	Most Used Formation	Overall Rating (Weighted Metrics)
Pep Guardiola 23/24	346.80	41.23	38.60	79.82	2.29	3.84	6.13	10.34	10.53	20.87	8.53	7.99	16.52	35.55	36.37	2.5:1	4.06	2.57	10.18	8.52	67 / 64	4-2-3-1	119.2
Mikel Arteta 23/24	339.50	41.23	36.84	78.07	2.68	2.29	4.97	13.52	13.79	27.31	11.10	10.16	21.26	39.21	28.07	2.62:1	4.49	2.66	11.74	6.35	59 / 58	4-3-3 Attacking	116.9
Arne Slot 24/25	320.70	40.35	33.33	73.68	3.03	2.53	5.55	10.89	10.34	21.23	8.77	6.90	15.67	40.66	27.06	1.64:1	3.76	3.05	10.14	7.95	60 / 57	4-2-3-1	115.5
Mikel Arteta 25/26	325.00	41.23	30.70	71.93	1.55	2.24	3.79	12.89	12.16	25.05	10.65	7.92	18.57	38.40	24.17	2.08:1	3.88	2.00	9.11	6.11	57 / 56	4-3-3 Attacking	105.2
Pep Guardiola 25/26	297.40	39.47	28.95	68.42	2.37	1.74	4.11	11.52	11.89	23.41	9.50	6.96	16.45	38.21	23.77	1.61:1	4.01	2.08	10.33	5.53	60 / 61	4-3-3 Attacking	102.1
Mikel Arteta 24/25	282.90	34.21	30.70	64.91	2.05	2.47	4.53	12.89	12.43	25.32	8.71	7.80	16.52	34.23	28.02	1.57:1	3.36	2.35	9.85	5.58	57 / 57	4-3-3 Attacking	98.1
Pep Guardiola 24/25	271.30	36.84	25.44	62.28	2.42	1.37	3.79	10.89	10.30	21.19	7.86	5.25	13.11	32.22	31.85	1.66:1	3.62	1.79	9.53	6.43	63 / 61	4-2-3-1	87.8
Enzo Maresca 24/25	264.10	35.96	24.56	60.53	2.24	1.66	3.89	10.07	10.81	20.88	10.07	5.22	15.28	29.48	29.16	1.39:1	3.46	1.92	12.23	5.89	56 / 59	4-2-3-1	87.6
Enzo Maresca 23/24	257.50	27.13	23.48	50.61	1.53	1.74	3.27	9.15	8.96	18.11	7.02	6.01	13.03	27.57	19.20	1.47:1	2.46	2.60	6.39	5.65	65 / 59	4-3-3 Attacking	80.1
Enzo Maresca 25/26	177.10	26.32	26.32	52.63	0.42	1.95	2.37	11.25	9.80	21.05	5.44	5.44	10.89	36.94	28.95	1.54:1	2.60	0.83	9.07	2.16	60 / 59	4-2-3-1	66.5
Arne Slot 25/26	201.70	31.58	21.05	52.63	1.32	0.45	1.76	10.53	9.94	20.46	6.53	4.36	10.89	37.08	33.35	1.14:1	3.25	1.80	8.81	4.76	59 / 60	4-2-3-1	64.2

	Key Metric - Upper Tier
	Key Metric - Middle Tier
	Key Metric - Lower Tier
	Secondary Metric - Upper Tier
	Secondary Metric - Middle Tier
	Secondary Metric - Lower Tier

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4. Three-season Blended Analysis

Exhibit 2 summarises the blended quantitative ratings and performance metrics for Enzo Maresca, Pep Guardiola, Mikel Arteta and Arne Slot across the previous three seasons. The blended results provide a longer-term comparison by combining each manager's seasonal performance, with greater weighting applied to the most recent seasons. The Glossary explains each rating and metric used in the analysis.

Exhibit 2: Three-season blended quantitative ratings and performance metrics for each head coach, highlighting their comparative strengths and weaknesses as at 9 July 2026

	Objective Achievement Rating	Strategic Intelligence Rating (Home)	Strategic Intelligence Rating (Away)	Strategic Intelligence Rating	Tactical Command Rating (Home)	Tactical Command Rating (Away)	Tactical Command Rating	Attacking Coefficient (Home)	Attacking Coefficient (Away)	Attacking Coefficient	Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient (Home)	Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient (Away)	Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient	Shot Conversion Rating	Opposition Shot Conversion Rating	Shot Creation Ratio	Possession Goal Conversion (Home)	Possession Goal Conversion (Away)	Possession KME Creation (Home)	Possession KME Creation (Away)	Overall Possession (Home / Away)	Most Used Formation	Overall Rating (Weighted Metrics)
Mikel Arteta	312.64	38.50	32.42	70.92	2.07	2.31	4.38	12.99	12.67	25.66	10.05	8.54	18.59	36.91	26.49	2.07:1	3.87	2.31	9.97	5.95	57 / 56	4-3-3 Attacking	106.7
Pep Guardiola	302.16	38.79	30.69	69.48	2.34	2.29	4.63	10.81	10.80	21.61	8.54	6.67	15.21	34.97	30.36	1.9:1	3.86	2.13	9.91	6.76	59 / 58	4-2-3-1	103
Arne Slot	261.20	35.97	27.19	63.16	2.18	1.49	3.66	10.71	10.14	20.85	7.65	5.63	13.28	38.87	30.21	1.39:1	3.51	2.43	9.48	6.36	60 / 57	4-2-3-1	89.6
Enzo Maresca	245.14	30.24	24.40	54.64	1.58	1.74	3.32	9.88	9.79	19.67	7.85	5.61	13.47	29.99	24.67	1.45:1	2.85	2.02	9.03	5.09	61 / 59	4-2-3-1	80.36

5. Pep Guardiola vs Enzo Maresca: The Scale of the Succession Challenge

- **Guardiola and Maresca share certain stylistic characteristics.** The 4-2-3-1 is the most-used formation for both managers, while their blended home Possession KME Creation Ratings are relatively close at 9.91 and 9.03 respectively.
- **The principal difference lies in execution.** Guardiola records a blended Shot Conversion Rating of 34.97, compared with 29.99 for Maresca, indicating greater attacking efficiency under the former City manager.
- **Maresca holds the defensive advantage.** His blended Opposition Shot Conversion Rating of 24.67 is the strongest among the four managers and compares favourably with Guardiola's 30.36.
- **Guardiola also converts home possession into goals more effectively,** recording a blended Possession Goal Conversion Rating of 3.86. Maresca's rating of 2.85 is the lowest among the four managers.

- **Maresca's 2023/24 Objective Achievement Rating of 257.50 was recorded while managing Leicester City in the Championship.** Although the model adjusts for league strength, this provides important context when comparing his record with Guardiola's achievements in the Premier League.
- **Overall, Maresca's blended Objective Achievement Rating of 245.14 trails Guardiola's 302.16, while his Overall Rating of 80.36 compares with Guardiola's 103.0.** The results illustrate the scale of the challenge Maresca faces in succeeding Manchester City's most successful manager.

6. Arne Slot: Inspiration and Warning

- **Slot provides a striking example of the immediate impact a new head coach can make.** His title-winning 2024/25 season produced an Overall Rating of 115.5—27.9 points higher than Maresca's rating of 87.6 in the same season.
- **Slot's 2024/25 Objective Achievement Rating of 320.70 also comfortably exceeds every Premier League single-season rating recorded by Maresca.**
- **Across the blended analysis, Slot records a Shot Conversion Rating of 38.87, compared with Maresca's 29.99.** This indicates considerably greater clinical efficiency during the period assessed.
- **Maresca performs better defensively.** His blended Opposition Shot Conversion Rating of 24.67 is stronger than Slot's 30.21, while his Shot Creation Ratio of 1.45:1 narrowly exceeds Slot's 1.39:1.
- **Slot's first-season success was not sustained.** His Overall Rating fell from 115.5 in 2024/25 to 64.2 in 2025/26—a decline of 51.3 points—and Liverpool subsequently parted company with him.
- **Slot's record therefore offers Maresca both inspiration and a warning:** a new manager can deliver an immediate title-winning impact, but sustaining that performance presents a very different challenge.

7. Mikel Arteta: Maresca's First and Most Difficult Test

- **Maresca's first competitive match as Manchester City manager is against the highest-rated manager in the three-season analysis.** Arteta records a blended Overall Rating of 106.7, compared with Maresca's 80.36.
- **Arteta holds a substantial advantage in Objective Achievement (312.64 versus 245.14), Strategic Intelligence (70.92 versus 54.64) and Tactical Command (4.38 versus 3.32).**

- **Arteta's attacking metrics are equally strong.** His blended Attacking Coefficient of 25.66 is the highest in the report, while Maresca's 19.67 is the lowest among the four managers.
- **Arteta's 4-3-3 Attacking system produces a blended Shot Creation Ratio of 2.07:1, considerably ahead of the 1.45:1 recorded by Maresca's predominantly 4-2-3-1 system.**
- **Maresca again holds an important defensive advantage.** His Opposition Shot Conversion Rating of 24.67 is stronger than Arteta's 26.49.
- **The Community Shield, therefore, provides an immediate test of Maresca's ability to translate defensive efficiency into results against the most complete and consistently high-performing manager in the comparison.**

8. Glossary

Objective Achievement Rating

The Objective Achievement Rating (**OAR**) is Carteret Analytics' quantitative measure of a head coach's success in achieving the primary objective of winning football matches.

The rating assesses performance across the previous three seasons, with progressively greater weighting applied to the most recent seasons. Carteret considers this three-season period to provide the most relevant indication of a manager's current performance and potential future success, although the rating can also be calculated over a longer timeframe.

The OAR is adjusted for the standard of the league in which the manager operated during each season. It also incorporates a data-population significance adjustment covering the previous six seasons. This adjustment can be affected by factors such as periods of managerial inactivity; the lower the significance figure, the better.

Where relevant, the analysis can also incorporate club-specific objectives, including the league position and performance in other competitions, such as the UEFA Champions League, that the manager would be expected to achieve by the conclusion of the 2026/27 season.

Overall Rating (Weighted Metrics)

The Overall Rating provides a composite assessment of each head coach. It combines the manager's results and achievements over the previous three seasons with a range of individual quantitative performance metrics.

The component metrics are adjusted for:

1. the standard of the league in which the manager operated; and
2. the relative importance and transferability of each metric between leagues.

The Overall Rating is designed to provide a broader indication of comparative performance and potential future success than results alone. The higher the rating, the better.

Strategic Intelligence Rating

The Strategic Intelligence Rating measures a manager's ability to prepare and organise a team before a match, analyse the opposition and maximise the probability of a successful result.

The assessment considers the objective performance levels and current form of the available players, their contributions from different positions and their effectiveness within alternative formations and combinations. It also evaluates the manager's ability to account for the equivalent strengths, weaknesses and tactical options available to the opposition.

The higher the Strategic Intelligence Rating, the stronger the manager's assessed pre-match preparation, team selection and opposition analysis.

Tactical Command Rating

The Tactical Command Rating measures a manager's ability to influence and transform a match while it is in progress.

The analysis considers Key Match Events (KMEs): events that lead, or could lead, to a goal being scored or conceded. It assesses how a manager's decisions alter the probability of these events and the team's ability to turn leading, level or losing positions into victories or, as a secondary outcome, draws.

Match losses receive a weighted negative assessment that reflects the preceding scoreline and match circumstances. The Tactical Command Rating is calculated on a per-match basis; the higher the rating, the stronger the manager's assessed in-match influence.

Attacking Coefficient

The Attacking Coefficient measures a manager's propensity to adopt an attacking style of football. The higher the rating, the more attack-minded the manager's approach.

Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient

The Success-adjusted Attacking Coefficient measures the relationship between a manager's attacking approach and the team's success in winning matches.

An attacking style does not, by itself, guarantee success. This rating, therefore, assesses whether attacking intent is accompanied by positive match outcomes. The higher the rating, the more successfully the manager combines attacking football with winning performance.

Team Shot Conversion Rating

The Team Shot Conversion Rating measures the team's efficiency in converting goalscoring opportunities into goals. It is derived from the wider analysis of Key Match Events and provides an indication of attacking effectiveness.

The higher the Team Shot Conversion Rating, the more efficiently the team converts its opportunities.

Opposition Shot Conversion Rating

The Opposition Shot Conversion Rating measures the equivalent conversion efficiency achieved by opposing teams. It provides an indication of the manager's defensive effectiveness in limiting the opposition's ability to convert opportunities.

Unlike most ratings in the report, a lower Opposition Shot Conversion Rating is preferable. It is generally positive for the Team Shot Conversion Rating to exceed the Opposition Shot Conversion Rating.

Shot Creation Ratio

The Shot Creation Ratio compares the number of shots on target produced by the manager's team with the number produced by its opponents. The manager's team is shown first in the ratio.

For example, a ratio of 2:1 indicates that the manager's team records two shots on target for every one recorded by the opposition. A higher ratio generally indicates greater attacking control and a stronger propensity to win matches, although the effectiveness with which those opportunities are converted remains an important consideration.

Possession - Goal Conversion Rating (Home and Away)

The Possession Goal Conversion Rating measures how effectively possession at important moments leads to goals. It distinguishes purposeful possession from possession that does not materially improve the probability of scoring.

A higher rating indicates that the team uses possession more effectively to create and convert goalscoring situations. Separate ratings are calculated for home and away matches.

Possession - KME Creation Rating (Home and Away)

The Possession KME Creation Rating measures how effectively possession generates Key Match Events that lead, or could lead, to match-winning situations.

A higher rating indicates that the team uses possession more effectively to create significant attacking events and improve its probability of winning. Separate ratings are calculated for home and away matches.

9. About Carteret Analytics

Carteret Analytics is the quantitative research and analysis division of Carteret Group, specialising in professional football. We are engaged by professional football clubs worldwide to provide quantitative analysis and insight on players, teams, head coaches and sporting performance.

Our work uses proprietary quantitative methodologies to examine the factors that contribute to sporting performance and to explore the relationships between player performance, team performance, player value and the financial resources available to clubs.

A particular area of our research is the objective assessment of head coach and manager performance. Our analysis seeks to distinguish, as far as possible, the contribution of the head coach from other factors that influence results, including the quality and value of the playing squad available to them. This allows us to examine managerial performance within a club, compare managers operating in different environments, and consider whether conventional measures such as points, league position and trophies provide a complete picture of managerial performance.

Our player research similarly seeks to measure the contribution of individual players to team performance. We use this analysis to examine player performance and valuation, including the distinction between a player's market value (their value in exchange) and their intrinsic value to a particular team (their value in use).

At team level, Carteret Analytics examines both individual and collective performance, including how the composition and characteristics of a playing squad affect results and how effectively clubs convert expenditure on playing talent into sporting performance.

Our research increasingly incorporates aspects of behavioural science and decision theory. This includes consideration of bounded rationality and the ability of players to interpret and execute tactical and strategic instructions within the time, information and pressure constraints of a competitive football match.

Work with football clubs

Carteret Analytics is engaged by professional football clubs internationally. Our work includes analysis of existing playing squads, player recruitment and valuation, opposition analysis, team performance and the assessment of head coaches and managers.

The purpose and scope of the analysis varies according to the requirements of each club. It can include retrospective analysis of performance, comparison with relevant players, teams or managers, and prospective analysis intended to provide an objective evidence base for sporting and investment decisions.

Media analysis

Alongside our work for football clubs, Carteret Analytics (and Carteret Group) regularly provides quantitative insights, research and analysis to sports media organisations and journalists covering professional football.

Our analysis has been provided to **BBC Sport, Sky Sports and national and international newspapers**, covering subjects including player performance and valuation, managerial performance, team performance, squad investment and the financial characteristics of professional football.

Our media work seeks to add context to the conventional statistics and narratives surrounding football by examining what the underlying data can (and cannot) demonstrate, and by distinguishing between correlation, commonly accepted explanations and factors for which there is stronger quantitative evidence.

Carteret Group

Carteret Analytics forms part of Carteret Group, an independent investment banking and advisory firm specialising in professional sport.

The Group's work with professional football clubs, owners and investors provides a broader financial and commercial context for Carteret Analytics' research, particularly in areas involving player valuation, squad investment, managerial performance and the relationship between financial resources and sporting outcomes. Carteret Group's work in professional football includes M&A, equity investment, debt financing and valuation, alongside its quantitative research and analysis.