

Manchester United v Brentford preview: Pochettinoâ??s Old Trafford bow

Description

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This **Manchester United v Brentford preview** starts with a debut of sorts. Mauricio Pochettino takes charge of his first home game at Old Trafford on Saturday, with a 3pm GMT kick-off (11pm in Singapore). United are second-bottom and searching for a win, while Brentford arrive sixth after thrashing Everton on Monday.


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Mauricio Pochettino applauds the away end at Anfield. Source: Manchester United official website (manutd.com)

Manchester United v Brentford preview: Pochettinoâ??s first home test

The new head coach has had a testing start. United lost 4-0 at Anfield last weekend, after Leny Yoro was sent off early, then drew 2-2 at Sporting in the Champions League, a night we covered in our Sporting 2-2 Manchester United match report. Brentfordâ??s own website describes United as second-bottom and winless in the league since late August.

Keith Andrews, the Beesâ?? head coach, is wary all the same. â??Itâ??s still Manchester United at Old Trafford and the new managerâ??s first game at home, which will create an energy in the stadium that weâ??ve all felt over the years,â?• he said. He also spoke admiringly of Pochettinoâ??s teams, saying he had â??studied his teams quite a lot in my coaching journeyâ?•.

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Joshua Zirkzee arrives for a Manchester United match. Source: Manchester United official website (manutd.com)

The tactical question

Andrews expects â??a very well-organised Man United side, even though theyâ??ve been restricted in terms of what they can do on the grassâ?•. That is the key phrase. Seven or eight minutes at Anfield and a patchy night in Lisbon is not a lot of evidence of how Pochettino wants his team to play, and Saturday is the first chance to see a settled XI with the crowd behind it.

Pochettinoâ??s sides have long been associated with energetic pressing, and the home crowd will want to see some of that from the first whistle. Brentford, who have the confidence of a 4-0 win behind them, will be looking to stay compact and make Unitedâ??s rebuilding work harder than it needs to be. For viewers in Singapore, this is a late one: kick-off is at 11pm on Saturday night.

Team news: Fernandes in doubt, Yoro and Cunha back

Unitedâ??s captain is the headline worry. Bruno Fernandes missed training on Friday with a virus picked up in Portugal. â??We donâ??t know,â?• Pochettino said. â??He finished the game a little bit with a problemâ?¦ Weâ??re not going to take any risks.â?•

There is better news elsewhere. Yoro is available after his red card at Liverpool was overturned on appeal, and Matheus Cunha returns after missing the Sporting trip because of a one-game UEFA ban. Joshua Zirkzee, named in the XI for the first time this season in Lisbon, will hope for a first home start since scoring in the 1-1 draw with Wolves last year.

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Brentford head coach Keith Andrews. Source: Brentford FC official website (brentfordfc.com)

Carlos Baleba, Manuel Ugarte, Marcus Rashford and Benjamin Sesko look set to be ruled out again, although Pochettino suggested Rashford is making good progress in his recovery.

Brentfordâ??s absentees

Andrews confirmed that Nathan Collins, Kaye Furo, Rico Henry and Aaron Hickey will not be fit. Striker Igor Thiago serves the second game of his three-match suspension, a notable loss given he scored twice in last seasonâ??s 3-1 win over United at the Gtech Community Stadium. Josh Dasilva and Antoni Milambo each played 45 minutes for the B team this week and are closing on a return, with

Andrews hoping they can â??gatecrash the first-team squadâ?• before Christmas.

Why Brentford will believe

The Bees come in with confidence. Their 4-0 win over Everton on Monday, powered by a Keane Lewis-Potter double, was a statement result, and we broke it down in our Brentford 4-0 Everton report.



Keane Lewis-Potter celebrates for Brentford. Source: Brentford FC official website (brentfordfc.com)

It also kicks off a heavy week. Arsenal visit the Gtech on Wednesday and Manchester City on Saturday night. â??At the start of last season, if Iâ??d had that schedule, I would have been a little bit daunted by

it, but Iâ??m not in the slightest,â?• Andrews said. A result at Old Trafford would be the ideal way to start it.

What to watch on Saturday

- **The Fernandes call:** if he cannot play, who connects midfield and attack for United?
- **Zirkzee and Cunha:** can the front line link up under a new coach?
- **Brentford without Thiago:** who carries the goal threat against a United back line that has conceded six in two games?
- **The Old Trafford crowd:** will the first home game under Pochettino spark a reaction?

Our other weekend previews include Everton v Liverpool. For more, browse the LBRD Sports section.

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Author
jadeyeo

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