

## 34. Lucas Moura

Club: Paris Saint Germain

Date of Birth: 13th August 1992

Position: Attacker



After announcing himself on the European stage for the first time this calendar year, we can say without doubt that Lucas Moura is one of world football's brightest and most pronounced young talents. Many saw his raw potential when he was playing for São Paulo in the Brazilian league little over a year ago, but he had yet to prove he could battle it out in one of the big European leagues. In January of 2013, oil-rich PSG presented Lucas with the opportunity to show everyone his undeniable talent, and, over the course of the last twelve months, many would agree that he has done just that.

Lucas arrived at PSG in January 2013, in the middle of PSG's title challenge that would ultimately prove successful. He made an almost immediate impact, creating 5 assists in his first 6 games for the club, but as a result of some small injuries and very strong competition for places, during the first six months he was limited to 10 league appearances out of a possible 19 games. Lucas had shown glimpses of his raw ability on the ball, but he had certainly not reached his peak performance. However, after the summer break, Lucas was raring to go for another challenge in the form of the 2013/14 season.

The start of the 2013/14 season has proven a big success for the young Brazilian. Still at just 21 years of age, he played a part in 17 of PSG's 19 Ligue 1 games so far, scoring 3 goals and making 6 assists. Although he has often been used as a substitute, (he has played the full 90 minutes only on 3 occasions so far), whenever he has been given the chance, he has impressed. His three goals have each been individually unique and impressive, perhaps the pick of the 3 being his goal against Stade de Reims in Week 14, when he breezed past a defender on the edge of the box and powered a shot into the top corner. On top of his goals, only Ibrahimovic amongst his PSG teammates rivals his 6 assists. Clearly, Lucas is an extremely effective player when he is given the chance to perform.

Lucas has several key attributes that make him stand out from other wide players. First of all, he is extremely quick, and can outrun almost every, if not every, full back in Ligue 1, never mind the centre backs. This trait is extremely useful, as it allows Lucas to have the option of either coming into midfield to collect the ball, or hovering on the last man, and looking to burst onto a through ball in behind the defence which would put him through on ball. Because of this, defenders have to be particularly alert when marking Lucas, if they get too tight to him, he will just glide past them, and that will be the end of that. The opposition need to give Lucas a few yards when they face him, so that they can react adequately to his next move.

However, more important to Lucas' game than his speed is his ability to dribble, which is almost unparalleled amongst his teammates. Lucas has such great close control that, as with many world-class players, the ball appears to stick to his feet. Combine his speed with that kind of dribbling ability, and you can see why Lucas often makes long, surging runs from deep inside his own half, passing 3 or 4 defenders in the process. When Lucas truly gets going, often the only way to stop him is to bring him down and give away a free kick. These runs, invariably, commit defenders to trying to impede him. This means that space is created for his teammates to occupy, and this is one of the main reasons why Lucas has so many assists. He will commit defenders, and then pass the ball off into the space he has just created, allowing the likes of Ibrahimovic and Cavani a clear shot at goal.

Having said that, there remain a few areas in Lucas' game that need refining. He can sometimes lack consistency, and if his opposing full back is experienced and strong, he often struggles to influence games. Since his style is so direct, he is bound to be vulnerable to dips in form, and if Lucas can produce something near to his best every time he steps out onto the pitch, he will make the step up into the elite level that some of his teammates find themselves in.

To conclude, Lucas has had a fantastic 2013, showing everyone just how talented he is, and how big a potential he has. He has begun to receive more playing time for PSG and, still only 21 years old, he has a lot of time left to develop his game in the future. If Lucas continues improving, and makes the necessary adjustments to his game, he can truly become one of the top players in European football, never mind French football, such is this young Brazilian's natural talent.

*'Neymar is a footballing genius. Who is Barton?'*

Lucas Moura

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**DID YOU KNOW?** As an adolescent, Lucas Moura had serious growth problems. Instead of taking growth hormones, he employed a nutritionist and is now standing at a more noticeable 5 ft 8.