

## 80. Mathieu Dossevi

Club: Valenciennes FC

Date of Birth: 12th February 1988

Position: Attacker

Mathieu Dossevi is terribly alone. 2013 was another year in which the Frenchman dazzled the opposition with tricks, flicks and pinpoint crosses but also one where this talent has become deserted as most of the key players around him have sought for football elsewhere. The question now is whether Valenciennes can keep their man in the January window, as they are currently relegation-threatened and Dossevi is too good to play in Ligue 2 on the evidence he presented us all with in 2013.

One of Dossevi's greatest strengths is his adaptability. The player has played in a number of different positions this year, including up-front, on the right of a front three, right attacking midfield, attacking midfield and a deeper, more orthodox right midfield. Despite these changes, Dossevi is a regular in the Valenciennes team and can terrorise defences with his dangerous runs down the right hand side. The player is often perilously quick and can cause defences problems with his direct running style. Dossevi is therefore good on the break and is an instrumental piece of the Valenciennes attack.

Dossevi is also a goal threat for his team, something that the vast majority of the other attackers on Valenciennes' books currently are not. With only 2 Ligue 1 goals in 2013, we can ascertain that Dossevi often snatches at his chances when he cuts in from the right-hand flank, with the final product to a dribble often being meek. However, Dossevi's goal against Brest in February was very impressive as the player hit a controlled effort from outside the penalty area into the bottom corner of the net on the half volley. This is evidence that the player has the ability to become a more assured marksman in the future; with a little more concentration and attention to detail needed.

In terms of assists, the player has provided four for his team this year. Dossevi takes some free-kicks and corners and half of his assists have come from here. Dossevi may be expected to cross the ball more in an attempt to elevate this figure for 2014, but the lack of quality at VAFC means there are few players to cap the move off.



There are areas of Dossevi's game that need improving before he can make the step up to a bigger club. Manager Ariel Jacobs has introduced the philosophy of collective responsibility at Valenciennes and Dossevi has failed to really adhere to this. There is a lack of desire from the player to track back and help out an already weak defence.

However, another thing which has improved for the 25 year old throughout the year is his passing. Dossevi looks more composed on the ball than ever before and his distribution is certainly improving. He has a passing accuracy of just over 80% in recent months and this is a step up compared with the earlier weeks of 2013.

The player's true ability has clearly been somewhat masked by the lack of quality of players surrounding him in VAFC's current squad. The mass exodus of some of Valenciennes' stars over the last year correlates with the player's drop in form. For example, Dossevi had a great relationship and understanding with defensive midfielder Remi Gomis and the players linked well last season. Since his summer departure to Levante, Dossevi has struggled to find himself in as many dangerous positions as beforehand with Gomis' defence-splitting balls over the top.

Dossevi has the potential to become one of the better players in Ligue 1 and perhaps he has been mentally affected by his side's continuous poor results over the last few months.

His 2014 will very much be shaped by whether or not Valenciennes are relegated from Ligue 1. Either way, Dossevi is far too dangerous a talent to be battling in France's second tier.

*'We must stop playing from the back. We can't do it. We need to look forward.'*

Mathieu Dossevi

24th September 2013

**DID YOU KNOW?** Mathieu Dossevi's older brother Thomas also played for Valenciennes between 2005 and 2007.