

Erik ten Hag reveals why Luke Shaw played at centre-back against Manchester City

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Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag has opened up on the decision to play Luke Shaw at centre-back against rivals Manchester City.

The left-back continued a recent trend of partnering Raphael Varane in the middle of a back four, despite Lisandro Martinez and Harry Maguire returning to fitness.

But Ten Hag has now revealed Shaw was the perfect foil in order to keep Erling Haaland quiet, and this is the reason why he got the nod in an eventual 2-1 win.

Firstly discussing Shaw's slow start to the 2022/23 season, Ten Hag said:

"I like that he's so honest. After the second game he didn't play and said: 'I fully understand, my performance is not right'.

"But from the first day in training at pre-season he was working really hard and you can see when he has the right approach he's a top player – I don't mean only as a team player, he's a leader.

"He's showed a lot of leadership capacities – he's the example at this moment – and with his skills and with his physical power he brings a lot to the team. But now also with his mentality.

"He's an example of how to win big games. I'm really happy with his development. I think it's been huge either at centre-half or left full back, he's a great player and a

great personality for the dressing room.”

Explaining the tactical match-up against Man City, Ten Hag added: “It is a big decision but I think when you analyse the profile of Haaland and the combination with [Kevin] De Bruyne it was also the right decision.

“Because Luke has the physical power to compete with them and also has the tactical view to make the right decision and technical skills to play in that position.

“So I think it matched really well but I think in other games he can contribute even more on the left in the wide positions, so it’s a tactical choice and we can see from game to game what we need.

“And I think we have more players in our squad who have the capacity to be multi-functional and we can use that as a weapon in games.”

Haaland, the Premier League’s top scorer this season with 21 goals, was kept quiet for much of the match at Old Trafford as United came from behind to secure victory on derby day.