# Manchester City faces FA Cup challenge amid injury crisis



In a season marked by injury woes and a lack of recruitment, Manchester City finds itself in a precarious position as it heads into an FA Cup knockout match this weekend against Plymouth Argyle. The club is focused solely on the FA Cup after a tumultuous Premier League campaign that has seen them slip to fourth place, trailing league leaders Liverpool by twenty points.

The challenges for Pep Guardiola's side mounted early in the season. A significant blow came when midfielder Rodri suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury during a 2-2 draw with Arsenal in late September. The situation worsened as key players, including John Stones, Rúben Dias, Nathan Aké, and Manuel Akanji, also fell victim to injuries. A laundry list of other notable absentees has included Jack Grealish, Ederson, Jérémy Doku, Mateo Kovacic, Kyle Walker, Erling Haaland, and Kevin De Bruyne, leaving the squad with glaring gaps in its lineup.

Despite the sale of Julián Álvarez to Atlético Madrid for a club-record fee of £81.5 million, Manchester City's summer recruitment fell short, with only Savinho arriving for £30 million. Guardiola chose not to make extensive changes to the squad, believing that his current squad was capable of performing at a high level. This decision has sparked criticism, especially as injuries continued to pile up throughout the season.

The FA Cup remains within reach as Guardiola’s side prepares for an important fixture against Plymouth on Saturday. Guardiola's record since taking the reins in 2016 has been stellar, but he faces the challenge of maintaining momentum amid the current struggles. The manager acknowledged the contributions of seasoned players like Ilkay Gündogan, stating, “I cannot figure out my period here without Gündogan, Bernardo [Silva], Kevin [De Bruyne]. I’m more grateful than you could ever imagine.” He emphasised that the success of the last season is not a valid reference for the current campaign, and time is indeed catching up with his squad, with several players nearing the age of 30.

As City looks to bounce back from a series of underwhelming performances, including an early exit from the Carabao Cup and a disappointing Champions League run, expectations remain high for the upcoming FA Cup match. Guardiola's tenure has consistently delivered silverware, and the pressure will be on to restore some pride with a solid run in the cup competition.

The definite aim this Saturday against Championship opponents is to keep hopes alive for an FA Cup triumph, a title that the manager is yet to miss since his arrival. While he did acknowledge the importance of qualifying for the Champions League, Guardiola has opted to deflect discussions centred around the FA Cup, remarking, “The FA Cup is far away – ask at the end of the season when we are one game away.”

With only eleven league games remaining and the situation rapidly evolving, Manchester City must rally together to ascend the standings and salvage a season that once promised much more.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://onefootball.com/en/news/manchester-city-vs-plymouth-argyle-fa-cup-fifth-round-match-preview-team-news-stats-head-to-head-how-to-watch-40772143> - This article supports the claim that Manchester City is focused on the FA Cup, particularly with their upcoming match against Plymouth Argyle, and highlights the team's injury woes and recent performances.
* <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/teams/manchester-city> - This BBC page provides general information about Manchester City's current season, including their Premier League standings and recent matches, which aligns with the article's description of their tumultuous campaign.
* <https://www.premierleague.com/clubs/20/Manchester-City/overview> - The Premier League's official website offers details on Manchester City's squad, recent performances, and league position, supporting the article's discussion of their current struggles.
* <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/sport/football/transfer-news/manchester-city-transfer-news-25947947> - This Manchester Evening News article discusses Manchester City's transfer activities, including the sale of Julián Álvarez and the limited recruitment during the summer, which is mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2024/sep/27/manchester-city-arsenal-premier-league-match-report> - The Guardian's report on Manchester City's match against Arsenal in September supports the claim that Rodri suffered an injury during that game.