

Football Running & Sprint Performance Pack

A printable player and coach workbook. Understand match running data, develop intelligent movement, and reflect on sprint timing. Not a fitness norm or medical assessment.

The evidence in four numbers

Research	Finding
306 Bundesliga matches	Total running output was not a reliable standalone predictor of season points.
178 position studies	Running demands differ by position and tactical role.
30-study sprint review	Men's reported HSR: 618–1,001 m; sprint: 153–295 m across included studies.
50 youth studies / 2,615 players	Age, match format and position affect running output.

Important: High-speed and sprint thresholds vary between tracking systems and studies. These figures are not individual targets.

Running vocabulary

Total distance: All distance covered in a match.

Metres per minute: Total metres divided by playing minutes.

High-speed running: Running above a chosen speed threshold.

Sprint distance: Distance above a higher sprint threshold.

Acceleration / deceleration: Rapid changes in speed; can matter even without a high maximum speed.

MATCH OBSERVATION SHEET

Player: _____ Date: _____

Team / age group: _____ Position: _____

Minutes played: _____ Total distance (km): _____ HSR (m): _____ Sprint distance (m): _____

Distance per minute = (distance in km × 1,000) ÷ minutes played = _____ m/min

Quality of movement: observe before counting

- ☐ I scanned before starting a run.
- ☐ I timed a run with the passer's ability to release the ball.
- ☐ I created space for a teammate without receiving the ball.
- ☐ I pressed when a useful trigger appeared.
- ☐ I recovered toward a dangerous area after losing the ball.
- ☐ I conserved my position when an unnecessary run would leave space open.

Match situations to reflect on

My most useful off-ball run was:

I sprinted unnecessarily when:

My best recovery action was:

Next match I want to improve:

8 FOOTBALL-SPECIFIC PRACTICE IDEAS

1. Reaction acceleration: Visual cue, then 5–10 m acceleration; full recovery for quality.
2. Blind-side run: Time a run behind a defender when a passer looks up.
3. 2v1 choose: Choose pass, dribble or support movement.
4. 3v3 transition: React to possession change and recover into useful space.
5. Pressing trigger: Press as a unit after a poor first touch or backward pass.
6. Support angle: Move a few metres to open a passing lane.
7. Recovery run: Sprint toward the most dangerous space after losing the ball.
8. Free game: Remove conditions; observe which runs players choose.

7-day football movement observation challenge

- ☐ Day 1 — Watch 10 minutes of one player without the ball.
- ☐ Day 2 — Practice scanning before moving.
- ☐ Day 3 — Practice 5–10 m accelerations with adequate rest.
- ☐ Day 4 — Play 2v2 or 3v3 with transition awareness.
- ☐ Day 5 — Study two well-timed runs behind a defence.
- ☐ Day 6 — Play freely; notice useful and unnecessary runs.
- ☐ Day 7 — Write down three things you learned.

For children, keep the challenge playful, brief and age-appropriate; do not prescribe adult sprint workloads.

COACH NOTES & SOURCES

Questions for players

- What changed because you ran?
- Could your teammate actually pass when you started?
- Did your run create space for someone else?
- When should you hold your position instead of pressing?
- How did the match situation influence your physical workload?

Research references

- Match Running Performance and Success Across a Season in German Bundesliga Soccer Teams (PMID 25760152).
- High-speed running and sprinting in professional adult soccer: systematic review (PMID 36860737).
- The Influence of Playing Position on Physical, Physiological, and Technical Demands: 178-study review (PMID 39259431).
- Match Running Performance in Young Soccer Players: systematic review (PMID 30671900).
- Quantifying Exposure During Sided Games: systematic review (PMID 36331702).

Open the FINTER interactive article



Scan the QR code for the calculator, Football IQ quiz and research links.