THE WINTER FOOTBALL EDITION

CHRISTMAS FOOTBALL & WINTER TRAINING

FINTER's Ultimate Coaching Pack 2026/27

Boxing Day history | 20 practical drills | 3 complete sessions | A four-week plan | A 14-day challenge | Safety tools | Quizzes and printable worksheets.

Designed for coaches, players, parents, PE teachers and football clubs.
Adapt every activity to your players' ages and your local weather and facility rules.

20 WINTER DRILLS	3 FULL SESSIONS	14 DAY CHALLENGE

A practical companion to the FINTER Christmas Football article. Includes an evidence-aware account of the 1914 Christmas Truce and an accurate record of Boxing Day 1963.

Website: finter.dk • Language: English • Free to print and share with attribution.

01 | Boxing Day: football history in 66 goals

26 December 1963: ten First Division fixtures produced a staggering **66 goals** - an average of 6.6 goals per match. It remains one of the most extraordinary scorelines collections in English football.

Fixture	Score	Goals
Fulham - Ipswich Town	10-1	11
West Ham - Blackburn Rovers	2-8	10
West Bromwich - Tottenham	4-4	8
Burnley - Manchester United	6-1	7
Liverpool - Stoke City	6-1	7
Blackpool - Chelsea	1-5	6
Wolves - Aston Villa	3-3	6
Nottingham Forest - Sheffield United	3-3	6
Sheffield Wednesday - Bolton	3-0	3
Leicester - Everton	2-0	2

Coach discussion: Two days after losing 6-1 at Burnley, Manchester United beat Burnley 5-1 on 28 December 1963. What does that suggest about confidence, recovery and tactical adaptation?

Historical reference: National Football Museum - Boxing Day 1963.

02 | The Christmas Truce and global traditions

The Christmas Truce of 1914: Unofficial local ceasefires took place on parts of the Western Front during the First World War. Some soldiers exchanged greetings and gifts. Accounts of informal football exist, but a single organised match with a reliably established final score is **not securely documented**.

Teaching history responsibly: Distinguish documented local truces from later popular stories. Ask players to explain the difference between a source, a memory and a legend.

Christmas football looks different around the world

Location	Typical festive football context
England	Boxing Day fixtures are a long-standing tradition.
Denmark / Northern Europe	Indoor football, futsal and artificial-pitch training are often important in winter.
Germany	The professional league traditionally has a winter break.
Australia	December falls in summer: coaches may need heat precautions, not cold-weather plans.
Community clubs worldwide	Charity matches, end-of-year festivals and family football events can bring people together.

Five-minute group activity

- Ask: What does football at Christmas look like in our community?
- Collect three different winter or holiday football traditions.
- Design a friendly event where every player can participate.

Research links: Imperial War Museums and Premier League.

03 | The winter safety and pitch checklist

Safety first. A drill never justifies playing on an icy, dangerously slippery, hard-frozen, uneven or officially closed pitch. Move indoors, change facilities or cancel when needed.

Pre-session checks

- [ ] Facility is open and permission to play is confirmed.
- [ ] Playing surface is inspected and safe.
- [ ] Footwear and clothing match the conditions.
- [ ] Players have access to water, breaks and warmth.
- [ ] Activity duration and intensity suit the group.
- [ ] The coach has an indoor or cancellation plan.
- [ ] Players know what to do if they feel unwell.

No fixed temperature makes every session safe or unsafe. Consider wind, rain, surface, age, clothing, heat/cold exposure and local guidance. Stop activities when a player becomes unwell; seek appropriate help for serious symptoms.

Coach decision guide

Condition	Suggested action
Icy, slippery or closed pitch	DO NOT PLAY. Move or cancel.
Cold/windy/wet weather	Inspect, shorten activities if needed; use suitable clothing and warming breaks.
Indoor facility	Check surface, goals, ventilation and playing space.
Warm-weather Christmas	Assess heat, shade, hydration and scheduling.

04 | Five practical drills: U5-U8 | Play, confidence and ball contact

Use a safe playing area. Adjust pitch size, group size, rest time and complexity for your players.

1. Christmas Dribbling Adventure

Duration: 8 min | **How:** Every player dribbles through a cone area; coach calls a direction or movement.

Focus: Ball control and confidence. | **Adapt:** Give more space or introduce colour signals.

2. Santa's Turning Challenge

Duration: 8 min | **How:** Dribble to a marker, turn and return with the ball.

Focus: Turning and close control. | **Adapt:** Offer two turning methods.

3. Reindeer Passing Gates

Duration: 8 min | **How:** Pairs pass through small cone gates using both feet.

Focus: Passing accuracy. | **Adapt:** Make gates wider or narrower.

4. Follow the Snowflake

Duration: 8 min | **How:** Players follow coloured markers while protecting the ball.

Focus: Awareness and coordination. | **Adapt:** Coach changes colour unexpectedly.

5. Christmas Mini-Matches

Duration: 12 min | **How:** Play short 2v2 games with regular rotations and small goals.

Focus: Participation and decision-making. | **Adapt:** Set up multiple pitches to reduce queues.

Coaching prompt: “What did you notice before receiving the ball, and how did that change your next action?”

05 | Five practical drills: U9-U12 | Technique and choices

Use a safe playing area. Adjust pitch size, group size, rest time and complexity for your players.

6. First Touch Into Space

Duration: 10 min | **How:** Receive a pass and direct the first touch towards a free gate.

Focus: Directional first touch. | **Adapt:** Introduce light defensive pressure.

7. Passing Triangles

Duration: 10 min | **How:** Three players pass and move to create new angles.

Focus: Timing and passing support. | **Adapt:** Add a passive defender.

8. One-on-One Christmas Cup

Duration: 12 min | **How:** Play 1v1 towards two small goals; rotate opponents.

Focus: Dribbling and choosing a goal. | **Adapt:** Start with more space, then reduce it.

9. The Gift of a Goal

Duration: 10 min | **How:** Receive a pass, control it and finish. Rotate roles.

Focus: Finishing and first touch. | **Adapt:** Use different passing angles.

10. Three-Team Winter Festival

Duration: 15 min | **How:** Run short 3v3 matches, rotating teams and ensuring equal participation.

Focus: Communication and football IQ. | **Adapt:** Award points for teamwork as well as goals.

Coaching prompt: “What did you notice before receiving the ball, and how did that change your next action?”

06 | Five practical drills: U13-U16 | Speed of thought

Use a safe playing area. Adjust pitch size, group size, rest time and complexity for your players.

11. Scan Before You Receive

Duration: 12 min | **How:** Before receiving, look over both shoulders and choose one of two passing options.
Focus: Scanning and decisions. | **Adapt:** Add time pressure gradually.

12. Third-Player Run

Duration: 12 min | **How:** A passes to B, who sets up C running into space.
Focus: Timing and movement. | **Adapt:** Change player starting positions.

13. Escape the Pressure

Duration: 12 min | **How:** Receive under controlled pressure and move towards a safe open area.
Focus: Body positioning and first touch. | **Adapt:** Add a second support player.

14. Winter Counterattack

Duration: 15 min | **How:** Three attackers play against two defenders with rapid but controlled restarts.
Focus: Transitions and overloads. | **Adapt:** Limit touches only if appropriate.

15. Regain the Ball

Duration: 15 min | **How:** Play 4v4 and practise organised counter-pressing after possession is lost.
Focus: Team pressing and communication. | **Adapt:** Reward intelligent recovery, not reckless tackles.

Coaching prompt: “What did you notice before receiving the ball, and how did that change your next action?”

07 | Five practical drills: Senior | Tactics, support and transitions

Use a safe playing area. Adjust pitch size, group size, rest time and complexity for your players.

16. Five Against Two

Duration: 12 min | **How:** Five attackers keep possession against two defenders.

Focus: Support angles and first touch. | **Adapt:** Change grid size or passing limits.

17. Win It and Attack

Duration: 15 min | **How:** Regain possession and create a clear chance quickly.

Focus: Attacking transitions. | **Adapt:** Introduce different starting positions.

18. Combination to Finish

Duration: 15 min | **How:** Combine a wall pass, a forward run and a finish.

Focus: Timing and finishing. | **Adapt:** Introduce a defender after repetition.

19. Compact Defensive Unit

Duration: 15 min | **How:** Play 5v5 focusing on defensive shape, spacing and communication.

Focus: Team organisation. | **Adapt:** Change target areas and attacking directions.

20. Tactical Christmas Match

Duration: 20 min | **How:** Play a conditioned match focusing on scanning, pressing or switches of play.

Focus: Transfer from training to match. | **Adapt:** Ask players to reflect at half-time.

Coaching prompt: “What did you notice before receiving the ball, and how did that change your next action?”

08 | Three complete training sessions

Plans include warm-up, skill work and games. Add rest or shorter bouts where needed. Total times are examples rather than prescribed physical loads.

Session A | U5-U8 | 45 minutes

Activity	Duration
Ball warm-up and games	10 min
Christmas Dribbling Adventure	10 min
Santa's Turning Challenge	10 min
Short 2v2 matches	15 min

Session B | U9-U12 | 60 minutes

Activity	Duration
Ball warm-up	10 min
First Touch Into Space + Passing Triangles	15 min
1v1 Christmas Cup	15 min
3v3 matches	20 min

Session C | U13-Senior | 75 minutes

Activity	Duration
Dynamic ball warm-up	10 min
Scanning / possession	15 min
Transitions	20 min
Combination finishing	15 min
Tactical match	15 min

Coach reminder: These are session frameworks. Age, player wellbeing, facility size and conditions should determine your final organisation.

09 | Four-week development plan

Choose one clear focus each week, watch players in realistic games and invite them to reflect on what they learned.

Week	Theme	Activities	Watch for
1	Ball control	Dribbling, turns, first touch	Can players keep the ball under control?
2	Support play	Passing triangles, scanning, 3v3	Do players create useful passing angles?
3	Decisions	1v1, 2v2, 3v2 transitions	Do players recognise different options?
4	Match transfer	Small-sided games, tactical match	Can players apply the learning in games?

Simple observation sheet

Team / age: _____

Session date: _____

Strength noticed: _____

One next step: _____

Player reflection: _____

Feedback model: Describe what you saw; ask one question; offer one actionable challenge. Avoid ranking children against each other.

Three end-of-session questions

- What did you see before receiving the ball?
- When did teamwork make a difficult situation easier?
- What will you try again next week?

10 | The 14-day Christmas football challenge

One small activity per day. The challenge is optional, can be completed at your own pace, and should never take priority over safety or recovery.

Done	Day	Mission
[ ]	1	10 minutes with a football
[ ]	2	Complete 20 accurate passes
[ ]	3	Practise five different turns
[ ]	4	Build a short dribbling course
[ ]	5	Practise directional first touch
[ ]	6	Try a new skill or feint
[ ]	7	Rest or enjoy free play
[ ]	8	Play a safe 1v1 game
[ ]	9	Scan before receiving
[ ]	10	Take 10 controlled shots
[ ]	11	Play small-sided football
[ ]	12	Help a teammate learn something
[ ]	13	Invent a football drill
[ ]	14	Enjoy a festive game or indoor activity

For parents and coaches: Encourage effort, creativity and kindness. Do not use the challenge to compare children or penalise rest days.

Player name: _____ **Completed:** ____ / 14

11 | The 15-question Christmas football quiz

Circle one answer per question. Answers are on the following page. Use the quiz for learning and conversation, not selection or ranking.

1. When is Boxing Day?

A) 24 Dec B) 26 Dec C) 31 Dec

2. How many goals were scored on Boxing Day 1963?

A) 44 B) 56 C) 66

3. Who defeated Ipswich 10-1?

A) Fulham B) Liverpool C) Arsenal

4. Who defeated Manchester United 6-1?

A) Chelsea B) Burnley C) Everton

5. What was West Ham v Blackburn?

A) 2-8 B) 3-3 C) 1-0

6. What can snow do to a football?

A) Slow it B) Always speed it up C) Nothing

7. What is safest on an icy pitch?

A) Play faster B) Move or cancel C) Tackle harder

8. What does scanning mean?

A) Looking around B) Throw-in C) Shooting

9. What is a first touch?

A) First receiving contact B) Final shot C) Free kick

10. When was the Christmas Truce?

A) 1914 B) 1939 C) 1963

11. Is one specific organised 1914 football match securely documented?

A) Yes B) No C) Official referee

12. How many players per side in 3v3?

A) 2 B) 3 C) 5

13. What is counter-pressing?

A) Regaining quickly B) Taking a break C) Substitution

14. Most important in winter training?

A) Safety and wellbeing B) Score only C) No breaks

15. What makes a good teammate?

A) Helps others B) Always controls play C) Laughs at mistakes

12 | Quiz answers and coaching dilemmas

Answer key: 1 B | 2 C | 3 A | 4 B | 5 A | 6 A | 7 B | 8 A | 9 A | 10 A | 11 B | 12 B | 13 A | 14 A | 15 A

10 dilemmas: discussion starters

1. The pitch is icy. Move or cancel - never use an unsafe surface.

2. A player is very cold. Stop activity, offer warmth and assess their wellbeing.

3. The team lost 6-1. Support confidence, recovery and useful tactical reflection.

4. Players wait in long queues. Create more stations and small games.

5. A child lacks suitable clothing. Find spare kit or an alternative without embarrassment.

6. Players vary in ability. Adapt complexity and offer meaningful participation.

7. Conditions change mid-session. Reassess; move indoors or stop if unsafe.

8. A player fears mistakes. Offer reassurance and age-appropriate challenges.

9. The group is losing focus. Shorten instructions, vary tasks and use games.

10. What matters most? Safety, participation, development and fun.

Discussion method: Ask the coach to explain their decision, consider the player's experience and identify a practical alternative. There is rarely only one suitable teaching approach.

13 | Printables, certificate and further reading

Match and session planning card

Team: _____ **Date:** _____

Weather / surface: _____

Today's learning focus: _____

Warm-up: _____

Main activities: _____

What did the players learn? _____

Indoor backup plan: _____

FINTER Christmas Football Certificate

AWARDED TO: _____

For participation, effort, teamwork and football enjoyment.

Coach: _____ **Date:** _____

Explore the full Christmas football guide

Scan the QR code to open the existing **Danish** FINTER Christmas football article. The English article can be linked here once you have published it.

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