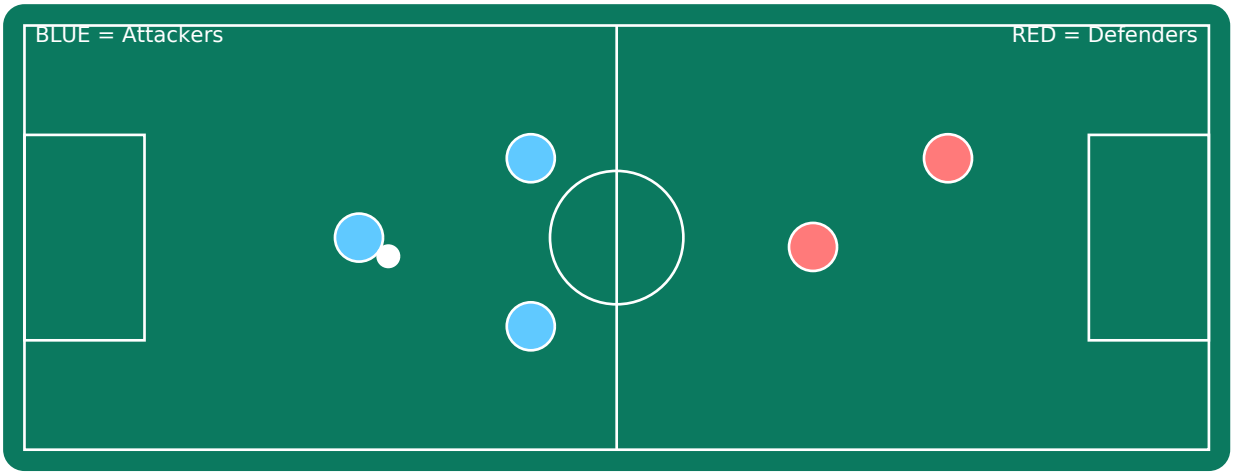
FINTER WORLD / PREMIUM COACHING PACK 2026/27

THE FOOTBALL IQ REVOLUTION

20 complete drills + tactical diagrams + 3 session plans + 30-day challenge + 15 coach dilemmas + printable observation sheets.



SEE > UNDERSTAND > DECIDE > EXECUTE > ADAPT

For U6 to senior. Use this pack with the interactive FINTER Football IQ article. The scenarios and test scores are educational tools, not validated intelligence measurements.

How to use this pack

Choose an age-appropriate game, run it with realistic opponents, ask one useful question and let the players play again. Scale time, space and pressure to the group. Encourage safety, autonomy and enjoyment.

Evidence-informed foundations

Scanning means deliberately seeking information away from the ball. FIFA Training Centre research summaries connect scanning with game context and subsequent action. The FA recommends small-sided games and open questions to help players recognise options. Football IQ is a useful coaching phrase, not a single universally measurable score.

Sources: fifatrainingcentre.com/en/environment/science-explained/high-performance/play/karl-aksum-scanning.php ; thefa.com/bootroom/resources/coaching/spotlight-on-receiving

1 / Five coaching principles

Meaningful perception: Ask what the player needs to notice, not how many times they turn their head.

Representative games: Include opponents, direction and genuine decisions.

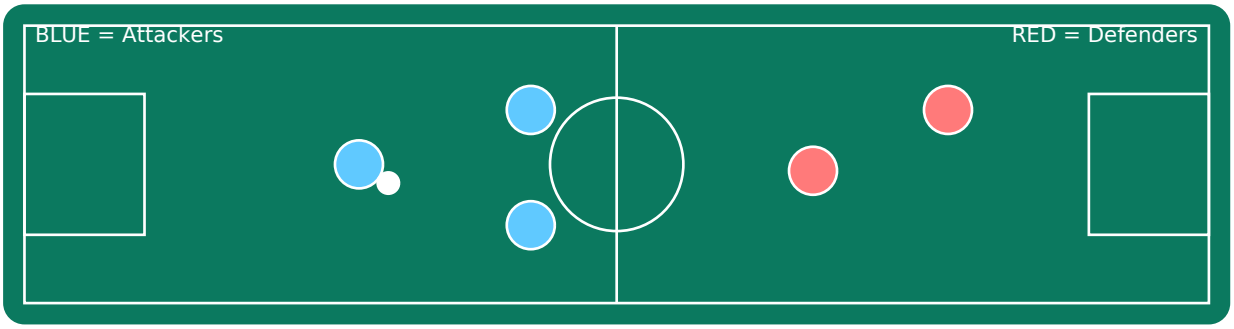
Right-sized challenge: Adjust pitch, numbers, time and pressure before adding complicated rules.

Decision + technique: Recognise appropriate decisions even when the execution fails.

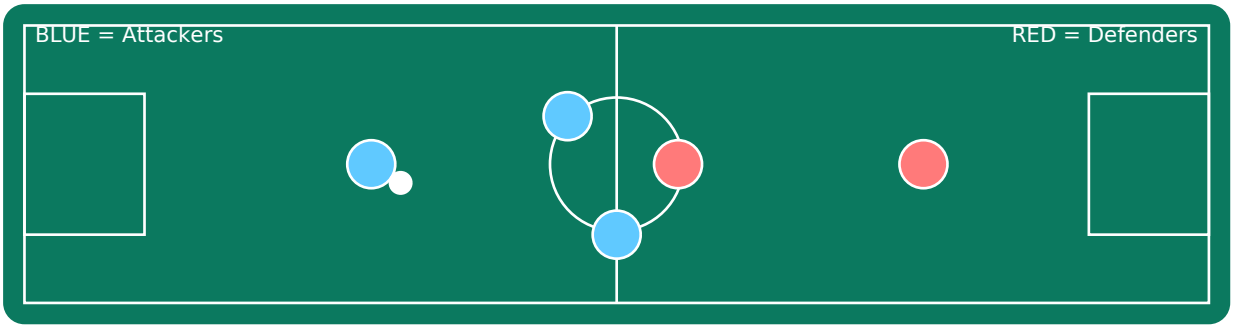
Player ownership: Ask short questions, limit interruptions and promote experimentation.

2 / Three tactical diagrams

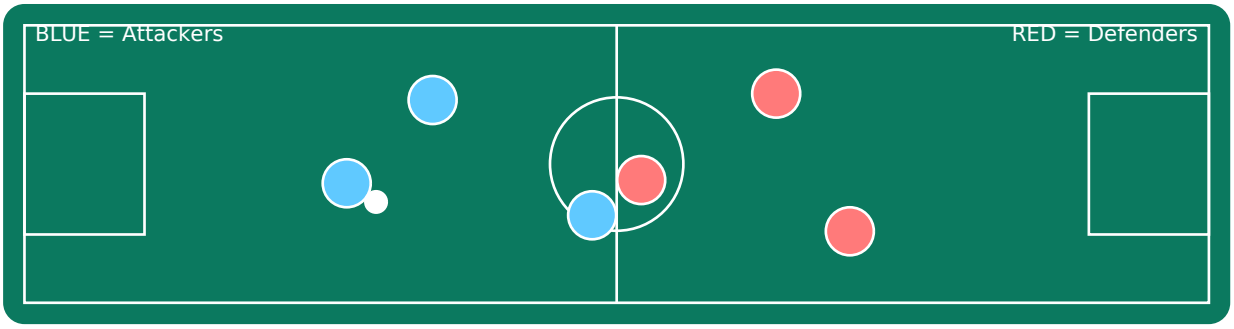
Open passing angle



2v1: draw and release



Transition: pressure with cover



3 / Twenty detailed football intelligence drills

01. Space Detectives (U6-U8 | 10 min | 6-14 players | 20 x 20 m)

Objective: Look up and find unoccupied space

Set-up: Every player has a ball; scatter coloured cone gates.

How to play: Dribble through any open gate; avoid crowds. Change direction after a gate.

Coach asks: Where was the empty space?

Progression: Call out a gate colour after players lift their heads.

Adaptation: Reduce area only if players can still avoid collisions.

02. Two-Goal Choices (U6-U8 | 12 min | 4-12 players | 18 x 24 m)

Objective: Choose between two scoring targets

Set-up: 2v2 in channels, two mini-goals at each attacking end.

How to play: Attack either goal; restart fast when out.

Coach asks: Which goal was easier to reach?

Progression: Add a defender who shifts toward one goal.

Adaptation: Use 3v3 if numbers require; keep frequent ball contact.

03. Colour-Gate Scan (U6-U8 | 10 min | 6-16 players | 20 x 20 m)

Objective: Combine ball control and visual attention

Set-up: Four coloured gates and one ball each.

How to play: Coach shows a colour card; player identifies and dribbles to that gate.

Coach asks: When did you see the colour?

Progression: Let players choose between two matching gates.

Adaptation: Use larger gates, not extra rules, for beginners.

04. Pass-and-Find (U6-U8 | 12 min | 6-12 players | 18 x 18 m)

Objective: Move into a passing angle

Set-up: Teams of three share one ball, no opposition first.

How to play: Pass and move to create a new triangle; progress to 3v1.

Coach asks: Can your teammate see you?

Progression: Introduce one passive defender.

Adaptation: Use walking pressure initially.

05. Three-Gate Adventure (U6-U8 | 12 min | 6-12 players | 24 x 18 m)

Objective: Recognise open target space

Set-up: 3v3 with three scoring gates across the end line.

How to play: Score by dribbling or passing through an open gate.

Coach asks: What changed when a defender moved?

Progression: Award the same score for any gate; let choice emerge.

Adaptation: Short 2-minute rounds with rotation.

06. Check Shoulder, Receive (U9-U12 | 12 min | 6-12 players | 20 x 15 m)

Objective: Link scanning and first touch

Set-up: Three passers, one central receiver, one live defender.

How to play: Receiver checks shoulder before pass and turns or sets based on pressure.

Coach asks: What did you see before the ball arrived?

Progression: Defender varies press timing.

Adaptation: Reduce pressure if receiver is overloaded.

07. 3v2 Advantage Lab (U9-U12 | 15 min | 5-15 players | 28 x 20 m)

Objective: Pass, carry or finish at the right moment

Set-up: 3 attackers against 2 defenders toward one goal, rotate roles.

How to play: Attack quickly; defender restarts counter toward halfway gates.

Coach asks: What did the defender commit to?

Progression: Vary where the defenders start.

Adaptation: Play 2v1 for less experienced groups.

08. Four-Goal Compass (U9-U12 | 15 min | 6-16 players | 25 x 25 m)

Objective: Switch target when blocked

Set-up: 3v3 or 4v4, four small goals near corners.

How to play: Each team can score in two opposite goals.

Coach asks: Where did the space open?

Progression: Move to 4v4 with a neutral player.

Adaptation: Keep simple rules and frequent restarts.

09. Turn or Set (U9-U12 | 12 min | 6-12 players | 18 x 15 m)

Objective: Receive according to pressure

Set-up: A passes to B; defender approaches from behind; C supports B.

How to play: B chooses to turn or set back to C; roles rotate.

Coach asks: What told you to turn or set?

Progression: Add a second defender and two exit gates.

Adaptation: Use semi-active defenders first.

10. Move After the Pass (U9-U12 | 12 min | 6-14 players | 22 x 20 m)

Objective: Create next passing option

Set-up: 3v3 plus two neutral outside players.

How to play: After a pass players should seek a useful new angle; no forced one-touch.

Coach asks: Where could you help next?

Progression: Remove neutrals as decisions improve.

Adaptation: Praise useful movement, not movement for its own sake.

11. Directional Rondo (U13-U15 | 15 min | 8-12 players | 24 x 16 m)

Objective: Scan for exit players

Set-up: 5v3 possession with one target at each end.

How to play: Connect through pressure to find the other end target.

Coach asks: What information did you need before receiving?

Progression: Reduce space or vary target movement.

Adaptation: Start with 5v2 if success is low.

12. Third-Player Release (U13-U15 | 16 min | 8-14 players | 30 x 22 m)

Objective: Use third-player support

Set-up: 4 attackers and 3 defenders with two end gates.

How to play: Progress through a teammate to release a third runner into space.

Coach asks: Who moved while the pass travelled?

Progression: Allow defenders to score on regain.

Adaptation: Demonstrate just one combination before play.

13. Press or Recover (U13-U15 | 18 min | 8-14 players | 30 x 25 m)

Objective: Read transition situations

Set-up: 4v4 plus two outside support players, two small goals.

How to play: On loss, decide whether nearby pressure is possible or recover centrally.

Coach asks: When was an immediate press realistic?

Progression: Add a 5-second bonus for a successful regain (not mandatory).

Adaptation: Keep transitions short and rotate rest.

14. Pressing Trigger Hunt (U13-U15 | 18 min | 10-16 players | 35 x 28 m)

Objective: Recognise poor touch and back-pass cues

Set-up: 5v5 directional with an end-zone target player.

How to play: Defenders agree a press signal; attack uses realistic build-up.

Coach asks: Which cue helped you press together?

Progression: Vary touch restrictions only for advanced groups.

Adaptation: Remove scoring bonus if players become reckless.

15. Blind-Side Arrival (U13-U15 | 16 min | 8-16 players | 30 x 25 m)

Objective: Arrive in space at the right time

Set-up: 4v4 plus 2 neutral players in wide lanes.

How to play: Attackers time movement behind defenders to receive.

Coach asks: When did the defender stop seeing you?

Progression: Allow inside neutral rotations.

Adaptation: Explain offside only if relevant to age and setup.

16. Midfield Scan Map (U16-Senior | 18 min | 10-14 players | 34 x 28 m)

Objective: Receive with a plan under pressure

Set-up: 6v4 possession: two central receivers and four support options.

How to play: Score by receiving centrally and playing out into another zone.

Coach asks: Where was the nearest pressure?

Progression: Vary press height and receiver roles.

Adaptation: Increase width or reduce defenders as needed.

17. Escape the High Press (U16-Senior | 20 min | 12-18 players | Half pitch)

Objective: Find the free player in build-up

Set-up: 6 attackers incl. goalkeeper vs 5 pressers; two halfway gates.

How to play: Build out to a gate; pressers counter toward goal on regain.

Coach asks: Where did the press leave free space?

Progression: Change pressing shape every round.

Adaptation: Keep goalkeeper inclusion optional.

18. Counterpress or Compact (U16-Senior | 20 min | 12-16 players | 40 x 35 m)

Objective: Coordinate transition decisions

Set-up: 6v6 plus support players with two goals.

How to play: On turnover, identify immediate regain or compact recovery.

Coach asks: Who covered behind the press?

Progression: Change score/time scenarios.

Adaptation: Provide recovery intervals and manage intensity.

19. Final-Third Decision Lab (U16-Senior | 20 min | 10-16 players | 38 x 30 m)

Objective: Compare shot, through ball and wide pass

Set-up: 5 attackers vs 4 defenders with goalkeeper.

How to play: Attack goal; defence transitions to two counter gates.

Coach asks: What made that option high value?

Progression: Limit number of attackers or adjust width.

Adaptation: Keep unopposed finish as a brief warm-up only.

20. Scoreline Intelligence (U16-Senior | 20 min | 14-20 players | 50 x 40 m)

Objective: Adapt choices to game state

Set-up: 7v7 or 8v8 with 3-minute mini-matches.

How to play: Coach gives realistic scenarios: draw, late lead, one goal down.

Coach asks: How did the score change your risk?

Progression: Let players create their own game-management rules.

Adaptation: Avoid excessively tactical constraints for novices.

4 / Three ready-to-run sessions

U6-U8 / 60 minutes

Time	Activity
10 min	Space Detectives
12 min	Two-Goal Choices
12 min	Colour-Gate Scan
20 min	3v3 play in short rounds
6 min	Player reflection and transitions

Coach focus: One cue only: Where was the free space?

U9-U12 / 75 minutes

Time	Activity
10 min	Ball mastery with visual cues
12 min	Check Shoulder, Receive
15 min	3v2 Advantage Lab
15 min	Four-Goal Compass
18 min	4v4 match with quick restarts
5 min	Reflection

Coach focus: Praise both the decision and the attempt.

U13-Senior / 90 minutes

Time	Activity
10 min	Dynamic ball warm-up
15 min	Directional Rondo
20 min	Press or Recover / Counterpress or Compact
20 min	Third-Player Release / Final-Third Decision Lab
20 min	Game-state match
5 min	Reflection

Coach focus: Coordinate individual perception with collective organisation.

5 / Four-week progression

Week	Focus	Coaching action
1	See the picture	Introduce scanning and body orientation
2	Find the option	Use directional small-sided games and passing lanes
3	Adapt to opponents	Vary pressing, cover and transition situations
4	Transfer to matches	Observe decisions, reflect and repeat weaker scenarios

6 / Thirty-day player challenge

Day 1: Find space before receiving

Day 2: Try two different passing angles

Day 3: Look over shoulder during a game

Day 4: Move after passing

Day 5: Watch a player off the ball

Day 6: Make a pressing decision

Day 7: Replay a 2v1

Day 8: Reflect on a choice

Day 9: Spot an open goal

Day 10: Play a 3v3 transition

Day 11: Ask a teammate what they saw

Day 12: Analyse a midfield receiving action

Day 13: Try an open-body first touch

Day 14: Protect central space

Day 15: Review an intelligent mistake

Day 16: Find third-player support

Day 17: Change attacking direction

Day 18: Play with a score scenario

Day 19: Create width and depth

Day 20: Identify pressure before receiving

Day 21: Practice a disguise

Day 22: Observe defensive cover

Day 23: Try an overload game

Day 24: Choose pass or carry

Day 25: Play an opposition-led challenge

Day 26: Notice an off-ball run

Day 27: Review one mistake constructively

Day 28: Repeat a favourite game

Day 29: Discuss the best option

Day 30: Celebrate progress

7 / Fifteen coaching dilemmas

1. Players do not scan

Question: How can the exercise require noticing pressure before receiving?

Possible response: Play 3v3 with a receiver who chooses between two goals. Pause once, ask what they saw, then play on.

2. Best dribbler loses possession

Question: How can we protect creativity without praising every choice?

Possible response: Reward recognising when to dribble, protect or pass; review one example.

3. Too much coach talk

Question: Is the intervention more valuable than another two minutes of play?

Possible response: Use short questions and coach individuals while the game continues.

4. Unequal playing levels

Question: How can all players face appropriate challenges?

Possible response: Change opposition pressure, pitch width and role, rather than labelling children.

5. Everyone follows the ball

Question: What constraints make space away from the ball useful?

Possible response: Use two scoring goals and praise scanning for the free one.

6. Slow transitions

Question: What action should follow a turnover?

Possible response: Restart repeated 3v3 transition games with clear direction.

7. Defenders press alone

Question: What tells players they have cover?

Possible response: Play 4v4 with scoring for collective regain, then discuss cover.

8. Technical mistakes after good ideas

Question: How do you separate decision quality and execution?

Possible response: Praise seeing the option and add technical repetition in context.

9. Parents coach from sidelines

Question: What can parents say that preserves autonomy?

Possible response: Share a team principle: encourage, do not instruct every action.

10. A player never turns

Question: How can body orientation become meaningful?

Possible response: Use a live defender behind receiver and a forward target.

11. Players avoid risk

Question: When is experimentation safe and valuable?

Possible response: Create short rounds in which creative attempts are recognised.

12. The rondo is too predictable

Question: Does it look like the game situation?

Possible response: Add direction, variable pressure and changing targets.

13. Players struggle in matches

Question: Is the training representative enough?

Possible response: Increase realistic opponents and transitions rather than just drill speed.

14. Too many rules

Question: Which rule contributes to the objective?

Possible response: Remove unnecessary restrictions; keep one clear challenge.

15. A child needs more time

Question: What adjustment keeps the activity inclusive?

Possible response: Increase space, reduce pressure, provide more repetitions and check enjoyment.

8 / Printable player observation sheet

Date: _____ Group: _____ Session theme: _____

Player	Looks before?	Useful option?	Next action / note

Observe useful scanning, option selection and recovery after mistakes. Record what happened rather than assigning an intelligence label.

9 / Printable player reflection card

One thing I noticed before receiving: _____

A decision that worked well: _____

A choice I would like to try again: _____

One thing my coach can help me practise: _____

10 / Sources and FINTER

FIFA Training Centre - Karl Aksum on scanning: https://www.fifatrainingcentre.com/en/environment/science-explained/high-performance/play/karl-aksum-scanning.php

FIFA Training Centre - Scanning activity in elite youth football players: https://www.fifatrainingcentre.com/en/environment/research-brief/high-performance/play/aksum-scanning.php

The FA - Spotlight on receiving: https://www.thefa.com/bootroom/resources/coaching/spotlight-on-receiving

The FA - Take a picture: https://www.thefa.com/bootroom/resources/coaching/take-a-picture

FINTER: https://finter.dk