FREE PLAYER WORKBOOK

6-WEEK PRE-SEASON TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SOCCER



A football training plan for the weeks before your first competitive match.

THE SIX-WEEK COUNTDOWN

Fit your individual work around club training, adjust when a friendly is added and take one clear coaching cue into the opening game.

06
weekly plans

03
drill diagrams

02
printable logs

01 / BEFORE WEEK ONE

Start with your next fixture

Write down your first competitive match. Count back six weeks. The dates of your club sessions and friendlies come next.



A NOTE FROM ALICANTE

At Alicante Football Academy, our players train with the academy and may also train with a local club. An extra workout has to fit around both.

Use this guide with your coach. It gives you a ball session you can do alone, a second option for a free weekend, and a way to change the week when a fixture appears.

FIND YOUR PAGE / TAP A ROW TO JUMP

03–04	**Plan your week and warm up**	›
05–10	**Follow the six weekly training plans**	›
11–13	**Set up the drills and practise the movement**	›
14–16	**Adjust for a friendly, playing time or age**	›
17–18	**Print the weekly planner and six-week tracker**	›

WHO CAN USE IT?

The timed examples suit healthy older youth and adult outfield players already training. Page 16 gives younger players an adult-led games option. If you are returning from injury, follow your clinician’s plan.

02 / PLANNING THE BLOCK

Build your six-week calendar

Set the fixture dates first. A is an optional technical session. B is an optional field session for a Saturday without a match.

Week	Football focus	What to look for
01	Find your starting touch	Score ten controlled first touches.
02	Move after the pass	Give the receiver a new angle.
03	Look before you receive	Find the open gate early.
04	Take a touch under pressure	Turn away from a defender.
05	Rehearse your match action	Recognise it in a game.
06	Prepare for the first match	Retest and select one cue.

EXAMPLE RHYTHM / TWO CLUB SESSIONS

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
A	**Club**	**Rest**	**Club**	**Rest**	**B / Match**	**Rest**

Write in your actual team days, including gym sessions. If the club covers the same work, shorten or remove the extra. A friendly replaces B. In a busy week, keep only the club sessions.

> **TRAINING ALONE BEFORE YOUR CLUB RETURNS?**
>
> Begin with the two listed days. In weeks 2–5, an accustomed player can agree a third easy midweek session: 6 minutes to warm up, 8 minutes of passing, 8 minutes of easy dribble/walk intervals and a 2-minute walk. Leave a free day either side.

Kit for the block: one ball, four flat markers, a watch, water and a safe wall or a partner. Team activities also need teammates, bibs and a coach.

03 / SESSION SETUP

Use a six-minute warm-up

This opening is included in each timed A and B session. Prepare on a clear, level surface with enough space to slow down.

Minutes	What to do
0–2	Walk, then jog easily. Add relaxed sideways steps in both directions.
2–4	Move through ankle rocks, easy squats and walking knee lifts. Start each movement gently.
4–6	Dribble with both feet. Add two gradual build-ups across a short lane, then walk back.



Take longer if you still feel stiff or unprepared, especially before faster work. In hot conditions, choose a cooler time, pause for water and shorten the session as needed.

RPE / RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION · SCORE THE WHOLE SESSION FROM 0 TO 10

Effort	What it should feel like
2–3 · Easy	Breathing is comfortable. You can talk normally.
4–5 · Moderate	Breathing is quicker. You can still speak in sentences.
6–7 · Hard	You need breaks between efforts. A demanding team session or match may feel like this or harder.

> **ON THE DAY**
>
> Use the numbers as a guide. If you have pain, feel dizzy or unwell, stop and tell your coach or a responsible adult.

WEEK / 01

Find your starting touch

Set a first-touch score you can repeat before your opening fixture.



MONDAY / OPTIONAL A — 20 MIN · RPE 3/10

First-touch check

One clean touch through a 1 m exit gate.

01 6 min warm-up. Set out the two gates on page 11. Allow 5 min for the check.
02 From 3 m, pass to the wall. Take 5 first touches per foot through its gate. Score out of 10.
03 7 min relaxed passing and receiving, switching feet. Finish with 2 min walking.

Coach's cue · Set your feet before the ball returns. Keep the same layout for week 6.

FREE SATURDAY / OPTIONAL B — 22 MIN · RPE 3–4/10

Move with the ball

Carry the ball at a pace that lets you look up.

01 6 min warm-up. Mark a 12 m lane with room to turn at each end.
02 8 min: alternate 1 min easy dribbling with 1 min walking. Turn using either foot.
03 6 min: alternate 1 min easy jogging with 1 min walking. Walk for another 2 min.

Coach's cue · Glance up between touches and slow down before you turn.

FIT THIS TO YOUR CLUB WEEK

If club training has already restarted after a break, begin with A only.

Use four markers for the two gates. If you train alone, leave the days between sessions free.

> **WEEKLY REVIEW**
> Which foot sent more returns cleanly through the gate?

WEEK / 02

Move after the pass

After releasing the ball, find an angle that makes the return pass easier.



MONDAY / OPTIONAL A — 24 MIN · RPE 3–4/10

Pass and change angle

Move sideways to give the next pass a clear line.

01 6 min warm-up. Set two markers 2 m apart, about 3 m from a wall.

02 8 min: angle your pass off the wall to the other marker. Move there to receive. Switch sides.

03 8 min: alternate 1 min of slow squats and calf raises with 1 min of rest. Walk 2 min.

Coach's cue · Finish your pass, then move early enough to face the return.

FREE SATURDAY / OPTIONAL B — 24 MIN · RPE 4/10

Carry through a gate

Use one longer touch when you see open space.

01 6 min warm-up. Place two 1 m gates about 10 m apart.

02 8 min: dribble through both gates and walk back. Change your leading foot each turn.

03 8 min: alternate 1 min of easy running with 1 min walking. Finish with a 2 min walk.

Coach's cue · Keep the ball near your foot at the gate. Push it further ahead between gates.

FIT THIS TO YOUR CLUB WEEK

If Tuesday's club session includes strength work, drop Monday's squat and calf-raise block.

If a friend joins, use them in place of the wall and swap roles.

> **WEEKLY REVIEW**
>
> After passing, did you move soon enough to receive facing forward?

WEEK / 03

Look before you receive

Check the space around you before deciding where your first touch goes.



MONDAY / OPTIONAL A — 24 MIN · RPE 4/10

Scan and exit

Look away from the ball early and recover sight of it in time.

01 6 min warm-up. Set one exit gate to either side of your receiving spot.

02 8 min: look over one shoulder before each wall pass; receive through that side's gate.

03 8 min: with a partner, have them point to a gate before passing. Alone, alternate sides. Walk 2 min.

Coach's cue · Get your eyes back to the ball before it arrives.

FREE SATURDAY / OPTIONAL B — 26 MIN · RPE 4–5/10

First steps into space

Accelerate for a short distance, then slow down under control.

01 6 min warm-up. Leave at least 10 m clear beyond your finish marker for slowing down.

02 8 min: do up to 4 smooth 10 m starts. Walk back and wait until ready between runs.

03 10 min: pass to a wall, move and receive into space. Reset at walking pace. Walk 2 min.

Coach's cue · Use the clear space beyond the marker to slow down gradually.

FIT THIS TO YOUR CLUB WEEK

Use B only on a free Saturday. If Thursday included fast runs, skip B's starts.

Use two exits to vary your touch; ask a partner for a late signal if available.

WEEKLY REVIEW

What could you see before the ball arrived that changed your next touch?

WEEK / 04

Take a touch under pressure

Read the defender's position and use your first touch to find the open side.



MONDAY / OPTIONAL A — 26 MIN · RPE 4/10

Protect and turn

Keep your body between the ball and a defender.

01 6 min warm-up. Set two gates 4 m apart and start between them.

02 9 min: receive a wall pass, shield from an imagined defender and turn through either gate.

03 9 min: a partner shadows one side as you turn. Alone, switch the shield side each rep. Walk 2 min.

Coach's cue · Take the first touch on the foot furthest from pressure.

FREE SATURDAY / OPTIONAL B — 26 MIN · RPE 5/10

Change pace and exit

Change speed once you have beaten or passed a defender.

01 6 min warm-up. Put a marker 5 m ahead and an exit gate 5 m beyond it.

02 8 min: approach with the ball, feint at the marker and carry through the gate. Walk back.

03 10 min: add a shadow defender or vary your approach side. Rest between turns. Walk 2 min.

Coach's cue · Make your change of pace after the feint, when space opens.

FIT THIS TO YOUR CLUB WEEK

A Saturday friendly takes the place of B. Record your minutes after the final whistle.

If you have a partner, swap the ball carrier and defender every turn.

> **WEEKLY REVIEW**
>
> Which first touch let you protect the ball and still play forward?

WEEK / 05

Rehearse your match action

Choose one action you expect to use in your position and rehearse it at game speed.



MONDAY / OPTIONAL A — 22 MIN · RPE 3–4/10

Receive for your role

Choose a target that represents your next pass in a game.

01 6 min warm-up. Place a receiving marker 3 m from a wall and a target gate to one side.

02 7 min: pass, scan and receive. Play through the gate as if finding a teammate.

03 7 min: put the target on the other side. Repeat with the opposite foot. Walk 2 min.

Coach's cue · A winger can take the touch down the line; a midfielder can open towards the far side.

FREE SATURDAY / OPTIONAL B — 22 MIN · RPE 4–5/10

Receive and break away

Connect one clean touch to a short change of pace.

01 6 min warm-up. Mark a 10 m lane with space to slow down beyond the end.

02 6 min: do up to 3 smooth 10 m starts. Walk back and wait until ready between efforts.

03 8 min: receive from a wall or partner, carry 5 m and pass through a gate. Walk back. Walk 2 min to finish.

Coach's cue · If the first touch gets away, reset and repeat with a shorter touch.

FIT THIS TO YOUR CLUB WEEK

If your club has two fixtures this week, use those as the football work and drop both extras.

Ask a partner to feed from a new angle or vary your position beside the wall.

> **WEEKLY REVIEW**
>
> When did your chosen action appear in training or in a friendly?

WEEK / 06

Prepare for the first match

Repeat your opening check and take one familiar cue into the first fixture.



MONDAY / OPTIONAL A — 18 MIN · RPE 3/10

Repeat your first-touch check

Compare 10 passes under the same conditions as week 1.

01 6 min warm-up. Use the same ball, surface, 3 m wall distance and 1 m exit gate as week 1.

02 5 min check: send each return through the gate with one touch. Try 5 per foot; score out of 10.

03 5 min easy passing. Practise one touch you want to use on matchday. Walk for 2 min.

Coach's cue · Compare each foot. Choose one touch to take into the game.

MATCHDAY / TEAM FIXTURE — COACH-LED · MATCHDAY

First competitive fixture

Apply one skill you have already rehearsed.

01 Before kick-off, follow the team warm-up and pick one cue for your position.

02 When your moment comes, scan before receiving and direct your first touch into space.

03 After the match, log minutes played, effort and one example to review with your coach.

Coach's cue · One clear example from the match gives you a starting point for next week.

FIT THIS TO YOUR CLUB WEEK

Move matchday to your actual fixture date. Let your coach set the final team sessions.

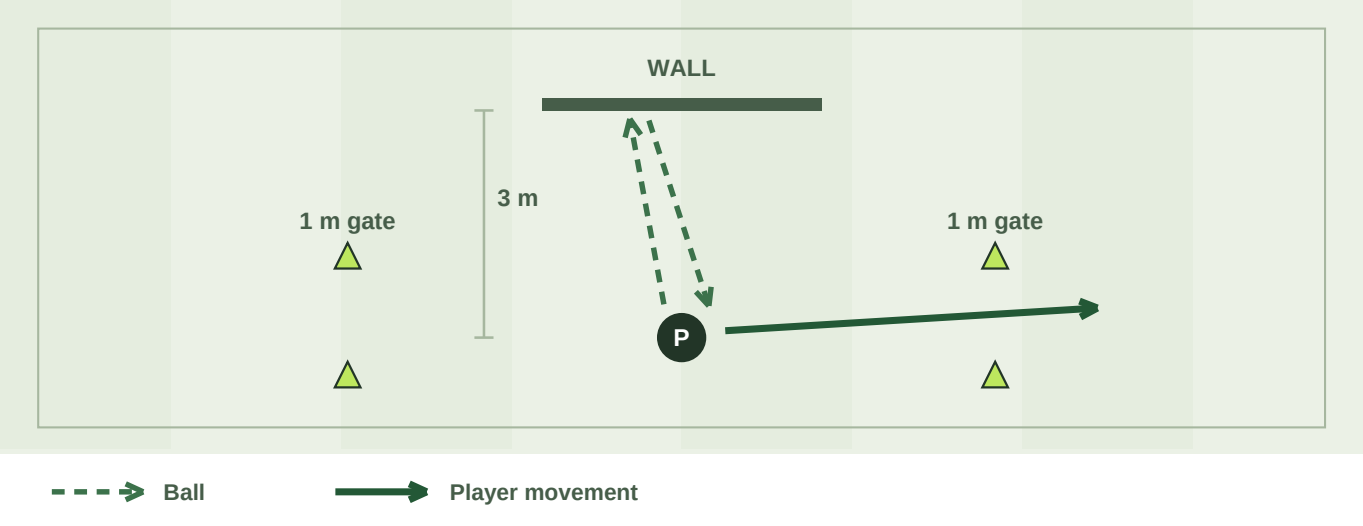
If the match moves, keep the date free or agree a light technical session with your coach.

> **WEEKLY REVIEW**
>
> When did you use your first touch to create a better next pass?

DRILL BOARD 01 / ONE PLAYER OR A PAIR

Score your first touch

Use the same setup in weeks 1 and 6. The score tells you which foot and direction to practise next.



Set up	How to run the check
Markers	Start 3 m from a safe wall. Make a 1 m gate on each side, about one stride from your starting spot.
10 attempts	Pass firmly to the wall. Receive with the right foot through the right gate five times. Repeat with the left foot through the left gate. Reset between attempts.
1 point	Count a point when your first touch sends the ball between the markers and you can reach it with your next step. A second touch before the gate scores zero.
Retest	Repeat the same order, ball, surface, gate positions and wall distance. A partner may feed instead. Keep that same feed for both checks.

YOUR RECORD

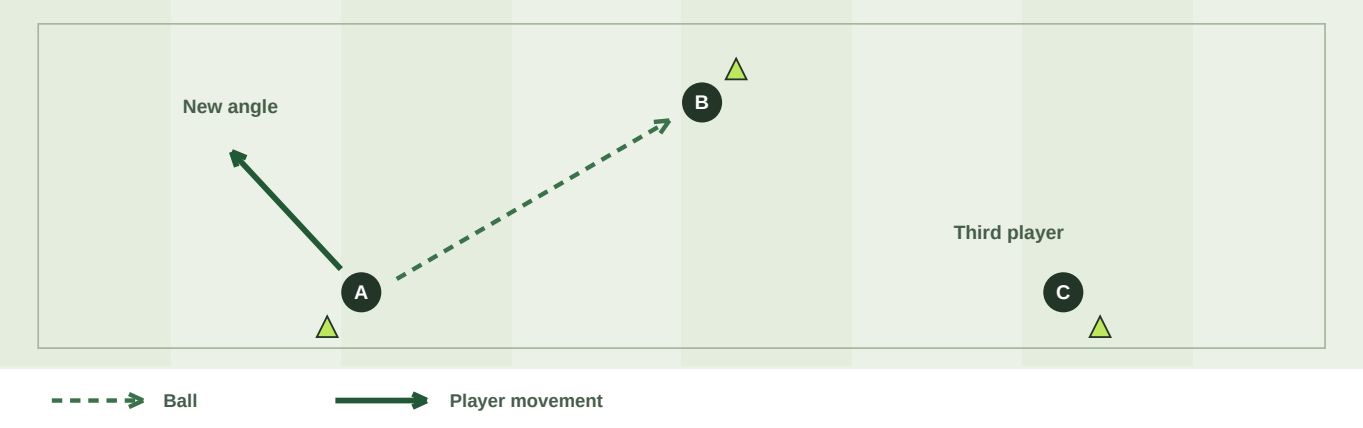
Write right foot __ / 5 and left foot __ / 5 on the weekly planner. Put the combined score __ / 10 on the tracker on page 18.

DRILL BOARDS 02 + 03 / GROUP OPTIONS

Add a teammate, then pressure

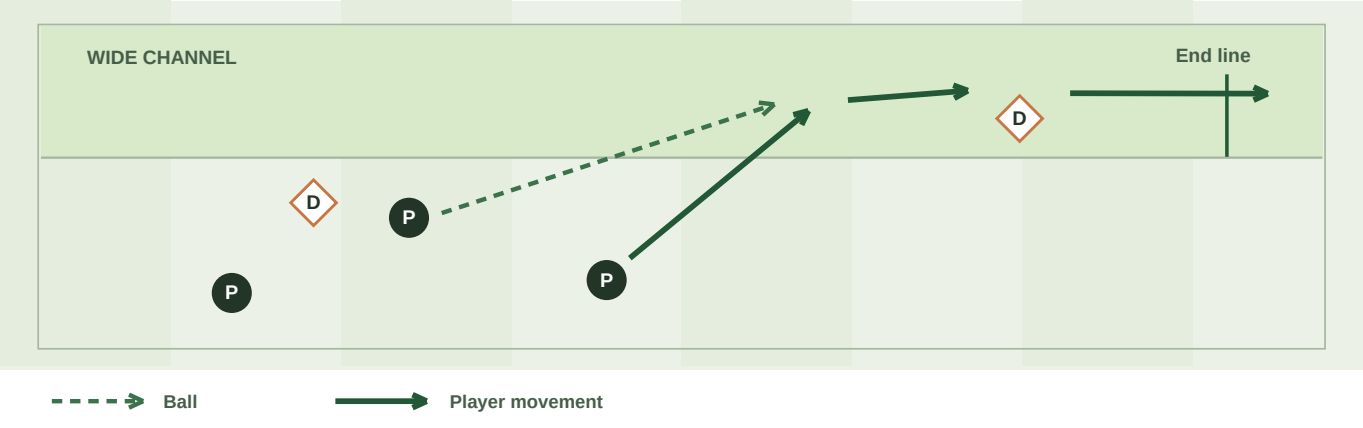
Use these games during a coach-led practice when players are available. They can replace the related technical work that week.

02 / A NEW PASSING ANGLE • WEEKS 2–3



Three players, one ball, three cones about 6 m apart. A passes to B and moves sideways to offer a return. B chooses A or C. Keep the ball moving for 90 seconds, then rotate starting positions. Try two rounds with a break.

03 / RELEASE INTO THE WIDE CHANNEL • WEEKS 4–5



Play 3v1 in the main space with a second defender waiting wide. Start in a 16 × 12 m area with a 3 m channel. After three passes, a runner enters the channel to receive. Beat the wide defender and dribble across the end line for a point.

> **COACH'S ADJUSTMENT**
>
> Rotate defenders after each attack. If the pass rarely reaches the runner, widen the channel or allow an earlier release.

FIELD NOTES / MOVEMENT AND STRENGTH

First steps and simple strength

Use these cues in the sessions that call for them. The minutes in the weekly plan already include the exercise.



ACCELERATION / WEEKS 3 AND 5

Mark a 10 m lane and leave another 10 m clear to slow down. After warming up, start upright in a split stance. Push away and let the first few steps build speed.

Walk back, take the time you need and start again when you can move smoothly. Stop the set if your steps become heavy or you cannot slow down in control.

BODYWEIGHT PAIR / WEEK 2, SESSION A

Exercise	How to do it
Squat	Use a stable chair as a target. Stand with feet comfortably apart, sit back towards the seat and stand up smoothly. Use a smaller range if needed.
Calf raise	Hold a stable support. Lift both heels, pause briefly, then lower them slowly. Keep the pressure even across both feet.

USE THE WORK MINUTE AS A WINDOW

Try 4–6 comfortable repetitions of each movement during the work minute in Week 2 A. Rest for any time left and take the full recovery minute.

WORKED EXAMPLE / WEEK 04

A friendly lands on Saturday

Your club trains on Tuesday and Thursday. Compare the same week before and after a friendly is announced.

Day	No weekend fixture	Saturday friendly added
Mon	Optional A. Practise this week’s first touch and movement.	Keep A if you feel ready and your coach agrees.
Tue	Club training. Use your weekly coaching cue.	Club training. Confirm the friendly and your expected role.
Wed	Rest or an easy walk.	Rest or an easy walk.
Thu	Club training. Record how hard it felt.	Club training. Follow the team’s pre-match plan.
Fri	Rest. Set out your cones for Saturday.	Rest. Check the meeting time and pack your kit.
Sat	Optional B if you feel ready. Use the Week 4 instructions.	Play the friendly instead of B. Record your actual minutes.
Sun	Recovery. Note one action you want to repeat.	Recovery. Tell your coach how much you played and how it felt.

WHAT CHANGED?

The friendly takes Saturday’s place. Leave Friday and Sunday free of the displaced session. If the club adds another practice, revisit Monday’s optional work too.

TRY IT IN YOUR OWN WEEK

Circle the first fixed club date on your planner. Cross out any individual session that would repeat the same work.

AFTER THE FRIENDLY

Same fixture, different minutes

Two teammates followed the same club week. Their next step depends on their minutes, how they feel and what the coach has scheduled.



PLAYER 01 / 15 MINUTES

You came on late, made two runs behind the full-back and felt fresh at full time. Sunday stays a recovery day. Ask the coach what the substitutes have planned before choosing Monday’s work.

PLAYER 02 / 75 MINUTES

You played most of the game and your legs feel heavy. Tell your coach. In this example, you leave Monday’s optional session out and review how you feel before Tuesday’s team training.

These are two possible decisions. A short appearance can still feel demanding, especially after a busy training week.

TWO QUESTIONS BEFORE ADDING WORK

Ask your coach	Choose a route
1. Is a club session or another fixture already scheduled?	Yes. Put it in the calendar first. Keep the team’s recovery or extra work as agreed. Otherwise, go to question 2.
2. Have you recovered and is there room for optional work?	Yes. Pick the session that fits your next football goal. If you feel unusually tired or sore, skip the extra session and check in.

MY NEXT SESSION AGREED WITH THE COACH

CHOOSE YOUR VERSION

Fit the plan to the player

The weekly A and B sessions are examples for players used to structured football. Change the game, equipment and time to suit the person using it.

Your situation	A practical way to take part
Young children	With an adult coach, play 2v2 to two wide gates. Score by dribbling through either gate under control. Keep turns short, swap teams and pause for water or rest when needed.
Newer youth player	Start with a wider receiving gate. Allow an extra touch. With a coach, try one short round and decide whether the next round would still look controlled.
Adult returning after a break	Begin with one brief, easy ball session if it fits the week. Shorten the planned rounds and walk between them. Review how you feel the next day before adding another session.
Full club week	Mark practices, gym sessions and fixtures first. If they cover the same actions as A or B, cross the extra session out. A week with no individual extras still counts.

SAME FIRST TOUCH, DIFFERENT SETUPS

Available	Try this
Alone	Pass against a safe wall and receive into a gate. With no wall, roll the ball ahead, catch up and guide it through one of two gates.
With a partner	Have your partner serve the ball, then point to a free gate before it arrives. Look up early and take your first touch towards that gate.

Coming back from injury? Follow your clinician’s return-to-football plan and use these activities only when cleared.

PRINT ONE COPY PER WEEK

Plan the week you have

Enter club dates and your fixture first. Pencil in any optional sessions. After each day, record what you actually did and how hard it felt.

WEEK NUMBER _____ **WEEK BEGINNING** _____ **FIXTURE OR FRIENDLY** _____

Day	Club practice or fixture	Optional session or recovery	Actual minutes	Effort out of 10
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

If you train twice in one day, separate the two entries with a slash. Count only the minutes you spend on the pitch during a match.

ONE ACTION I WANT TO USE IN A GAME

ONE ADJUSTMENT MY COACH AND I AGREED

PRINT AND KEEP

Your six-week training record

Use your weekly planners to complete one row each week. A note about the first touch, pass or run you tried will help you remember the football behind the numbers.

PLAYER

FIRST COMPETITIVE FIXTURE

Week	Training minutes	Match minutes	Hardest effort /10	One action I tried or change I made
01				
02				
03				
04				
05				
06				

Training minutes include club and individual sessions. Keep friendly and competitive match minutes in the match column. For effort, use the highest session rating you logged that week.

FIRST-TOUCH CHECK / SAME WALL, GATES AND DISTANCE

Record clean exits out of ten, with five attempts on each foot. If your setup changes, note it beside the score.

WEEK 1 / 10

WEEK 6 / 10

SETUP NOTE

ONE ACTION I WILL TAKE INTO THE OPENING MATCH



AFTER YOUR OPENING FIXTURE

What did you see in the game?

Pick one moment you can describe: where you looked, what your first touch did, and which pass became possible. Bring that moment to your next session.

CONTINUE TRAINING WITH AFA / TAP A RESOURCE

52-week football training plan
Choose your next block of individual work. ›

Soccer conditioning workouts
Plan gym and field work for a future off-season. ›

Pass-and-move football drills
Find a group practice for receiving and supporting. ›

Train with us in Alicante
See how our players combine academy sessions and club football. ›

Coaching references: England Football Learning, How coaches can plan for football training (2024), and Pre-season football training for young players (Pete Sturgess). Research background: Azcárate et al., Variation in weekly internal training load in professional soccer players (2025).