



**OUTPUT**

# ***DRIVING INTENT IN FOOTBALL TRAINING***

Strategies To Maximise Your Training Environment And Get  
The Most Out Of Your Players

**292**  
PERFORMANCE

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## INTRODUCTION:

In the fast-paced and highly competitive world of football, success is often attributed to the players' physical prowess, technical skills, and tactical understanding. However, there is a crucial element that underlies all these aspects and has the potential to take performance to new heights: **intent**. In this ebook, we delve into the concept of driving intent in football and explore its significance in maximising physical preparation for elite and high-level players. By understanding and harnessing intent, coaches, players, and enthusiasts can unlock the true potential of their training sessions and elevate their performance on the pitch.

We uncover the key principles and strategies to structure training sessions effectively. My extensive experience in working with professional footballers enables me to shed light on the limited time and opportunity for physical preparation that athletes face. By emphasising **specificity and intensity** in training, players can optimise their adaptation and ensure that every minute spent in preparation contributes to their on-field success.

One of the fundamental aspects of maximising physical preparation is structuring training sessions with precision. In this ebook, we explore the principles of teaching and learning in a gym-based environment, enabling coaches to choose exercises that elicit maximum output from their players. By understanding the spectrum of competition, from individual challenges to team-oriented exercises, coaches can create an

environment that fosters growth and improvement.

Promoting **accountability** is another critical aspect discussed in this ebook. We explore the challenge of maintaining accountability in a football environment and offers insights into utilising leaderboards and reports to ensure that players stay committed to their training goals. Moreover, leveraging data to identify areas for improvement not only enhances accountability but also enables players to make informed decisions about their training and performance.

Applying **intent and competition** at the club level is a key focus of this ebook. By completing prescribed work with intent, players can maximise the benefits of their training sessions and translate them into improved performance on the pitch. Furthermore, the use of biofeedback for technique reflection

and improvement enhances players' learning and engagement, enabling them to constantly evolve and refine their skills.

**Metrics and gamification** are explored as effective tools for creating competition and driving performance. Coaches will gain insights into the versatility of Output's metrics and learn how to adapt exercises and competitions to suit different skill levels. Periodisation of intensity and gamification in training cycles helps maintain motivation and optimise performance gains.

Integrating data for **injury rehabilitation** and performance enhancement is an area of increasing importance in football. By understanding the demands of the game and customizing training activities based on player profiles, coaches can reduce the risk of injuries and improve players' performance in meaningful actions on the pitch.

In conclusion, this ebook serves as a comprehensive guide to harnessing intent for success in football training. Whether you are a coach, player, or enthusiast, the insights shared will provide valuable guidance on how to structure training sessions, create competition, promote accountability and leverage data to enhance

performance. By embracing intent and incorporating these strategies into your football training, you can unlock the true potential of your abilities and elevate your performance to new heights on the pitch.

## ABOUT BEN:

Ben led the physical performance of the England men's pathway and the Senior Men's team to 2 World Cups (2018 & 2022) and 1 Euros (2020). Prior to this he physical prepared the GB & England Women's Hockey team to become Olympic & European Champions. He led the rehab science of the BOA and EIS , has a PhD in biomechanics and has coached in the PL and EFL. He is the founder of 292 Performance which provides high performance support to high performing people & teams. Ben can be contacted at [info@292performance.com](mailto:info@292performance.com) or follow him on X (Twitter) [@ben\\_rosenblatt](https://twitter.com/ben_rosenblatt).



# THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFICITY AND INTENSITY OF EFFORT

If we were to capture the problem, the time and opportunity for physical preparation in elite or high-level football is extremely limited. Therefore, the specificity and the intensity of work must be high enough to stimulate adaptation. Otherwise, you're wasting some of your training time and not being efficient. Demanding schedules and limited options for training make it essential to optimise the effectiveness of each session. Footballers have very limited time to actually prepare physically. They play a lot of games and have to travel. So, it's about trying to maximise the time they have to prepare them physically.

## ***Need for high specificity and intensity to stimulate adaptation:***

To make the most of the limited training time, we cannot ignore the importance of specificity and intensity. Players need to train in a way that directly prepares them for the most demanding events within the game. You want the training to be specific to the sport and the tasks the individual must complete to be successful.

By pushing the boundaries of effort and challenging players to reach their maximum potential, adaptation and improvement can be achieved.

As training time is limited, the intensity of effort for each repetition must be above the threshold which will stimulate an adaptive response. Additionally, the movement challenges we set, must prepare the tissues for the actions and tasks that they will need to deliver within the game.

There are two types of player. The first category consists of players who are still learning how to train effectively. For these players, it is paramount to gradually increase the training load and focus on fundamental movement skills.

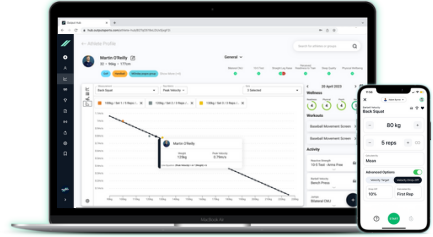
The second category includes players who have a solid training foundation. For these players, there is a need to introduce higher intensities and more challenging exercises to drive adaptation.

## ***Using feedback to teach intensity of effort and maximise output:***

Teaching players to train with the required intensity is a crucial aspect of maximising physical preparation.

Utilising feedback mechanisms to help players understand the effort they need to put in during training sessions is key. By providing real-time data and metrics, such as velocity-based training and reactive strength index, players can gauge

their effort and strive for optimal performance. We want to try to create an environment where players are competing against their own outputs, so they can see how hard they're working compared to what they've done before.



## STRUCTURING FOOTBALL TRAINING SESSIONS FOR MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY

When it comes to structuring training sessions for maximum efficiency, we must emphasise the importance of creating a conducive learning environment in the gym. We need to guarantee clear instructions and explanations that ensure the players understand the purpose and execution of each exercise. We have to be really clear with our communication, so players understand what they're doing, why they're doing it, and how to do it well.

As coaches, we should also be providing feedback during the learning process. By providing immediate feedback and correction, players can refine their technique and optimise their performance. To structure training sessions effectively, we must choose exercises that yield maximum output. We're looking for exercises that target the muscles and actions that are going to have the greatest demand placed on them during the

game. Furthermore, exercise selections means nothing without applied progressive overload. By gradually increasing the intensity or difficulty level over time, players can continue to challenge themselves and stimulate adaptation. In essence, we want to find exercises that we can gradually progress. So, starting with exercises that are at an appropriate level and then progressing them over time.

When structuring training sessions, I advocate for incorporating various levels of competition to promote engagement and accountability.



## ***LEVELS OF COMPETITION TO DRIVE MOTIVATION & ACCOUNTABILITY***

**Me vs. Me:** This form of competition involves players aiming to improve their own performance over time. This self-driven approach fosters a sense of personal growth and motivation. We want players to compete against themselves. So, we're trying to improve on what they've done before and set targets for themselves.

**Leaderboard:** Introducing a leaderboard system allows players to compete against each other while maintaining a friendly and supportive environment. If it is a general leaderboard with everybody on it, the intensity is great for the top 5-6, but if you are not in that top 5-6, interest drops. Output is really good because you can have multiple groups and leaderboards for the same activity and just group them differently. This can account for differences in skill level, body weight, etc.

**Me vs. You:** This type of competition adds an element of challenge and intensity to the training sessions where players go head to head. We can set up drills where players are competing against each other. It adds another layer of intensity and competitiveness to the session.

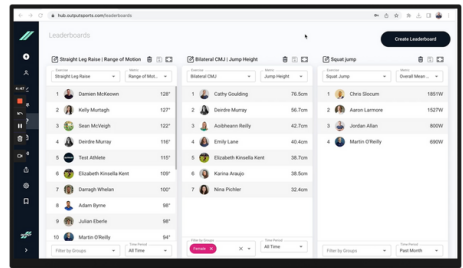
**Individual vs individual in a team vs team:** If I win I get a point for my team, if you win you get a point for your team. This is highly effective in creating competition. The intensity of effort is very high and the accountability is extremely high given that the players are performing to their best for the good of the team.



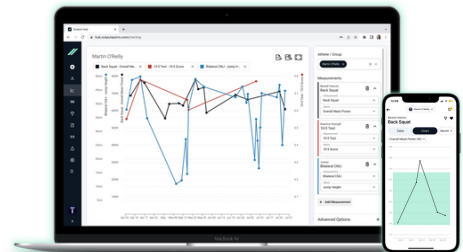
# ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY IN A FOOTBALL TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Accountability plays a crucial role in football training, but it can be challenging to establish and maintain. The football environment presents unique challenges due to its team-based nature. In such a dynamic and fast-paced sport, it's essential to find effective ways to hold players accountable for their training efforts and adherence to the program. To enhance accountability, I advocate for implementing leaderboards and reports. These tools provide a visual representation of individual and team performance, allowing players to track their progress and compare their results with others.

Additionally, reports can be generated to summarise individual and team performance over a specified period. These reports provide valuable feedback and enable players and coaches to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Reports can show players what they're doing well and where they need to improve. It's a way of holding them accountable for their performance.



Output's custom leaderboard feature **promotes healthy competition** amongst players and **drives intent through gamification**.



Instantly **visualise key trends** and compare set V set and athlete V athlete. **Share key KPIs with athletes, coaches and stakeholders** with one-click dynamic reporting.



## ***ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY IN A FOOTBALL TRAINING ENVIRONMENT***

Adherence to a strength training plan is one of the biggest challenges in professional football. I think if you're asking anyone in the clubs and asked how many players actually complete all of the prescribed work, a good club might say 70-80%. There are a lot of players that will go in and only complete one set instead of 3 and that lack of accountability may be one of the reasons. There are players who don't value that physical preparation environment as much as other aspects of their preparation as well.

At the club level in football, completing prescribed work and ensuring accountability are crucial aspects of player development. It is essential to establish clear expectations and guidelines for training sessions. We prescribe certain exercises or drills for players to complete. It's important for them to understand that they need to do the work assigned to them. To foster accountability, coaches and trainers must create an environment where players understand the importance of completing the prescribed work and take responsibility for their training.

In club-level football, utilising biofeedback can be a valuable tool for technique reflection and improvement. Biofeedback refers to the use of technology to provide real-time information about physiological responses during training or matches. Biofeedback devices, such as IMUs, help players understand their body's response and optimise their technique. When teaching and coaching someone how to reduce their contact times, you give them the coaching cues and you have tangible evidence of the outcome of the verbal cues that connect and resonate with the athlete. From a learning perspective, getting players to reflect on how they're delivering these types of performances is really useful. By incorporating biofeedback into training sessions, players can gain insights into their movement patterns, intensity levels, and overall performance. This information enables them to refine their technique, increase efficiency, and reduce the risk of injury.



Learning and engagement are essential elements in a football context, particularly at the club level. Creating an environment where players are actively involved in their development and have a thirst for knowledge is crucial for long-term success.

To achieve this, aim to incorporate various learning strategies, such as interactive discussions, video analysis, and practical demonstrations, to enhance player engagement. When players are engaged and actively learning, they are more likely to take ownership of their development and apply what they've learned on the field.

In addition to knowledge acquisition, coaches must foster a positive and supportive learning environment. Players need to feel comfortable making mistakes and taking risks. It's through these experiences that they can truly grow and develop as footballers.



## QUANTIFYING AND REDUCING THE COST OF ACTIONS

Understanding the specific demands of the game is crucial for effective training in football. Coaches and trainers need to assess the game demands, particularly focusing on braking and sprinting actions. Football involves various movements such as accelerating, decelerating, and changing direction. By assessing these actions, we can tailor training programs to better prepare players.

By analysing the game demands and identifying the key actions that players frequently perform, coaches can design training sessions that target specific physical qualities required for braking and sprinting actions. This approach ensures that players are adequately prepared for the dynamic nature of the game.

Quantifying exercises and monitoring the neuromuscular system play a vital role in optimising training outcomes and reducing the risk of injuries. Technology and data can allow coaches to track and measure various training parameters. By quantifying exercises, such as measuring force production or analysing movement patterns, we can gain insights into the neuromuscular system's response to training. This information allows coaches and trainers to make data-

driven decisions, individualise training programs, and identify potential areas for improvement.

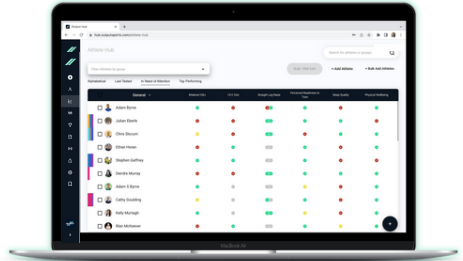
Quantification helps in monitoring fatigue levels, tracking progress, and identifying any imbalances or asymmetries that may increase the risk of injuries. By closely monitoring the neuromuscular system, coaches can make informed decisions about adjusting training loads, managing recovery, and optimising performance.

Reducing the risk of recurring injuries is a critical aspect of player welfare and performance. It is paramount to identify activities that may increase the likelihood of recurring injuries and taking appropriate measures to mitigate those risks.

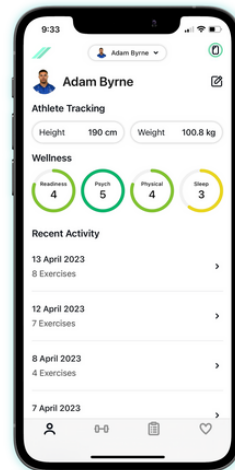
By analysing injury history and closely monitoring players during training sessions, we can identify activities that may place excessive stress on vulnerable areas. This knowledge enables coaches and trainers to modify or substitute certain exercises or movements to minimise the risk of recurring injuries.

Players need to communicate any discomfort or previous injury concerns to the medical staff and coaching staff. This information allows us to make informed decisions about training modifications or interventions.

By proactively identifying and addressing activities that may increase the risk of recurring injuries, coaches and trainers can create a safer training environment and support players' long-term health and performance.



*Assess readiness and recovery to avoid overtraining. Automated readiness dashboards allow you to quickly assess which athletes need attention.*



*Output has an automated subjective wellness assessment that athletes can complete before they train. This can help coaches and athletes identify whether they should be closely monitoring readiness during warm-ups.*

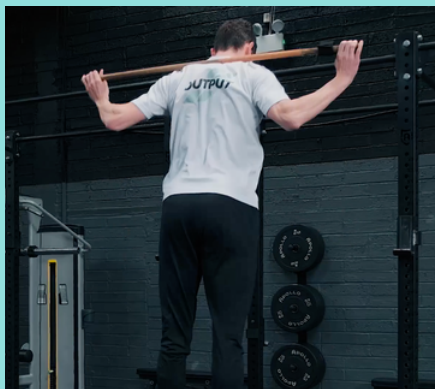
# EXERCISES FOR FOOTBALL STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

The below exercises are my top staples in football strength and conditioning. Their effectiveness lies in their ability to target specific aspects of performance while offering a variety of challenges, including intensity, perturbation, and neuromuscular control. By incorporating these exercises into training programs and gradually increasing their complexity, coaches and trainers can help football players develop the necessary physical attributes for success on the field.

**Kettlebell swings:** are often underrated but have been highly impactful in their application. This exercise is known for its ability to develop lower body power, particularly eccentrically in the hip extensors. This is an important exercise to protect the hamstrings and enhance their capacity to generate explosiveness during movements such as sprinting and changing direction.



**Drop Jump Squats:** This exercise involves a drop before a jump, resulting in a high eccentric demand during the task. The drop squat with a concentric jump is an underrated exercise that can generate a significant eccentric impulse despite employing low loads. This exercise helps improve explosive power and eccentric strength while simultaneously challenging the neuromuscular system.



**Drop Jumps:** This exercise also aims to reduce contact time and enhance ankle stiffness, which can be beneficial for football players. By incorporating biofeedback and tracking contact times, players can monitor their progress and make necessary adjustments to optimise performance.



**Multi-directional lunge:** Involve performing lunges in multiple directions. By introducing perturbation through a slish bag or an external object, players are required to challenge their postural control while executing braking tasks. This exercise provides a low-intensity stimulus to the lower body while promoting high levels of perturbation, making it an effective training tool.



**Lateral hops:** Over a given distance, combined with feedback on contact times, are a highly valuable exercise. This exercise targets lateral power, stability, and coordination, which are essential for cutting, sidestepping, and changing direction on the football field. These types of activities are often performed by players, but the intensity of effort required to elicit a physical change is frequently overlooked.



# ***HOW DATA ANALYSIS CAN AID FOOTBALL TRAINING***

The Output Sports device offers a range of metrics, versatile equipment options, and the ability to quantify various exercises, leading to improved training outcomes and player performance. One of the reasons I have found Output so valuable is the variety of metrics you can use to compete with and the versatility of the equipment. This flexibility allows coaches to introduce a wide range of exercises and activities, even those that require minimal technical expertise. For example, exercises like med ball slams, which don't require technical excellence but can still be competently performed by all players. The Output Sports device allows for the attachment of the unit to a piece of equipment rather than the performer, making sessions flow more smoothly, particularly for players who are not accustomed to using the device.

The ability to quantify exercises using the Output Sports device is another feature that as a football S&C coach, I find invaluable. It allows coaches to objectively assess and track the performance of players in more complicated exercises. An example of this is hopping sequences, which previously lacked objective measurement. With the Output Sports device, coaches can quantify these sequences, which not only increases the intensity of effort but also provides objective feedback to the players. For instance, lateral hops can be used to improve reactivity, change of direction, and lower limb protection.

The device adds objectivity to the process, allowing coaches to monitor progress and make data-driven decisions. The Output Sports device also plays a crucial role in enhancing performance during key actions on the pitch such as running in behind, winning physical duels, aerial battles, and 1v1 scenarios. By utilizing the versatility of the device, coaches can design exercises that specifically target these actions, tailoring training to individual needs and tracking progress over time.



The device provides coaches with a shared language and a systematic approach to improving player performance in these critical areas. Another significant aspect of the Output Sports device is its value in longitudinal monitoring and accountability within football strength and conditioning programs. Coaches can use the device to track player progress over time and ensure that desired adaptations occur during task-specific exercises. This longitudinal monitoring helps coaches understand how players are adapting and make informed decisions regarding training interventions. Additionally, the device aids in maintaining accountability within the training environment, ensuring that players adhere to the prescribed exercises and intensity levels.

Data profiling can be a useful tool to inform training program design. By leveraging data during sessions, coaches can ensure that desired intensity levels are achieved, allowing players to train at the appropriate effort levels. Moreover, data analysis after training sessions helps monitor adherence, ensuring that players are performing as intended. These practices become particularly important in managing large squads and optimizing performance outcomes.

In conclusion, the Output Sports device offers significant benefits for football strength and conditioning programs. Its versatility, variety of

metrics, and ability to quantify exercises provide coaches with valuable tools for optimising training sessions and enhancing player performance. By incorporating this technology into their coaching methodologies, coaches can solve individual player problems, foster a shared disciplinary language, identify trends over time, and make data-driven decisions that ultimately lead to improved player outcomes on the pitch.



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*With 200+ available metrics, Output is my go-to solution for all data analysis.*



292 Performance was founded by Dr Ben Rosenblatt to bring high performance services to high performing people and teams.

292 Performance provides consultancy support to elite teams, as well as rehabilitation camps and bespoke training plans and coaching to individual players.

# OUTPUT

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