

CASE STUDY – Injury Intervention FIFA, F-MARC “The 11”

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The FIFA scientific sector F-MARC recently released a new soccer-specific training intervention with the aim of reducing player injuries for all levels. Football is one of the most popular and participated sports in the world attracting around 200,000 professional and 240 million amateur players worldwide. Unfortunately, these high levels of participation coincide with extremely high incidents of injury demonstrating soccer to be one of the most hazardous sports athletes can partake in. Injuries in soccer occur at all levels of participation and the consequences of injuries in the amateur game relate to the massive costs of treatment and time absent from work. The impact on the professional game is debatably greater if key players miss vital games influencing a clubs success and potential revenue. It has been estimated that British soccer alone produces a bill of £1 billion per year combining the payment of treatment and time absent from work

The information in the following sheets contains all the information required to successfully complete all 10 exercises in ‘The 11’ protocol. All exercises should be completed at every training session and generally take 20 minutes to complete. The aim is to improve core stability of players whilst targeting soccer-specific muscles. All the information for in this booklet was obtained from the official ‘The 11 DVD’ and at www.fifa.com. Read through the exercises below and consider the following discussion points;

- Would availability of equipment/resources needed to complete the exercises significantly impact teams?
- What are the time implications for amateur players during training sessions?
- Consider both amateurs and professionals motivation to completing these exercises.
- What differing physical benefits/adaptations could you see by completing the exercises either once a week or three times a week?

- Considering a range of other injury prevention measures, where would the 'The 11' rank in a professional club?

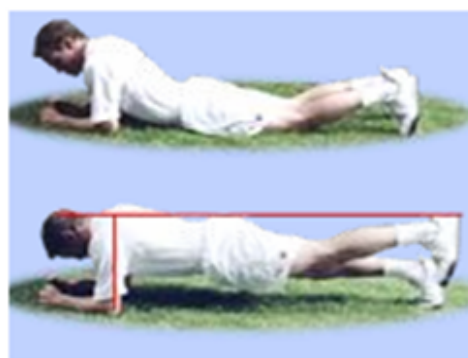
Exercise 1 – The Bench

Purpose: Strengthening of the core muscles.

Starting position: Lie on the stomach. Support the upper body with the forearms and place the feet perpendicular to the ground.

Action: Lift stomach, hips and knees so that the body forms a straight line from the shoulder to the heels. Elbows should be directly under the shoulders. Tighten the abdominal muscles and buttocks. Lift the right leg a few inches from the ground and hold for 15 seconds. Return to the starting position, relax and repeat with the left leg. Perform this twice.

Important: Do not flex the hips or let your stomach drop. Maintain that straight line from the shoulders to the heels.



Exercise 2 – Sideways Bench

Purpose: Strengthening of the lateral abdominal (core) muscles

Starting position: Lie on one side and support the upper body with the forearm with the elbow under the shoulder. Bend bottom knee 90 degrees. When viewed from above, the shoulders, elbow, hips and both knees should form a straight line.

Action: Lift the top leg and hips until the shoulder, hip and top leg are in straight line and hold this position for 15 seconds. Return to the starting position, relax and repeat on the other side. Perform twice on each side.

Important: Do not drop the hips or tilt the upper shoulder or hips forwards.



Exercise 3 – Hamstrings

Purpose: Strengthening the hamstrings.

Starting position: Kneel down with a straight upright upper body. Knees and lower legs should be hip width apart. Cross the arms in front of the body. A partner pins the ankles firmly to the ground with both hands.

Action: Slowly lean forward keeping the upper body and hips straight. Thighs, hips and upper body stay straight. Try to hold this straight body alignment as long as possible while leaning forward. When the position can no longer be maintained by the hamstrings then use both hands to control the fall. Perform five times.

Important: Do not bend hips. Perform the exercise slowly. Body control is important. Hold partners ankles firmly.



Exercise 4 – Cross-Country Skiing

Purpose: Strengthening leg muscles.

Starting position: Stand on the right leg and let the other leg hang relaxed. Flex the knee and hips slightly so that the upper body leans forward. From the front, the hip, knee and foot of the supporting leg should be in a straight line.

Action: Flex and extend the knee of the supporting leg and swing the arms in opposite directions in the same rhythm as in cross country skiing. Flex the knee as far as possible while keeping the weight balanced on the supporting foot. When extending, do not lock the knee. Keep pelvis and upper body stable and facing forwards. Perform 15 times on the right leg, then 15 times on the left leg.

Important: Keep pelvis horizontal and do not let it tilt to the side. Do not let knee buckle inwards.



Exercise 5- Chest-Passing/Single Leg Stance

Purpose: Improve coordination and balance; strengthening of the leg muscles.

Starting position: Two players face each other at a distance of 5 yards standing on their right leg only. Knee and hips should be slightly bent. Keep the weight on the ball of the foot and lift the heel from the ground. From the front, the hip, knee and foot of the supporting leg should be in a straight line.

Action: Throw a ball back and forth between players, catch the ball with both hands, and throw it back with one hand. The quicker the exchange of the ball, the more effective the exercise. Perform 10 times on the right leg, then 10 times on the left leg.

Important: Always keep knee slightly bent. Do not let knee buckle inwards.



Exercise 6 – Forward Bend Catching/ Single Leg Stance

Purpose: Improve coordination and balance; strengthening of the leg muscles.

Starting position: Repeat that of exercise 5.

Action: Repeat the basic actions of exercise 5 except after every catch complete a forward bend and touch the ball to the ground without putting weight on it. Perform 10 times on the right leg, then 10 times on the left leg.

Important: When viewed from the front, hip, knee and foot of the supporting leg should be in a straight line. Keep weight only on the ball of the foot, or lift heel from the ground.



Exercise 7 – Figure of Eight/Single Leg Stance

Purpose: Improve coordination and balance; strengthening of the leg muscles.

Starting position: Repeat that of exercises 5 & 6.

Action: Before throwing back, swing the ball in a figure-8 through and around both legs: first around the supporting leg with the upper body leaning forward, and then around the other leg while standing as upright as possible. Perform 10 times on the right leg, then 10 times on the left leg.

Important: When viewed from the front, hip, knee and foot of the supporting leg should be in a straight line. Always keep knee slightly bent and do not let it buckle inwards.



Exercise 8 – Jumps

Purpose: Improve jumping power and landing technique.

Starting position: Stand on both feet hip width apart, about a 1 foot to the side of a field line. Bend the knees and hips slightly so the upper body leans a little forward. When viewed from the front, hip, knee and foot should be in a straight line. Arms are slightly bent and close to the body.

Action: Jump with both feet, sideways back and forth over the line and back as quickly as possible. Land softly on the balls of both feet with slightly bent knees. Jump 10 times side to side, then 10 times forwards and backwards over the line.

Important: A soft landing and quick take-off are more important than the height of the jump. Spend as little time on the ground as possible. Do not let knees buckle inwards.



Exercise 9 – Zig-Zag Shuffle

Purpose: Improve coordination and jumping technique.

Starting position: Stand at the start of the zigzag course (6 marks set 10 x 20 yds), legs shoulder width apart. Bend the knees and hips so the upper body leans substantially forward. The lead shoulder points in the direction of movement.

Action: Shuffle sideways to the first mark, turn so that the other shoulder points to the next mark and complete the zigzag course as fast as possible. Always take-off and land on the balls of the feet. Complete the course twice.

Important: Always keep upper body leaned forward with the back straight. Run quietly by absorbing ground contact with the knees but do not let them buckle inwards.



Exercise 10 – Bounding

Purpose: Improve jumping power and technique.

Starting position: Stand on the take-off leg with the upper body upright. The arm of the same side is in front of the body. When viewed from the front, hip, knee and foot of the take-off leg should be in a straight line.

Action: Spring as high and far as possible off the supporting leg. Bring the knee of the trailing leg up as high as possible and the opposite arm bent in front of the body when bounding. Land softly and quietly on the ball of the foot with a slightly bent knee. Cover 30 metres twice.

Important: Do not let knee buckle inwards during take-off and landing.



11 – Fair Play

Purpose: Understand that a substantial amount of football injuries are caused by foul play. Obtaining optimal physical conditions will not eliminate injuries only reduce them. Observance of the laws of the game and especially Fair Play are essential for the prevention of football injuries.

