

E4F - FOOTBALL STATISTICS AND METRICS SERIES



🔍 FOOTBALL ANALYSIS: 15 IMPORTANT ASPECTS

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Opposition analysis must be based on your team's playing model. This foundation guides the analyst in identifying crucial team and individual behaviours to gain an advantage. Starting from your playing model, there are 15 key aspects to consider in analysing the opposition in football.

Team formation and tactical setup.

Identify the opposition's preferred formation and tactical approach
Understand their style of play, such as possession-based, counter-attacking or high-pressing.

Key Players

Identify the opposition's key players who are influential in their attack and defence. Analyse individual strengths, weaknesses, and playing styles of key players.

Set Pieces

Evaluate the opposition's set-piece strategies, both defensively and offensively
Pay attention to their corner kicks, free kicks and throw-ins.

Transition Moments

Analyse how the opposition transitions between defence and attack
Identify vulnerabilities during these transition phases

Pressing Triggers

Determine the situations that trigger opposition's high press or defensive block
Exploit weaknesses in their defence structure when they press

Player Movement Patterns

Study the movement patterns of key players, both on and off the ball
Identify players who make runs into space or have a tendency to drift out of position

Defensive shape

Examine the opposition's attacking patterns, focusing on build-up and final third play. Identify their preferred attacking routes and key playmakers

Weak Foot Analysis

Determine the weak foot of key players and exploit any limitations
Adjust defensive strategies based on the opposition players' weaker sides

Individual defensive abilities

Evaluate the defensive abilities of individual players.
Exploit weaknesses, such as slow reactions or poor positioning

Goalkeeper Analysis

Study the opposition goalkeeper's strengths and weaknesses.
Identify shooting opportunities and set pieces that target the goalkeeper

Discipline and style of play

Analyse the disciplinary record of opposition players
Exploit potential weaknesses by inducing fouls or taking advantage of players on yellow cards

Injury and Fatigue

Consider the injury status and recent workload of key opposition players
Exploit potential fatigue by pressuring physically tired players

Match History

Review past performances against the opposition team. Identify patterns in their play and learn from previous encounters

Adaptability and Updating

Assess how the opposition adapts to different game situations. Plan alternative strategies in case the initial approach is unsuccessful.

Continuous Analysis is essential as football teams evolve. Regularly updating the analysis based on recent performances ensures match preparedness.

My thanks. I'm grateful to Maciej Krzymień of Legia Warszawa for this insightful article. His generosity in allowing me to adapt it, complete with lesson plans, means it can be used for the benefit of my students, football players, and all fans. He's as good as gold/goal-ed!

Sample exercises

Gap-Fill

Complete the sentences with the missing words.

1. The opposition usually plays in a _____ formation.
 2. Their main tactical approach is _____-based football.
 3. They often use a _____ press to win the ball back.
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True or False

The opposition is strong at switching quickly from defence to attack (T/F).

They rarely press, even when the ball goes to a full-back. (T/F)

Their striker often drifts wide to create space for teammates. (T/F)

Comprehension

Speak about or write short answers.

16. What triggers the opposition's high press?

17. Which players rely most on movement off the ball?

18. How does the opposition usually build attacks in the final third?

Multiple Choice: Choose the correct option (A, B, or C).

21. A key reason to identify weak-foot limitations is:

- A) To pick the best goal celebrations
- B) To force mistakes in possession
- C) To improve your own set-piece routine

22. Analysing individual defensive abilities helps you:

- A) Avoid attacking certain players
 - B) Target defenders with slow reactions
 - C) Choose which players take penalties
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