

Module 3: Identification

—●— Creating Player Observation Tools

Description

Player observation tools are essential for scouts and Talent ID staff to systematically evaluate players during games or events. These tools help ensure that evaluations are objective, consistent, and aligned with the philosophy and profiles of the football organisation. Whether evaluating a single player in detail or multiple players more broadly, a well-constructed observation tool allows for clearer insights and informed decision-making.

The process outlined below highlights key principles for creating player observation tools, which are important for improving Talent ID and helping organisations discover and nurture potential. By following these five steps, player observation tools can be tailored to both immediate and future scouting needs within the football organisation, facilitating more effective and efficient Talent ID.

Five Steps to Creating Player Observation Tools

1. Determine the Purpose and Context

Before designing the observation tool, clearly define the purpose of the evaluation. Is the scout observing one player in-depth or evaluating multiple players? The observation format should vary based on the context, and you may want both long and short versions of the report to adapt to different situations. For example:

- **Single player observation:** requires more detailed reporting, with a focus on detailed analysis of the player's technical, tactical, physical, and psychosocial attributes in various match situations. This type of observation often includes examples of specific actions in the game, providing a narrative of the player's decision-making, technique, and overall contribution to the match
- **Multiple player observation or Talent ID event:** requires a broader but systematic evaluation, potentially with shorter, more concise reports

2. Align Content with Organisational Objectives

Ensure that the content of the observation tool reflects what the organisation values in players. This allows for the tool(s) to gather relevant data connected to the organisation's player development goals (i.e., philosophy and profiles). The tool should capture:

- **Biographical information:** player name, age, position, strong foot, height, personality
- **Event context:** game or event level, location, opposition
- **Key qualities:** specific football qualities that the organisation prioritises, such as technical skill, tactical understanding, physicality, and mental attributes

3. Incorporate a Player Rating Scale

The tool should include a rating system to quantify observations. Using a standardised rating system helps compare players consistently and objectively. This can take many forms:

- **Colour-coded system:** different colors represent performance levels
- **Numerical scale:** create a range from 1-4 or 1-10 to score attributes like technique, game understanding, athleticism, and competitiveness
- **Additional scales:** these could cover aspects such as game quality or maturation, especially for youth players (e.g., early vs. late maturing)

4. Ensure Consistent Language

Language in the observation tool should be clear and standardised across the organisation. Everyone involved in the evaluation process should use the same terms to avoid ambiguity. For instance:

- **Define key terms:** ensuring uniformity in how evaluations are described and interpreted specific to the organisation

5. Include a Recommendation Section

Since Talent ID is a continuous process, the observation tool should include a recommendation section. This forward-looking component ensures the observation contributes to long-term talent tracking. The scout should provide suggestions for future actions, such as:

- **Recommendations:** recommend continued monitoring of the player
- **Future potential:** note the player's potential for future development
- **Invitations:** identify whether the player should be invited to future events or teams