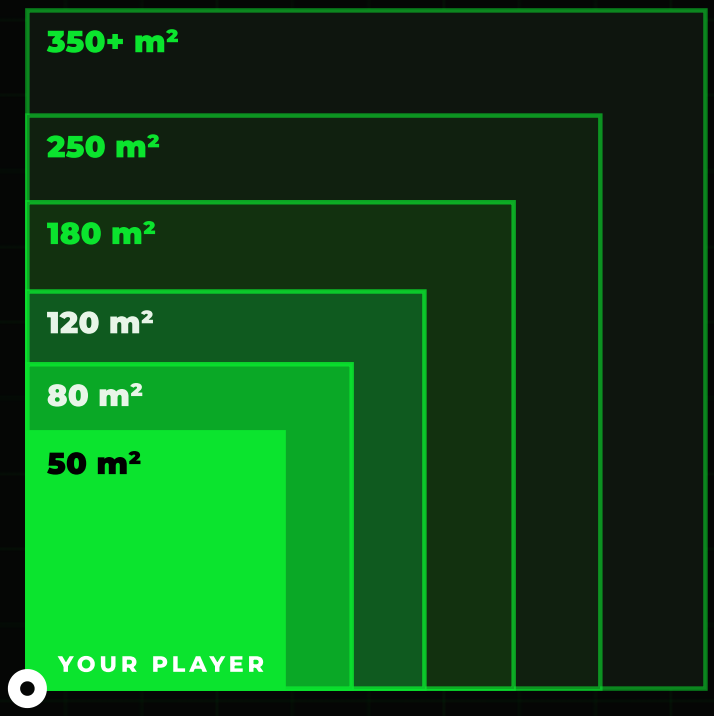
SPACE IS THE SPEED SESSION

RELATIVE PLAYER AREA

Don't change the drill. **Change the space per player** — and the behaviour changes automatically.



RPA CONTROLS
Time on the ball

RPA CONTROLS
Decision pressure

RPA CONTROLS
Movement type

HOW TO MEASURE IT

ONE SUM.
SQUARE METRES PER PLAYER.

02

RPA = PITCH AREA ÷ PLAYERS

WORKED EXAMPLE

- Pitch **28 × 20 m** = 560 m²
- 4v4 = **8 players**
- 560 ÷ 8 = **70 m² per player**

Count every player on the pitch, both teams. Use the same rule every time (e.g. whether keepers are in or out).

WORKING BACKWARDS: THE CONE-SETTING SHORTCUT

Area = RPA × players. Pick the RPA you want, multiply by the number of players, then choose a pitch shape that gives that area. E.g. 4v4 at 100 m² → 8 × 100 = 800 m² → **40 × 20 m**.

PITCH-SIZE CHEAT SHEET (FROM THE SIS RPA ZONES)

FORMAT	PLAYERS	RPA (M² EACH)	TOTAL AREA	EXAMPLE PITCH (LOW → HIGH)
3v3	6	50–80	300 – 480 m²	20 × 15 → 24 × 20 m
4v4	8	80–120	640 – 960 m²	32 × 20 → 40 × 24 m
5v5	10	120–180	1,200 – 1,800 m²	40 × 30 → 50 × 36 m
6v6	12	180–250	2,160 – 3,000 m²	54 × 40 → 60 × 50 m
7v7	14	250–350	3,500 – 4,900 m²	70 × 50 → 70 × 70 m
8v8+	16	350+	5,600 m² +	80 × 70 m or bigger

EVERY SESSION STARTS WITH 3 DECISIONS

1
What speed do I want? Acceleration? High-speed running? Max velocity?

2
Pick the RPA band that produces it (next page).

3
Add one chaos lever — optional.

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Not a score — a **match**. Does the speed your players are producing match the speed that space is built to create? Tight space should show bursts, braking and duels. Big space should show long strides and running. If it doesn't, change the space first.

THE 6 SPEED ZONES

03

FORGET THEORY.
HERE'S HOW EACH ZONE FEELS.

ZONE · 3V3

50–80
M² ULTRA TIGHT



THE OUTPUT

- Micro accelerations
- Sharp decels
- Duels

COACH CUES

"Explode in 1–2 steps" · *"Win the first movement"*

Pressing · Aggression · Reaction speed

ZONE · 4V4

80–120
M² TIGHT



THE OUTPUT

- Repeated accelerations
- Short bursts

COACH CUES

"Go again quickly" · *"React first"*

Your transition engine

ZONE · 5V5

120–180
M² MEDIUM



THE OUTPUT

- Mix of accel + HSR

COACH CUES

"Break lines at speed" · *"Carry into space"*

The most football-realistic zone

ZONE · 6V6

180–250
M² LARGE



THE OUTPUT

- High-speed running
- Longer actions

COACH CUES

"Attack space early" · *"Run beyond"*

ZONE · 7V7

250–350
M² VERY LARGE



THE OUTPUT

- Sprint exposure
- Open-stride running

COACH CUES

"Open up fully" · *"Attack depth"*

ZONE · 8V8+

350+
M² MATCH SPACE



THE OUTPUT

- Max velocity
- Counter-attacks

COACH CUES

"Full speed" · *"Exploit transition moments"*

QUICK RULE OF THUMB · NO CALCULATOR MID-SESSION

Want fast feet?
Shrink the pitch.

Want running speed?
Expand the pitch.

Want chaos?
Add transitions.

Want control?
Keep structure.

The small square in each card shows how much room one player has, drawn to the same scale. Typical games are a guide — the RPA number is what counts.

MATCH SPACE TO THE GOAL

PICK THE SPEED. THE BAND PICKS ITSELF.

04

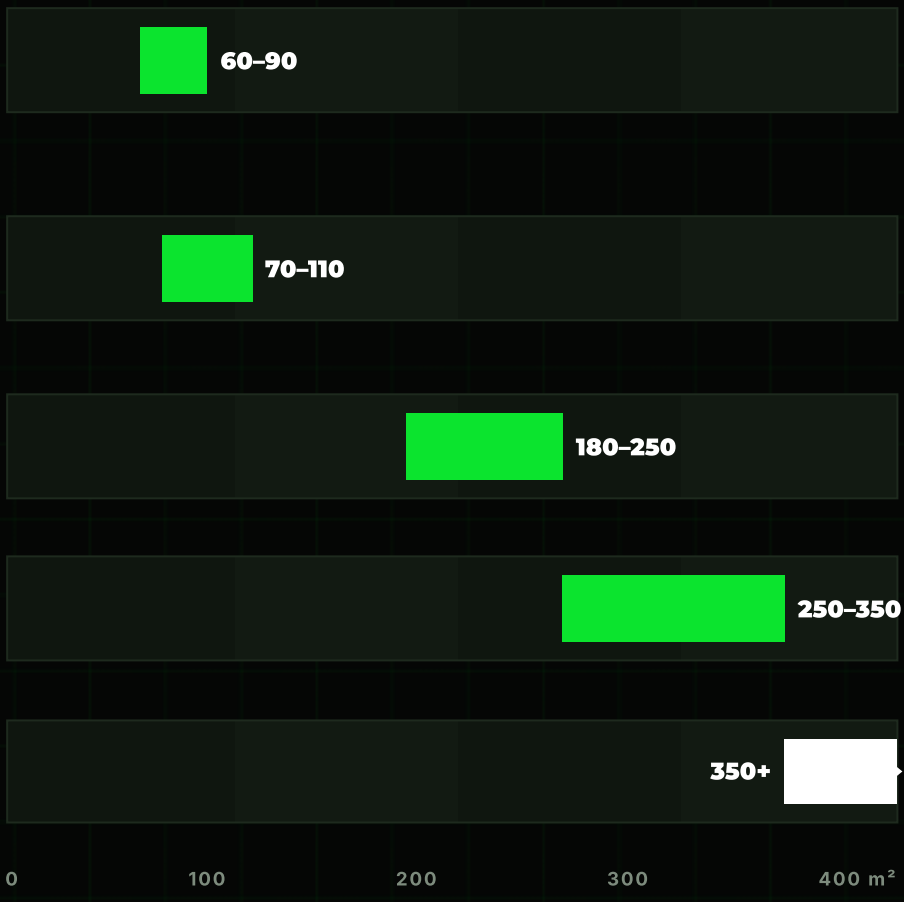
REACTIVE AGILITY
Add: Add chaos: random balls, direction changes
Outcome: Decision + movement under pressure

ACCELERATION
Add: 3v3 / 4v4 + short transitions, overloads
Outcome: Explosive first steps

HIGH-SPEED RUNNING
Add: Directional play, space to attack
Outcome: Repeatable HSR

MAX VELOCITY
Add: Long channels, sprint triggers
Outcome: Top-end speed exposure

MATCH SPRINT REPLICATION
Add: Transitions, counter rules
Outcome: Real match sprint patterns



BUILD YOUR WEEK

YOU'RE PERIODISING SPACE, NOT JUST LOAD.

DAY 1
ACCELERATION
70–100
3v3 / 4v4
High chaos

DAY 2
MIXED SPEED
120–180
5v5
Tactical focus

DAY 3
SPEED EXPOSURE
200–300
6v6 / 7v7
Open space

DAY 4
MATCH CHAOS
300+
8v8+
Transitions

Bands overlap on purpose — they are working ranges, not walls. Reactive agility and acceleration share the tight end of the scale; they differ in the chaos you add.

YOUR NEXT SESSION

05

THREE THINGS TO DO AT YOUR NEXT SESSION.

1 DO THE SUM BEFORE YOU SET THE CONES.

Choose the speed quality for the session, find its band, then work out the pitch: **area = RPA × players**.

DO THIS
E.g. acceleration with 4v4: RPA 70–100 → 8 × 85 = 680 m² → about 34 × 20 m.

LOOK FOR
Players producing the movement that space is built for: bursts in tight zones, long strides in big ones.

2 COACH WITH THE ZONE'S OWN CUES.

Every zone has two cues that fit the space. Use only those. Less talking, clearer message.

DO THIS
Tight: *"Go again quickly."* Large: *"Attack space early."* Match space: *"Full speed."*

LOOK FOR
Players reacting to the cue within one or two actions, not waiting to be told twice.

3 ADJUST THE SPACE, NOT THE DRILL.

Session not producing the speed you want? Move the cones before you change the exercise.

DO THIS
Use the quick rule: **shrink** for fast feet, **expand** for running speed, **add transitions** for chaos.

LOOK FOR
The behaviour shifting within a couple of minutes of the change.

PAIR IT WITH THE CHAOS SPEED INDEX · FREE RESOURCE 01

RPA sets the environment. RPA 70 → expect high accelerations. If CSI is low, players aren't engaging: add chaos.

CSI validates the outcome. RPA 250 → expect HSR. If CSI is high, the session is working.

WHAT'S NEXT

THIS GUIDE GIVES YOU THE MEASUREMENT. THE MEMBERSHIP GIVES YOU THE FULL COACHING CYCLE.

Measuring is the start. When a player or team has a speed problem, you need a way to find the cause and act on it. Inside the Speed Intelligence System membership, coaches get support for the whole coaching cycle — built around their speed problem, not a pre-set session plan. Founding coaches are helping shape the future of coaching performance.

1 ASSESS · 2 HYPOTHESISE · 3 INTERVENE · 4 RE-ASSESS

BRING US YOUR SPEED PROBLEM → WWW.SPEEDMECHANIC.CO.UK