



Four-Week Review — Phase 5: Match Management (Weeks 24–29)

A structured checkpoint, completed by the coach using the evidence gathered across Weeks 24–29, before Phase 6 begins in Week 30.

This review follows the same rhythm every four-to-six-week block has used all season (previous reviews after Weeks 5, 11, 17 and 23; the season close follows after Week 36). Filling it in properly — honestly, with specific examples rather than general impressions — is what makes Phase 6's coaching decisions evidence-based rather than guesswork, and Phase 6 is the final block of the season.

1. Principles Covered

WEEK	PRIMARY PRINCIPLE	SECONDARY PRINCIPLE
24	Recognise the picture before playing	Compactness
25	Progression: through, around, over	Overloads & rest defence
26	Compactness	Overloads & rest defence
27	Recognise the picture before playing	Nearest players react first
28	All transition principles	All possession principles
29	All Phase 5 principles, consolidated	Recognise the picture before playing

By the end of Phase 5, the squad has now been introduced to a genuinely new category of coaching content: game-state and game-management skill, layered on top of the formation-neutral tactical principles built across Phases 1–4. The squad can protect a lead, chase a game, reorganise after a red card, use a numerical advantage patiently, manage momentum after any goal, control restarts, and — as of this week — move fluidly between several of these states inside a single, continuous match. The set-piece programme also reached its final Phase 5 milestone: a second attacking corner option pressure-tested inside match-state scenarios, and the club's first confirmed penalty protocol.

2. Evidence of Progress

(Complete using direct observation from Weeks 24–28, particularly Week 29's "Read the State" and "Phase 5 Final" practices, which were deliberately designed as diagnostic, minimal-instruction practices.)

- What specific moment, from any of Weeks 24–28, best demonstrated the team managing a genuine match situation in a way it couldn't have managed before Phase 5? Name the week, the practice, and what happened.
- In Week 29's "Read the State," did the team produce a visibly correct, spontaneous adjustment each time a new match state was called, with no further coaching explanation? Which state transition was smoothest, and which was roughest?
- Compare Week 24's first, heavily-scaffolded lead-protection practice to Week 29's "Phase 5 Final" — is the team's overall composure under a scripted, changing scoreline visibly greater now than it was at the start of the phase?
- Did the team correctly read and respond to a genuine match-state change (a goal scored or conceded, a red card, a real closing-minutes scenario) inside any of Phase 5's actual fixtures?

3. Recurring Technical Problems

(List any technical issue — passing weight, first touch, delivery technique, finishing, dead-ball striking — that appeared in more than one week's coach review, e.g. the "Common Problems and Corrections" tables in Weeks 24–29. A problem seen once is noise; a problem seen three or more times across six weeks is signal.)

4. Recurring Tactical Problems

(Same approach — cross-reference the "Common Problems and Corrections" tables and the weekly Coach Review sections. Common candidates to check specifically, given what Phase 5 targeted: the team defaulting to the same approach regardless of the scoreline or match state, slow or absent reorganisation after a numerical change, committing too many or too few numbers forward when chasing a game, and a lapse in concentration specifically in the minute after either team's goal.)

5. Physical Observations

The in-season wave described in the Season Architecture (Section 7) shifted its character for Phase 5, expressed through scripted match-state practices rather than generic intensity work, with Week 28's genuinely timed, countdown-driven practices carrying the phase's most realistic physical and psychological demand. Record:

- Did the squad tolerate Week 28's genuinely high-pressure, countdown-driven practices without signs of excessive fatigue or a drop in decision-making quality late in each practice?
- Were the attendance-based physical adjustments applied consistently across six weeks of competitive fixtures, and did they seem to matter?
- Any individual players who need a different physical entry point into Phase 6 — either because they've missed significant training, or because they're carrying more load than the group?

(This section is observational, not diagnostic. Any player showing signs of possible injury, overtraining, or a health concern should be referred to qualified medical or sports-science support rather than managed through this review.)

6. Communication Development

The full season's language has now been in use for the whole of Phase 5, alongside newer, more specific vocabulary introduced this phase (the "safe" call from Week 24, the reshape-confirmation call from Week 26, and the state-confirmation habit rehearsed this week).

- Which calls are used accurately and without prompting, including the newer, phase-specific ones?
- Which calls are still infrequent or inaccurate?
- Is the language being used *early* (before an action, shaping it) or only *afterward* (describing what already happened)? Early use is the actual goal, and should be more consistent now than it was at the Phase 4 review.
- Did players confirm a new match state out loud, entirely on their own, at any point during Week 29's minimal-instruction practices?

7. Leadership Development

Phase 5 continued building deliberate opportunities for player ownership: the whole team's scenario-based decision-making across Weeks 24–25 without a coach's explicit instruction, the reshape-confirmation responsibility in Week 26, the momentum- management discipline in Week 27, and the almost entirely coach-silent "Read the State" practice in Week 29.

- Who has stepped into an organisational role without being asked, and is this the same player(s) identified at the Phase 1, 2, 3 and 4 reviews, or has leadership continued to distribute further?
- Did a different leader emerge for organising a reshape after a red card (Week 26) than for confirming the penalty order (Week 29)? If so, that's worth naming specifically — the latter is a genuinely new kind of leadership responsibility for this squad.
- What is the specific, concrete opportunity to hand more ownership to players in

Phase 6, which focuses on refining identity, fixing recurring weaknesses, and opposition-specific preparation, and will depend heavily on players contributing honestly to what the team's real strengths and weaknesses actually are (Season Architecture, Section 6)?

8. Set-Piece Progress

Phase 5 delivered the pathway's fifth milestone (Season Architecture, Section 8): every routine pressure-tested inside genuine match-state scenarios, and the club's first confirmed penalty protocol — an order of takers and techniques established before it's ever needed for real.

- Did the confirmed penalty order hold up as intended, or did the season's evidence since Week 29 suggest it needs revisiting before Phase 6's set-piece maximisation work (due Weeks 32 and 35)?
- Was Week 23's near-post twist used successfully at any point during Phase 5's fixtures, and did the "protecting a lead" framing from Week 29's live rehearsal hold up under genuine match pressure?
- Which of the seven routines, if any, showed drift when reviewed in Week 29's "The Full Set" circuit, and does that change the priority for Phase 6's final set-piece work?
- Note anything to refine before Phase 6 adds its final layer of opposition-specific adjustment.

9. Match Transfer

(This is the most important section — everything above is only useful if it's changing what happens on a Saturday.)

- Across the fixtures played during Phase 5, what evidence exists that training content is showing up in matches specifically (not just "the team played well," but a named principle — a lead genuinely protected, a game genuinely turned around, a red-card reorganisation handled calmly, a numerical advantage used patiently, a goal followed by composed restart control — visible in a named moment)?
- Did the Match Review and Weekly Adjustment routes (A/B/C) get used accurately each week — is the record of which route applied, and why, still available for reference?
- Specifically for this phase's named match-day connections (fewer points dropped from winning positions, more territory won when behind, composure maintained after a red card, fewer immediate goals conceded after our own goal, composed game management late on) — which is most visibly true on a Saturday, and which is least?

10. Priorities for the Next Block (Phase 6, Weeks 30–36)

Based on the above, name (in order) the two or three things Phase 6 most needs to address before the season closes at Week 36. Phase 6's planned content (refining identity, fixing recurring weaknesses, opposition-specific preparation, maximising set pieces, sustaining intensity, and decisive matches) assumes Phases 1–5's foundations are reasonably secure — if they are not, say so here rather than letting the final block of the season proceed on an assumption that hasn't been tested. Since Phase 6 is the season's last block, this section carries particular weight: there is limited remaining time to close any gap identified here.

Adjusting the Route Into Phase 6

Use whichever of the five scenarios below actually describes the squad — more than one may apply in different areas (e.g., results could be good while a specific principle is still shaky).

IF THE TEAM IS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Increase complexity rather than simply repeating Phase 5 content into Phase 6. This might mean introducing Phase 6's opposition-specific practices with more demanding, less signposted scouting information from the start, combining refined-identity work with a live, unpredictable match-state scenario earlier than Week 30's schedule assumes, or bringing forward Phase 6's set-piece maximisation content if the programme is already sharp. Do not mistake "ahead of schedule" for "finished" — continue revisiting Phases 1–5 principles inside Phase 6's practices, as the Season Architecture requires throughout, right up to Week 36.

IF THE TEAM IS BEHIND SCHEDULE

Identify specifically which Phase 5 principle is weakest (Section 4 above) and give it additional, targeted time inside Phase 6's Tuesday sessions — most Phase 6 practices can absorb an extra five minutes of the relevant Phase 5 idea without abandoning their own week's content, since Phase 6 is explicitly the season's consolidation block and assumes Phases 1–5's foundations are already secure. Do not delay Phase 6's start; instead, simplify Phase 6's own practices (using the regressions already written into each one) until the gap closes, and be realistic about how much can genuinely change in the season's final seven weeks.

IF ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN INCONSISTENT

Consolidate rather than expand. Phase 6 is specifically about refining what the team already does, which depends on a shared, settled understanding among whoever is present. Where attendance has been patchy, spend Week 30's Tuesday session explicitly re-establishing Phase 5's core match-management language with whichever group shows up, rather than assuming continuity that may not exist. The contingency sections built into every practice (low/high attendance, restricted space) exist precisely for this situation.

IF RESULTS ARE POOR BUT PERFORMANCES ARE IMPROVING

This is a normal, expected pattern, and should not trigger panic changes to the season plan. Maintain the players' confidence explicitly — name the specific improvements visible in matches (Section 9), even where results haven't followed yet, and continue the development process as planned. Results tend to follow performance with a lag, not a lead; changing the plan reactively before that lag has played out usually costs more than it gains, even this late in the season.

IF RESULTS ARE GOOD BUT PERFORMANCES ARE WEAK

This is the more dangerous pattern, because it invites complacency, and there is particularly little time left in the season to correct it if it goes unaddressed. Do not let good results substitute for the honest evidence gathered in Sections 2–8 above. If Week 29's "Read the State" and "Phase 5 Final" showed genuine gaps despite good results, address those gaps directly in Phase 6 exactly as planned — the review process exists specifically to catch this pattern before it becomes comfortable, and Phase 6's decisive-matches content (Weeks 34–36) will test it directly regardless.

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