

Force Plate Testing Checklist

A Weekly Countermovement Jump Workflow for Team Sport Athletes

Force plates turn feel into facts. This checklist gives you a ten minute weekly jump testing workflow, four metrics worth tracking, and a clear rule for when to intervene.

Setup Before the First Jump

- Zero the plates before every session, not just once a week.
- Same footwear every time. Same shoes or barefoot, with no exceptions.
- Test at the same point in the training day, ideally before training starts.
- Athletes arrive warm, hydrated, and recovered from the previous day's hard work.
- State the instructions once and stop coaching during the test. Consistency beats enthusiasm.

The Testing Protocol

- Two to three trials, hands on hips, full countermovement depth.
- Cue "jump as fast and as high as you can" when you want RSI modified.
- Cue "jump as high as you can" when you want pure jump height.
- Thirty seconds of rest between trials.
- Record the best rep. Averaging hides the signal.

The Four Metrics That Actually Matter

1. Jump Height. The headline number. Track the trend, not the day.
2. RSI Modified. Jump height divided by time to takeoff. The elasticity check. It falls when the athlete is flat.
3. Eccentric and Concentric Durations. How fast the athlete dips and pushes. Both slow down before jump height drops. Fatigue shows up here first.
4. Inter-Limb Asymmetry. Left versus right output. Flags compensation before it becomes a problem.

Red Flags: When to Have the Conversation

- Jump height down more than 10 percent from the athlete's four-week rolling baseline.
- RSI modified trending down for two consecutive weeks.
- A sudden asymmetry spike that was not there last week.
- Eccentric duration climbing while jump height holds. Fatigue hides here first.
- The numbers look fine but the athlete feels off. Ask anyway. Trust is the metric behind the metrics.

The Weekly Workflow

1. Test on the same day, at the same time, every week.
2. Export the four metrics into your tracking sheet that same day.
3. Compare each athlete to their own rolling average, never to the team average.
4. Flag the red flags and talk to the athlete before changing anything in training.
5. Summarize the group in one line: who is up, who is flat, who needs a lighter week.
6. Send that line to the head coach. One line, not a spreadsheet.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Testing after a hard session and calling it a baseline.
- Chasing a personal record every week instead of tracking the trend.
- Changing the cue, the depth, or the rest period between weeks.
- Comparing athletes to each other instead of to their own history.
- Collecting data you never share with the coaching staff.

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