

Sports Performance Identity Index (SPII)

Introduction and Instructions

The Sports Performance Identity Index (SPII) is an observational checklist that helps coaches and support staff recognise the behavioural outcomes of a strong team identity in players.

When athletes share a strong identity, their unity is visible in how they communicate, apply effort, recover from setbacks, and interact with one another. The SPII provides a structured way of noticing and scoring these behaviours, allowing progress in team identity to be tracked over time.

How to Use the SPII – Player Behaviours

Observe: Watch players during matches or training. Focus on the specific behaviours listed under each factor.

Rate: For each item, assign a score from 0–4:

0 = behaviour strongly matches the low-identity anchor

2 = mixed/neutral behaviour

4 = behaviour strongly matches the high-identity anchor

Use 1 or 3 if behaviour falls between the anchors.

Score: Add up all the item scores to generate a total SPII player score.

The maximum possible score is 100.

Interpret: Higher scores = stronger expression of team identity in players.

Lower scores = weaker identity signals, highlighting opportunities for development.

1. Communication

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Sarcasm, blaming, critical remarks | Frequent verbal encouragement (“well played”, “nice pass”) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 2 | Silent withdrawal, monosyllabic responses | Shared humour, laughter, light-hearted banter |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 3 | Avoiding eye contact, turning away | Open body language, facing teammates |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 4 | Withholding information, “going it alone” | Quick information sharing (calling plays, warnings) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

2. Effort and Energy

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | Jogging when sprinting is needed | High-intensity sprints, willingness to “make the extra run” |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 6 | Shrugging shoulders, slowed reactions | Active chasing and tracking back off the ball |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 7 | Reluctance to cover for others, cutting corners | Animated readiness (clapping, bouncing on toes) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 8 | Complaining about drills or exercises | Encouraging teammates to keep pushing, even when tired |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

3. Coordination and cohesion

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 9 | Mis-timed runs; players in each other’s’ way not “on same wavelength” | Smooth passing sequences, intuitive synchrony, scanning and anticipating |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 10 | Visible subgroup splits | Collective rituals, hand signals, routines |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 11 | Lack of celebration after goals/points | Joint celebrations (high-fives, hugs, huddles) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 12 | Individuals overplay and try to do other people’s jobs | Sticks to role and plays it fully |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

4. Resilience in adversity

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 13 | Head shaking, throwing arms in air | Quick recovery from mistakes (“reset” behaviours) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 14 | Blaming individuals for mistakes | Encouraging teammates (“we go again”) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 15 | Drooping posture, slumped shoulders | Persistence and determination under pressure |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 16 | Avoids passing under pressure | Trusts teammates in risky moments |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

5. Leadership and Initiative

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 17 | Over-dominant individuals “take-over” | Distributed leadership (peer-to-peer guidance) |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 18 | Arguments over responsibility; favouritism | Multiple players stepping up constructively |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 19 | No one takes charge, collective drift | Confident, constructive communication |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

6. Emotional Contagion

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 20 | Frustration spreads: one player’s visible frustration and anger escalates group irritability | Excitement spreads: energy visibly lifts the group |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 21 | Mistake cascades into group despondency | Smiles and upbeat gestures ripple through; Celebrating small victories to create a positive atmosphere |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

7. Execution discipline

| | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 22 | Ignores agreed game plan | Consistently sticks to plan |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 23 | Acts outside behavioural standards | Displays agreed behavioural standards |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

8. Trust and safety

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 24 | Refuses to admit mistakes | Willingly acknowledges mistakes |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |
| 25 | Excludes fringe players | Includes all teammates in communication |
| | 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | |

SPII score / 100

Using the SPII with Players

Use the TRIBE protocol to develop team identity and the SPII to track progress, not to expect perfection. Team identity often develops unevenly, with periods of growth and setbacks.

Look for patterns over time. Are players showing more persistence after setbacks? More inclusion in group celebrations? Greater alignment with the game plan?

Share observations with players to reinforce positive behaviours and strengthen the sense of “us.”