

Defender Fitness Routine

The five-day physical plan I run on top of team training. Built for center backs and fullbacks who need to defend in the 88th minute — repeated sprints, change of direction, contact, and 90-minute durability.

— *Levi Asher Goncalves*

Day 1 — Repeated-Sprint Engine

- 6 × 30m sprints, 90s rest between reps.
- 4 × 60m sprints, full recovery (2:30).
- Finish with 2 × 150m at 80%.
- Why: this builds the engine that lets you defend the last 15 minutes.

Day 2 — Change of Direction + Recovery Runs

- 5-10-5 shuttle — 6 reps each side.
- T-drill — 4 reps, full speed, clean footwork.
- Backpedal-to-sprint transitions — 8 × 20m.
- Why: most defending isn't straight-line. Train the turn.

Day 3 — Posterior Chain Strength

- Romanian deadlifts — 4 × 6.
- Single-leg hip thrusts — 3 × 10 each side.
- Nordic curls — 3 × 6 (slow eccentric).
- Calf raises — 3 × 15.
- Why: the chain that wins headers and survives contact.

Day 4 — Aerial + Contact Prep

- Box jumps — 5 × 4 (max height, full reset).
- Broad jumps — 5 × 3.
- Med-ball chest throws — 4 × 6.
- Partner shoulder-to-shoulder work — 3 × 30s.
- Why: win the duel before the duel starts.

Day 5 — Match-Length Tempo

- 8 × 200m at 75%, jog 200m recovery between reps.

- Finish with 5 min easy jog + mobility.
- Why: 90 minutes is the standard. Train past it.

Daily Core (every day, non-negotiable)

- Plank ladder: 30s / 45s / 60s.
- Copenhagen plank — 3 × 20s each side.
- Side plank with reach-through — 3 × 10 each side.

Mobility Focus

- Hips and ankles, every single day. 8–10 minutes minimum.
- Pre-session: dynamic only. Post-session: long holds.
- I rushed an injury once and lost a season. Don't.

Weekly Load Notes

- Pair Day 1 and Day 5 with lighter team-training days.
- If you played a full match, replace Day 5 with active recovery.
- Sleep is the multiplier. Eat to refuel. Hydrate before you're thirsty.