

ANAS ALDARAMI

Football Operations & Sporting Strategy Portfolio

IF GNISTAN CASE STUDY | 2027-2029

Protect the Core.
Preserve the Transition Identity.
Add Controlled Progression.
Create Player Value.

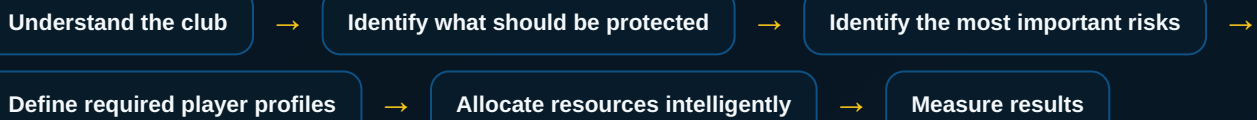
PURPOSE OF THIS PORTFOLIO

INDEPENDENT CASE STUDY | METHOD BEFORE CONCLUSIONS

This portfolio is an outside-in case study designed to demonstrate how I approach football operations, squad planning, recruitment, player development and sporting strategy.

It is not intended to suggest that I have access to IF Gnistan's internal information, nor to replace the knowledge of the club's existing coaching, sporting or executive staff.

My objective is to demonstrate a structured way of thinking.



Outside-in perspective

Independent analysis based on what can be observed from public squad, match and performance information.

Internal validation required

Any actual sporting decision would need confirmation against club contracts, medical information, wage structure, coaching views and internal data.

The analysis is based entirely on publicly available information, match data, squad information and external performance analysis available as of October 2026.

ABOUT ME

Operations, structure and long-term sporting thinking

ANAS **ALDARAMI**

My professional background is in business operations, management, entrepreneurship, stakeholder coordination and building operational workflows. I am now looking to bring this experience into professional football.

Over recent years, I have focused increasingly on the sporting and operational side of the game, particularly squad building, player recruitment, transfers, contract management, scouting, player development and the relationship between sporting performance and financial sustainability.

My ambition is to build my career within a professional football environment, initially in football operations or a related role within a sporting department, while continuing to develop toward broader sporting management responsibilities over time.

This portfolio is therefore not an application to become IF Gnistan's Sporting Director. Instead, it demonstrates the level of preparation, analytical thinking and operational discipline I would aim to bring to a football department.



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**Business
Operations**



**Process
Design**



**Stakeholder
Coordination**



**Football
Operations
Ambition**

What I aim to contribute



- Structured operational thinking
- Clear sporting-analysis logic
- Long-term squad and asset perspective
- A strong willingness to learn inside a professional club environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why IF Gnistan is an attractive sporting project

IF Gnistan is entering an important stage of its development. The club has a **recognisable competitive identity**, a clearer long-term sporting ambition, and an opportunity to **strengthen the connection** between performance, player development and player value.

01

Protect the Core

Resolve key contract decisions early, protect the existing sporting foundation, and identify which players should form the basis of Gnistan 2027 before entering the market.



02

Preserve the Transition Identity

Maintain the team's strongest current characteristic: compact defending, rapid attacking transitions, and the ability to exploit space quickly.



03

Add Controlled Progression

Recruit profiles that improve progression and chance creation when opponents deny transition space and force Gnistan to build more methodically.



04

Create Player Value

Turn recruitment, development, contract management and selling into one connected process that supports both sporting success and financial sustainability.



Key working principle



The objective is not to replace Gnistan's identity.
The objective is to make it more complete.



UNDERSTANDING IF GNISTAN'S DIRECTION



IF Gnistan is entering an important stage of its development.

In September 2026, the club announced a new five-year strategy and began recruiting a new Sporting Director to lead the next stage of development across the men's and women's first teams.

The club's stated direction is clear: competitive first teams, stronger player development, a more effective pathway from the academy, increasing player value and the ambition to compete regularly for European qualification by 2030.

How can Gnistan improve competitive performance while building a squad model that is sustainable, developable and capable of producing transfer value?

Protect the existing core.

Stability before unnecessary turnover.

Preserve the strongest playing characteristics.

Build on what already creates competitive advantage.

Recruit profiles, not just players.

Target specific tactical problems.

Create and protect player value.

Make the sporting cycle repeatable.

Public sources / reference: IF Gnistan

04

EXECUTIVE SPORTING ASSESSMENT



My initial assessment is that Gnistan does not require a complete sporting rebuild.

The team already possesses identifiable strengths and an increasingly recognisable playing structure. The priority should therefore be **evolution rather than revolution**.

STRUCTURAL BASE

3-4-3

Frequently used back-three structure during 2026.

POSSESSION TENDENCY

~41%

Relatively low-possession profile in one external season analysis.

PRIMARY THREAT

TRANSITION

Compact defending and rapid attacking transitions.

During 2026, Gnistan has frequently used a back-three structure, including a 3-4-3 in the most recent league match against HJK. Independent tactical analysis also identifies Gnistan as one of the league's most interesting transition teams.

NOT THE QUESTION

“How do we replace Gnistan's current style?”

THE REAL QUESTION

“How do we preserve Gnistan's transition strength while giving the team additional solutions when transition opportunities are not available?”

That distinction should influence recruitment.

Public sources / reference: Veikkausliiga; 60 Degrees North Scandinavian Football

PROPOSED SPORTING IDENTITY

PRESERVE

Preserve the Transition Threat

Gnistan appears most dangerous when matches create space. The team can recover the ball, move forward quickly and attack opponents before their defensive structure is fully established.

External analysis of the 2026 season found Gnistan among the strongest Veikkausliiga teams at progressing into the final third and penalty area shortly after regaining possession.

The same analysis highlighted particularly strong results when breaking opposition defensive lines during transition.

This should be considered a competitive strength.

I would therefore avoid recruitment decisions that make the team slower or remove its ability to attack directly.

ADD

Add Controlled Progression

The next stage should be adding another method of progression.

When an opponent protects space, defends deeper and reduces transition opportunities, Gnistan needs players capable of progressing possession against an organised block.

The objective is not necessarily to become a possession-dominant team. It is to become a team capable of winning in more than one type of match.

Transition when transition is available.

Control when control is required.

This leads directly to the recruitment profiles proposed later in this portfolio.

SQUAD AUDIT

Initial outside-in assessment based on publicly available information



First-team
squad

26



Contract / loan
decisions by end 2026

12



High-minute
contributors needing
decisions

6



Immediate
priority renewals

4

Current core structure

3 - 4 - 3



Contract decision priorities



Priority
renewals

Europaeus, Arko-Mensah,
Ayo, Latonen



Option /
review

Danny Perez, Marcelo,
Milovanov, Roman Eremenko



Development
core

Gnanou, Hannula, Jouhi,
Atarah



Likely exits /
low-priority

Bashkirov, Ojala, Dahlstrom



Main takeaway

Gnistan may not need a full rebuild. If the right core is protected, the squad may only need a small number of targeted additions rather than wide-scale change.

PRIORITY ONE: PROTECT THE CORE



Before entering the transfer market, my first major sporting-management decision would be a complete **Contract and Asset Protection Review**.

Public contract databases indicate that a significant group of Gnistan players reach contract decision points at the end of 2026.

Important limitation

Because public databases can occasionally be outdated, all contract information would need internal verification before any actual decision is taken.

The principle, however, remains important. A club aiming to develop and increase player value should avoid allowing important sporting or financial assets to reach the end of their contracts without a deliberate decision.

WRONG FIRST QUESTION

“Who should Gnistan sign?”

BETTER FIRST QUESTION

“Which existing players should form the foundation of Gnistan 2027?”

Every player approaching a contract decision should be assessed using the same framework:

Sporting importance × Age × Development potential × Tactical fit × Availability ×

Salary cost × Replacement cost × Future value

Renew Exercise Option Negotiate Release Replace Loan Decision

Public sources / reference: Transfermarkt (public contract data - internal verification required)

CONTRACT CASES THAT DESERVE EARLY ATTENTION

The strongest contract priority should normally be players who combine significant first-team contribution with age, development potential or market value.

EXAMPLE CASE

GABRIEL EUROPAEUS

At 21, he represents a very different contract-management case from an experienced player approaching the later stages of his career.

If a young player is already trusted with significant first-team responsibility and has potential future value, allowing the contract to approach expiry can weaken the club's negotiating position.

The principle is not “renew every young player”. The principle is to decide early enough that the club controls the process.

OTHER EARLY CASES

Ayo Obileye

Edmund Arko-Mensah

Joakim Latonen

Plus players whose contracts include, or may include, extension mechanisms.

For each case I would ask:

- ✓ Does the player fit the expected 2027 playing identity?
- ✓ What would replacement cost?
- ✓ Can the player improve?
- ✓ Can the club potentially create future transfer value?
- ✓ Would extending the contract improve sporting stability, financial protection, or both?

The answers should determine the contract decision rather than reputation alone.

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SQUAD ARCHITECTURE BEFORE RECRUITMENT



After contract decisions, I would construct the 2027 squad using a simple depth principle for every functional role in the playing system.

STARTER

Primary solution for the role.

CHALLENGER

Capable of competing for minutes and maintaining level.

DEVELOPMENT

Future contributor with a planned pathway.

This is more useful than simply counting two players per position. For example, two central midfielders may technically play the same position but provide completely different functions.

Squad planning should therefore be based on roles, not only positions.

For the current Gnistan structure, the first-team map should examine:

Goalkeeper

Three centre-back roles

Right wing-back

Left wing-back

Central midfield controller

Progressive central midfielder

Wide / inside attacking roles

Central attacking role

Striker

Once existing players are mapped to those functions, genuine recruitment gaps become much clearer. Only then should the club enter the market.

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RECRUITMENT PRIORITY: PROGRESSIVE NO. 8



RECRUITMENT PROFILE 01

PROGRESSIVE NO. 8 / BALL-PROGRESSING MIDFIELDER

The purpose of this player is not simply to increase possession. The purpose is to help Gnistan progress through pressure when the direct route is unavailable.

Ideal behaviour

The ideal player should be comfortable receiving between or beside opposition pressure, carrying the ball forward, playing through lines and connecting midfield with the attacking line.

Key evaluation areas

Progressive passing, progressive carrying, passes into the final third, carries into the final third, receiving under pressure, ball retention, decision-making after receiving and defensive work without the ball.

When space exists → play forward quickly.

When space does not exist → create the next advantage.

The player should complement Gnistan's existing transition game rather than slow it down. That is the profile I would prioritise.

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RECRUITMENT PRIORITY: **1V1** **PROGRESSING WINGER**

RECRUITMENT PROFILE 02

1V1 PROGRESSING WINGER

Gnistan's transition strength means that simply adding another fast wide player may not solve the most important problem.

The team should instead consider a winger capable of creating superiority against an organised defence.

Desired profile

A player who can receive wide, eliminate an opponent in 1v1 situations and either attack the penalty area or move inside into the half-space.

Important indicators

Successful dribbles, progressive carries, carries into the penalty area, touches in the penalty area, chance creation following carries and the ability to retain the ball when isolated against a defender.

Create what transition does not always provide: **individual progression against a set defence.**

RECRUITMENT PRIORITY: WING-BACK / FULL-BACK HYBRID

RECRUITMENT PROFILE 03

WING-BACK / FULL-BACK HYBRID

Because the team has increasingly operated with a back three, I would avoid defining the requirement as simply “right-back” or “left-back”.

The preferred player should offer tactical flexibility.

In a back three

Capable of operating as a wing-back in a 3-4-3 or 3-5-2.

In a back four

Comfortable as a conventional full-back if the coaching staff moves to a four-player defensive line.

Role requirements

Progress forward

Support build-up

Receive high and wide

Combine inside

Overlap / underlap

Recover defensively

This creates value in two ways: it strengthens the current system and protects the squad from becoming dependent on one rigid formation.

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THE STRIKER QUESTION AFTER AKINYEMI



The departure of Adeleke Akinyemi creates an important strategic decision.

Gnistan confirmed that Akinyemi left for Neftçi after scoring 13 league goals, at the time leading the Veikkausliiga scoring chart.

GOALS

13

Major attacking output lost.

CONTRACT PROTECTION

2027 OPTION USED

The club protected its position before sale.

TRANSFER CONTEXT

CLUB-RECORD

Described by Gnistan as the largest fee in club history.

From a sporting-management perspective, this is important for two reasons. First, the team lost a major source of goals. Second, the transaction demonstrates the value of protecting a contract before a player is sold.

AVOID THE AUTOMATIC REACTION

“Spend the transfer income on another striker.”

ANALYSE FIRST

Determine how much of Akinyemi's attacking contribution can be replaced internally and how much requires external recruitment.

The evaluation should include goals, expected goals, shots, box presence, runs behind the defensive line, transition threat and the ability of other attackers to absorb greater responsibility.

Only after that analysis would I decide whether striker becomes a Priority A recruitment position.

Public sources / reference: IF Gnistan

RECRUITMENT SHOULD BEGIN WITH **PROFILES, NOT NAMES**

One of the most important principles in modern recruitment is avoiding the question “Which players do we like?” before answering “What exactly does the team need?”

AVOID

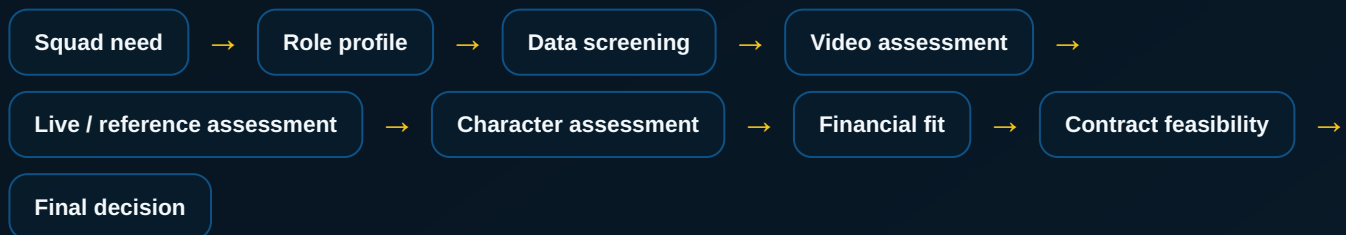
Which players do we like?

Reputation-led or agent-led recruitment can arrive before the football problem has been defined.

BEGIN WITH

What exactly does the team need?

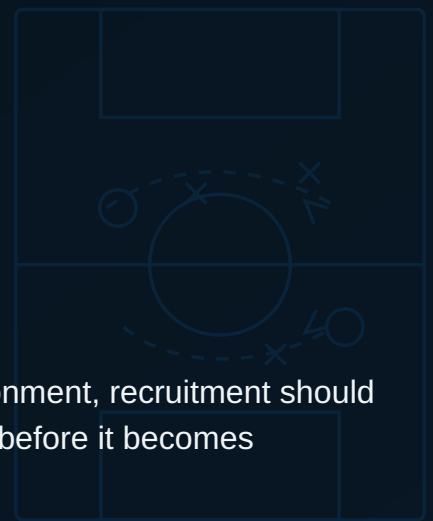
Every recruitment process should begin with a written role profile agreed between the sporting department and coaching staff.



This reduces recruitment driven by reputation, agents or isolated performances. It also creates organisational continuity.

If a head coach changes, the club still retains a clear understanding of what types of players fit its broader sporting model.

RECRUITMENT MARKETS



For a club operating within Gnistan's competitive and financial environment, recruitment should focus heavily on markets where performance value can be acquired before it becomes expensive.

Rather than attempting to compete financially for established players from stronger leagues, Gnistan can build advantage through identification.

Finland

Domestic market and league familiarity.

Nordic region

Adjacent leagues and second tiers.

Baltic football

Potential performance-to-cost opportunities.

Selected European lower divisions

Profile-specific searches rather than broad market fishing.

Emerging U21 players

Development and future-value potential.

Carefully selected free agents

Value only when role and total cost fit.

Profile first. Market second. Player third.

The scouting question becomes: “Where can we find this specific profile at a level of cost and risk appropriate for Gnistan?”

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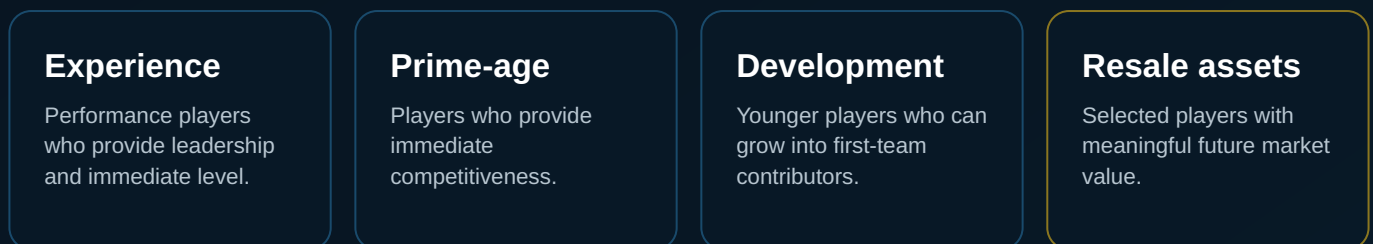
PLAYER TRADING & ASSET MANAGEMENT



Akinyemi's transfer should not be treated only as a successful individual sale. It can become a model for a repeatable sporting process.



Not every player should be signed for resale. Competitive football requires experienced players who may provide high sporting value without significant future transfer value.



The Sporting Department's job is to manage these categories as one portfolio.

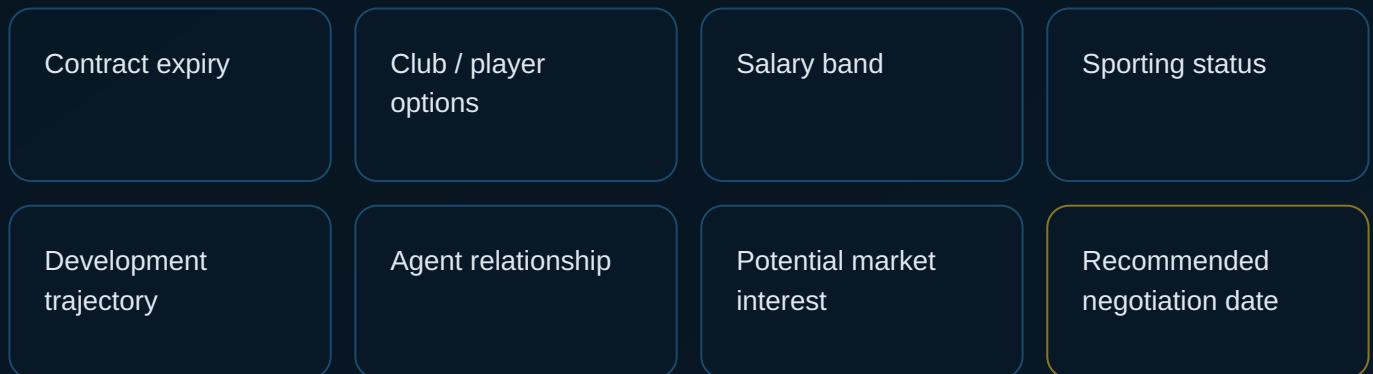
CONTRACT MANAGEMENT IS PART OF RECRUITMENT



Recruitment does not end when the player signs.

One of the most important moments in player asset management occurs before the final year of the contract.

A rolling contract-control system should show:

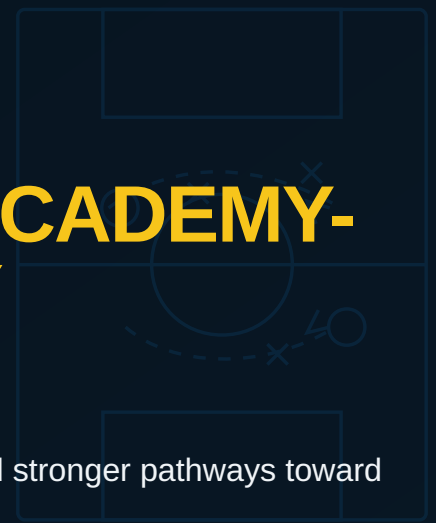


A player's contract decision should ideally be made before urgency transfers negotiating power away from the club.

This becomes especially important for younger players who begin outperforming their original role.

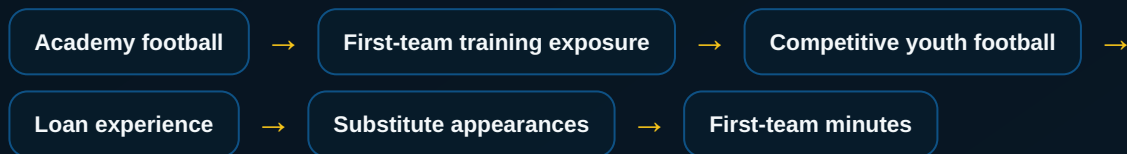
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BUILDING A STRONGER ACADEMY-TO-FIRST-TEAM PATHWAY



Gnistan's new strategy specifically identifies player development and stronger pathways toward the first teams and international level as central objectives.

That pathway should be treated as a sporting process rather than only a philosophical objective.



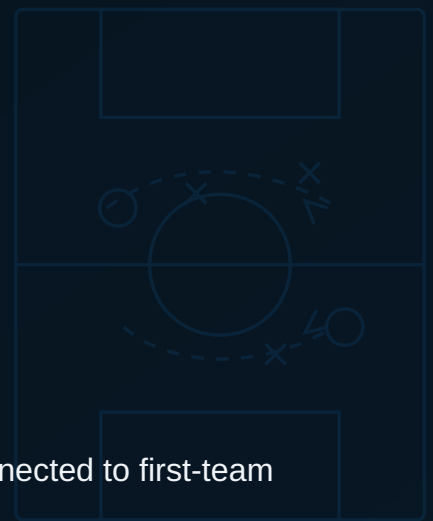
What is the next environment that will accelerate this player's development?

Not every prospect should be promoted immediately. Not every prospect should be loaned. The pathway should reflect the player rather than a fixed rule.

For selected high-potential players, the club should also protect contract duration before exposure significantly increases market interest.

Public sources / reference: IF Gnistan

FIRST-TEAM & ACADEMY ALIGNMENT



The strongest player pathway exists when youth development is connected to first-team requirements.

If the first team intends to maintain a back-three structure, for example, academy development should expose suitable players to the technical and tactical requirements of those roles.

What alignment does mean

Common football language and identifiable developmental competencies.

A young wing-back prospect should understand what the first team requires from that role.

A young central midfielder should understand what progression, pressure resistance and defensive positioning look like at senior level.

What alignment does not mean

It does not require every youth team to copy the first team's formation.

The objective is to reduce the distance between youth potential and first-team usefulness, not to eliminate coaching flexibility.

Connect developmental competencies to senior-team requirements without making the academy tactically rigid.

PERFORMANCE & RECRUITMENT KPIs



The sporting department should measure more than league position.

League results remain the most important competitive output, but they do not explain whether the underlying sporting model is improving.

Competitive performance

League position, points, underlying chance creation and prevention, performance against different opposition structures.

Squad health

Player availability, age distribution, minutes played, role and dependency on individual players.

Player development

U21/U23 minutes, academy first-team exposure, number of players progressing between development stages.

Recruitment

Percentage of signings becoming starters, percentage of contributors, minutes from new signings, relative to contribution.

Asset management

Contract security, transfer income, proportion of core players entering final contract years and value created from recruitment.

The objective is not to create excessive dashboards. It is to create a small number of metrics that improve decision-making.

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SPORTING DEPARTMENT OPERATING RHYTHM



Strategy only becomes useful when it creates recurring processes.

I would establish a regular decision rhythm between sporting management, coaching, performance, scouting and executive leadership.

Squad Plan

Role depth, status, age curve and future gaps.

Contract Plan

Expiry dates, options, priority negotiations and exposure.

Recruitment Shortlist

Always-on candidate pools linked to defined role profiles.

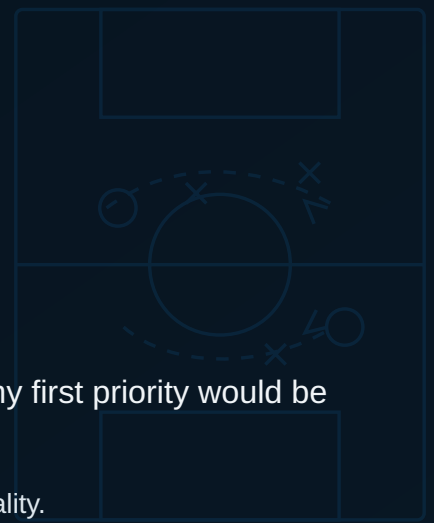
Development / Loan Plan

Next environment and timing for each prospect.

These should not be created only when the transfer window opens.

The transfer window should be the **execution phase** of work completed throughout the year.

MY FIRST 30 DAYS



If joining a football operations or sporting department environment, my first priority would be understanding rather than changing.

The first month would focus on validating public assumptions against internal reality.

Review

- Contracts
- Squad roles
- Salary structure
- Recruitment processes
- Decision responsibilities

Understand

- Performance data
- Player-development pathways
- Current scouting workflows
- Head coach's playing principles
- Perceived squad improvement needs

I would meet the head coach and key sporting staff to understand how they define the team's playing principles and where they believe the squad requires improvement.

The main output of the first 30 days would be: **one agreed squad picture.**

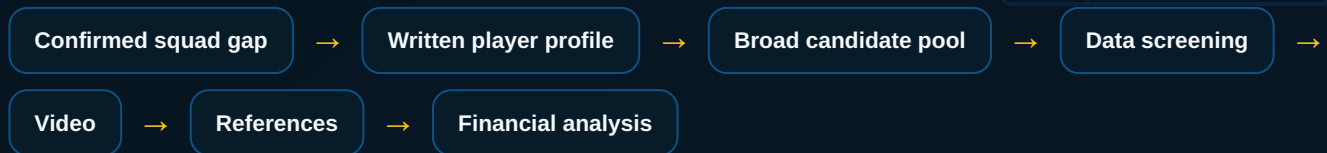
Everyone involved in sporting decisions should understand who the core players are, which contracts require decisions, where development opportunities exist and what recruitment gaps are genuine.

DAYS 31-60

DAYS 31-60

The next phase would convert the squad audit into recruitment architecture.

Every confirmed requirement would receive a written player profile.



The scouting funnel would then produce broad candidate pools before progressively reducing them through data, video, references and financial analysis.

At the same time, priority contract discussions would continue.

The objective would be to avoid a situation where the club begins external recruitment before knowing which existing players will remain.

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DAYS 61-90

The final phase of the first 90 days would focus on execution and establishing repeatable systems.

Execution

- ✓ Priority recruitment targets move toward negotiation.
- ✓ Contract decisions are resolved where possible.
- ✓ Development plans for high-potential players are agreed.

Systems

- ✓ A simple sporting KPI dashboard is implemented.
- ✓ Key sporting processes are documented.
- ✓ Ownership of recurring decisions is clear.

Most importantly, the processes should be documented sufficiently that the sporting department is not dependent on one individual's memory or contacts.

PROPOSED 2027-2029 ROADMAP

2027

Stabilise and Protect

The first objective should be preserving the strongest components of the existing team while resolving contract uncertainty and filling the clearest tactical gaps.

The recruitment focus should favour quality over volume. The season should also establish consistent recruitment, contract and player-development processes.

2028

Develop and Create Value

By the second year, the objective should be to see clearer results from the player-development and recruitment model.

More players should arrive with a visible development pathway. The academy-to-first-team pathway should become measurable. Player trading should become increasingly proactive rather than reactive.

2029

Build a Sustainable European-Level Squad

By 2029, the squad should contain stronger continuity, controlled contract exposure, greater domestic player development and sufficient quality to position the club toward its publicly stated 2030 ambition of competing regularly for European qualification.

The long-term objective is not one exceptional season. It is repeatability.

WHAT **SUCCESS** WOULD LOOK LIKE



Success would mean Gnistan becomes increasingly difficult to disrupt through normal football cycles.

Player departure

Losing one important player should not require rebuilding the team's identity.

Coaching change

A coaching change should not destroy recruitment logic.

Contract control

A player entering the final year of his contract should not become an unexpected emergency.

Transfer cycle

A successful transfer should create resources for the next cycle.

Academy pathway

An academy player should be able to see a realistic pathway toward senior football.

One model

The club's competitive and financial objectives should support each other.

That is the sporting model I would aim to contribute toward.

FINAL STRATEGIC POSITION

My overall view is that Gnistan already possesses something valuable: **a recognisable competitive identity.**

The next step should not be to replace it. It should be to make it more complete.



Protect the Core

Make early decisions on important contracts and prevent unnecessary loss of sporting or financial value.

Preserve the Transition Identity

Maintain the ability to attack quickly, exploit space and play compactly.

Add Controlled Progression

Recruit specific profiles that improve the team's ability to progress and create when opponents deny transition space.

Create Player Value Systematically

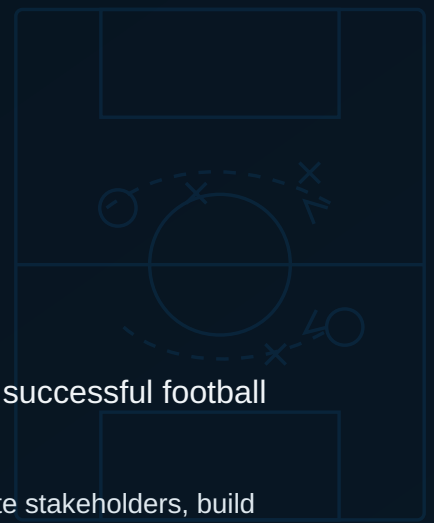
Turn recruitment, development, contract management and selling into one continuous process.

Build a Stronger Pathway

Create clearer routes from Gnistan's development structure into first-team football and ultimately into higher competitive levels.

The objective is not to choose between sporting success and player development. The strongest version of the model allows each to reinforce the other.

PERSONAL CLOSING



I prepared this case study because I am genuinely interested in how successful football organisations are built behind the scenes.

My professional experience has taught me how to manage operations, coordinate stakeholders, build processes and work toward long-term objectives.

Football is the environment in which I want to apply and continue developing those skills.

I understand that entering professional football requires learning from experienced people already working within clubs.

I would therefore welcome the opportunity to contribute in football operations or another suitable role within the sporting side of IF Gnistan, while continuing to learn and develop within a professional football environment.

Thank you for taking the time to review my work.

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APPENDIX

SOURCES & METHODOLOGY

This portfolio is an independent case study based on publicly available information as of October 2026.

Club & competition sources

- IF Gnistan - official club communications and strategy announcements
- Veikkausliiga - match and competition information
- Transfermarkt - public contract and squad reference data

External analysis used

- 60 Degrees North Scandinavian Football
- Griffis Analysis

Methodological limitation

Public information cannot replace internal club data. Salary structure, medical information, contractual clauses, agent expectations, coaching assessments, personality references, full performance datasets and ownership of decision rights would all need to be validated internally before any real sporting decision.

Public analysis can identify questions and priorities.

Internal information determines the final decision.