



The Spartans Youth

Live Together Play Together Win Together

JULY 2021 - THE SUMMER NEWSLETTER



Top: U17 Spartans Youth who won the Andrew Towns Cup 2-1 against Hutchison Vale

Bottom: U19 Spartans Reds who won the Bob Bankier Trophy 4-3 against Loanhead MYFC

Chairman's Welcome

As I write this it has been some of the warmest weather in weeks which always makes me think about the summer football advocates, another discussion for another time!

We know this has been a very start stop season with Covid 19 being the biggest winner. However there have been many successes on the pitch for Spartan teams with more cup and league successes. More importantly, it has been great to see so many players, coaches and helpers working together during this difficult time. I again take the opportunity to thank everyone who is part of the Spartans family and beyond for all their support over the recent months.

Our 25th celebrations continued with myself, Carolyn and Stuart visiting most age groups before the break to hand over the personal gift of the 25th Anniversary key ring to all players and coaches. We still have few to meet and will do so soon. It was great to be able to share the journey from Inverleith park in 1996 as Floras Soccer School to our present home at Ainslie Park. As part of these celebrations the YSMC felt it was an apt time for us to review Spartans Youth Section "Values". It has taken many months of effort from Youth Section members and committee members, thanks to all of those have contributed. You will hear more about the re-launch of our values soon. Look out for the 10 year awards, it is nice to recognise the support of coaches and players, we really appreciate their time and commitment. The award is a bespoke design and hopefully something to be treasured as a reminder of good times on your Spartans journey.

We have a lot to look forward to with all football starting again soon in a much more recognisable way. So, enjoy what's left of the summer break, come back refreshed and ready to go again!

Les Atkinson

Live Together Play Together Win Together

Match Kit Donations

We are delighted to have been able to donate last seasons match kit to Meeru Primary & Secondary School in Uganda Bukomansimbi District, William Reid School, Zambia, and to the charity Kit Aid.

25 Year Anniversary

Les and Stuart out meeting with players and talking about the story of the Youth Section and celebrating our anniversary





Striving to be better

During lockdown over Zoom we had opportunity to learn from a range of top coaches and players – Steve Sallis, Mindset & Leadership Mentor and Peter Sturgess Head of U11s Development, English FA. As well as from our own First Team Coaches and players, Dougie Samuel and Debbi McCulloch. There was plenty of interesting advice – here are a few takeaways:

- Be patient and take time to get to know your players, they are more than footballers
- Ask questions of those around you to learn
- Think about your communication - have you been understood?
- Be positive - football at Spartans should be “serious fun”
- Passion and perseverance need to be nurtured
- Good coaches recognise their strengths & weaknesses
- Take time to reflect - plan, do, and always review

You can only become a better football coach by educating yourself: completing SYFA courses, reading and watching informative football people, taking ideas from other sports like netball, judo, rugby, etc, and by listening to your players. Over the coming months watch out for more inhouse coach development events and to view the most recent zoom events check out our [You Tube Channel](#).

Coach Development Officer - Stuart Gray

Certainly 2021 to date has once again been a challenging time for everyone, we were all happy to see some light at the end of the tunnel with news from the SFA/Scottish Government that we could resume training in March followed by contact matches from April. Our main focus has been to look to support the players, volunteer helpers & coaches on & off the pitch. As we make plans for season 2021/2022 we are also working on some new projects to improve the experience & standard of coaching within the Youth section.

Below 2006 Youth & 2010 players enjoyed an SFA training camp at the Oriam. A highlight for the players was meeting Willian & Kieran Tierney of Arsenal. The girls teams U13 Beveridge and U13 Douglas also took part.



A Journey in Football

Founder of Floras Soccer School, Carlo De Angelis has written a personal account of the challenges and joys of setting up and growing a youth football club.

An interesting read about where Spartans Youth began.

Order your copy by emailing:

clubmanager@spartansfcyouth.com



Drinking the Wind

Scotland Call Up for Graham & Sidey

Congratulations to Lily Graham of our U19s national performance team who earned her 1st Scotland schools cap this month in a game against England. Scotland won 2-1.

Congratulations also go to Leah Sidey and Lily Graham who were called up to the Scotland U17s training camp which was held in June. This is a great achievement for the players who work hard and want to learn and develop at every training session. Credit to the coaches Alfie Smith, Michael Cranston and Charlene Lassells who have worked hard with all the players within the squad and this is great recognition for the great work that they are doing.

Player Pathway

Player progression has seen Hannah Nicolson move from U15s to our U17s squad. Hannah who is still only 13 has shown that age doesn't matter when it comes to ability and has been a starter within our U17s squad. Well done to Sophie Douglas who moved from our U17s squad to our U19s National performance squad. Sophie is only 15 & has been with the U17s squad for 18 months.

School Football Achievements

Well done to our U15s player Ella Beaton-Hill who was part of the George Watson team who won the Scottish schools football shield.

U17s player Hannah Nicolson and U15s player Aimee Laidlaw got to the final of the U15s Schools Scottish Cup with Lasswade HS. Unfortunately they lost 3-2 in the final but this was a great achievement for the team.

Daniel Blyth



Left to Right from top: Lily Graham, Hannah Nicholson, Aimee Laidlaw, Leah Sidey, Emily Hamilton, Sophie Douglas

Coach Development

Well done to our Under 17s Head Coach, Daniel Blyth, and SWPL1 Women's 1st team coach, Scott Noble, who both sat their UEFA B License in June. This is a very intensive and challenging course and both coaches have been hard at work over lockdown with numerous zoom calls and assignments. They were glad to get out on the pitch to practice and deliver what they had learnt over the past year.



Academy Graduates

Congratulations: to Amy Denholm, Zoe Murray, Lily Graham (left) & Emily Hamilton (above) who made their debuts for Spartans Women; and to Josh Laing, Sam Coates, Given Ndlovu, Louis Maclachlan Aaron Cameron (from left above) and Ben Lamont who progress from U17s to Les Atkinson U20s squad.

Fundraising & Matches

The 2010s are enjoying being back playing their ESSDA Sunday morning fixtures after a long layoff and it is good to see our kids playing with a smile on their faces.

In April, 13 kids from the year group took part in the virtual Kilt Walk 2021 and raised more than £4000 for 2010 squad funds. Congratulations to Abraham, Adam, Calum Ritchie, Daniel, Finlay, Jay, Josh Taylor, Lewis Brown, Nathan, Robbie, Sam and Zachary for such a brilliant fundraising effort and thanks too to the coaches, parents & guardians who played their part in making this a success.

Paul Adam



Douglas and Reilly Merge

The Douglas & Reilly squads have merged together again. In the last week of December Brooke Walker joined the squad and she is an absolute pleasure to have around. Brooke has strengthened the squad and has already scored her first goals for the team.

Lorne Johnston had the opportunity to step up and support the U15 Harrison squad. Her amazing tenacity in training and matches paid off and she made a brilliant debut for the U15s, and her first experience of 11 aside. Well done!

Unfortunately team mate, Jennifer Cain, sustained a fracture to her heel during a match. We all wish her a speedy recovery and hope it's not long before she is back at training. Get better soon Jen.

Gergo Szöllősi



Football Festival

Our 2009 Reds and Blues held a festival to mark the end of their small sided games ahead of moving to 11's in August. It was a fantastic morning with great weather and all the teams really enjoyed the amazing facilities at The Academy and getting more experience on the full size pitches.

The teams held 2 mini round robin tournaments welcoming 6 ESSDA teams along. Our Reds played 3 close fixtures with Currie Star, Musselburgh Windsor and Edinburgh South, while the Blues played Lochend FC, Currie FC and Bonnyrigg Rose.

Our Reds were showing off their Zip top sponsored by FNZ, and new match top sponsors, Hepburn Fabrication.

Colin Foggon



Soccer 7s

After missing the full 5's season, the 2012's have had a great start to the 7's season. We've had league games and friendlies all over Edinburgh, the Lothians and even up to Fife for a game! The coaches are delighted with the progress and improvement that the boys have made since the start of the season. It's amazing to see how well the lads are playing after only two months on the big pitches.

We've been moving players into different teams every couple of weeks, asking boys to play in different positions and playing against opposition in tough leagues that will really challenge the boys and develop them as footballers. Week on week we can see that the boys are improving and are playing some fantastic football, well done to all of the lads! A huge thank you from the 2012 coaches for all of the support and effort from the parents & guardians, the players and everyone else who has been involved up until now.

Richard Gray



Spartans Blues 2008's Debut Season at 11 aside

Back in May 2020 the thought of getting the boys back playing was shrouded in uncertainty. Who knew when football would return. The boys were kept motivated and engaged through Zoom meetings and challenges set by the coaching staff.

Like everyone else, it was not until mid-July that the boys got together for limited training. It was a further three months before the excitement started as we had fixtures! The boys had to be patient though - fixture 1 - called off due to a water logged pitch - fixture 2 - cancelled as travel ban implemented and opponents were outside an EH postcode.

Our first game was eventually played on 18 October 2020 - an emphatic 5-2 victory. Football was back - our boys were back on the park - everyone was happy. The season has had it's challenges. Start. Bad weather. Travel bans. COVID restrictions. Stop. Start. Fixture congestion. However, the boys stuck together throughout and what a great opening season they had. Finishing 4th in their debut season of 11 aside. Now to look forward to season 2021/22!

Paul Woods



A Season Like No Other ...

For the 2007's 19/20 season ended when the pandemic struck, with none of us expected to be viewing the 20/21 season as one of further lockdowns, challenges, and restrictions. Coming out of our zoom fitness encounters to be training together was a real positive start to the season, albeit initially in smaller bubbles.

Getting back playing games in October was a huge progression for all the squad and gave everyone a real sense of focus again, until lockdown would strike again at the start of 2021. Games resumed in May, and it was great to just get back playing again and we appreciated every moment on the pitch.

As the season ended it was fitting that the players acknowledge their teammates. They voted for Archie Wylie as Players, player of the Year and Oisín Nairn as Players, Trainer of the year. Two very deserving winners.

Everyone is a winner this season though as we have all faced the challenges together and will all become more resilient from the experience. Well done to everyone in the Youth u14s. Coaches, players, and parents.

So, indeed a season like no other, but we all look forward to training through the summer and preparing for the 21/22 season, and hopefully much more normality.

Gordon Whittaker



Words of Encouragement

The 2021/22 has come to a close for 2006 Youth with us finishing in mid-table in Division 1. Lockdown has had an impact with several boys suffering from muscle-strains and growth-related injuries but we are confident that all will get back to full strength.

We were excited to return to matches in April but unfortunately in the first game Joe broke his leg and this put everything into perspective. He is already making a great recovery after 7 weeks in a full-leg cast. We worked hard to get a morale-boosting message from his favourite Arsenal player, Bukayo Saka, and our lead coach Chris Innes managed to use his contacts to get a [video message](#) and a signed shirt arrived too! Great to have top players being positive role models.

We moved a few players between teams and welcomed new joiner (Charlie), so we started adjusting our style of play. From 442, in the last few games of the season the team moved to 343/352 formations and results picked up. This gives us confidence as we plan for next season. We are looking forward to U16s with a new signing (Kenzie) and the coaches ready for the challenge.

Nigel Miller



Good Progress

After a long wait the U16 Locomotives finally recommenced their season. It was great to have the boys back training and to see their happy smiling faces.

We recruited a new goalkeeper which has helped the squad, so no more asking for volunteers. A huge thanks to the outfield boys who stepped up to man the goals. Good luck to all the boys who have been doing national 5 exams, this has impacted on training numbers but we still had worthwhile sessions. We reached a cup final and finished midtable, a great result following a disrupted season. We are looking forward to the challenge of U17s.

Keith Chalmers



End of an Era

Spartans Blues 2003 squad pictured at the end of their very last cup game versus Broxburn at Albyn Park. Unfortunately ended in a 3-0 loss in a game that could have gone either way.

It has been a pleasure to work with such a talented and committed group of lads who gave their all throughout the years and finally against Broxburn.

It is sad that these boys will never play in a competitive game with each other again and very sad from a coach's point of view that my time with this team has come to an end. Some players are hoping to stay with Spartans and a large number of others are off to university and pastures new.

On behalf of myself, Bruce, Mike and Nigel we would like to wish the players all the best for the future and hope that they enjoyed their footballing years at Spartans.

Colin Boyes

Player News

2008 Youth player, Bryn had a great time at the FAW (North Wales) training camp in Wrexham. He trained with the squad on Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd June. The facilities and coaching was excellent.

The standard of football was high and training great; learning a lot from it. He was informed that he would be part of training squad for 12 months and assessed on whether he would be put forward to play for the team. With more training camps to attend later in the year. Well done Bryn!



Fynn, 2011 player, visited the CR7 Museum in Cristiano's home town of Funchal, Madeira on his holiday. The Ronaldo chop and other skills will be the order of the day for the upcoming 2011 Football Festival to be held later this month.

Congratulations to 2009 Blues and Girls U15 McMahon player Aylei who won her school P7 Sportsmanship Award. Aylei was rewarded for all her hard work on her footballing achievements.



Coming to America

2003 Red's Player, Adam Sloan, shares his journey to Kansas

I had never thought about a football scholarship in America before, but after I had heard about people I know going and then seeing that Future Pro USA were holding a trial day at Ainslie Park I thought I'd go up and see what it was all about. The first part of the trial day was learning about all the stages I would have to go through and then what life would be like as a student athlete in America. After we had all got a rough idea of what it would all be like we moved on to the actual football side of the day. The future pro workers sent us all down to the changing rooms where there were three different teams and when you went in the changing rooms there was a whole kit in there for you. The football started with all the teams being separated and then we did some simple training like possession, passing and shooting drills, which we did for about an hour to warm up for the main games. There were three thirty minute games where every team would play each other so each team would play twice.

After the trial day it was about a week before I got a call saying I had got through the trials and can move onto the next step. Once I had been accepted future pro sent me an email with the footage from the trial day which I had to get all the highlights of my performance to make a start on my highlight reel that would be sent out to coaches in America. Once I had done that it was just a case of going to more trial days to get more footage for my video that should be around 5 minutes long. The second trial day I went to was at the Broadwood stadium in Cumbernauld. As I had already been accepted, I only had to come for the end games and got to play every game as clients take priority. When my highlight reel was completed, it was just a case of waiting for offers from colleges and universities across America. After speaking to a few coaches, I decided that Garden City Community College, Kansas was the right fit for me. I liked the coach there and I liked his enthusiasm and vision for the team. The courses on offer at Garden City were varied and interesting too so I had lots to choose from.

I am excited to experience a different type of football and learn how different it is compared to in Scotland. I am also excited to have been given the opportunity to play football at college level while I earn my degree.

Future Pro USA Success for Under 19s Girls

Under 19s National Performance players Amy Denholm and Carys Grieve have also secured a football scholarship and head over to the US to continue their footballing journey. Amy joins the University of West Alabama and Carys is also heading to Garden City Community College.



Top left to bottom right: Adam Sloan, Garden City, Amy Denholm, University of West Alabama and Carys Grieve.

What's new from the Spartans Family



Still Kicking @ The Academy

Still Kicking is a free programme that provides an opportunity for women to engage in football regardless of ability or experience. An hour long session that is broken down on the pitch into team building exercises, drills and skills and fun fives. Sessions run on Thursday evenings 7 to 8pm and take place at The Academy.

All you need to bring is lots of enthusiasm. We have boots that you can borrow if you need them.

For information on volunteering with our Community Programmes contact:
scottnoble@spartanscfa.com



Holiday Hat-tricks Summer Coaching

Hat-tricks is our fun-packed holiday programme. The emphasis is on developing children's football skills and providing a thoroughly enjoyable week under the watchful eye of our highly qualified Academy coaches. It is perfect for players of all abilities. Our Junior (5-8 years) and Senior Soccer Schools (9-11 years) run Monday to Friday.

To find out more or to book coaching for the new term follow the link:

[Our schedule | Spartans Community Football Academy | Powered by ClassForKids \(class4kids.co.uk\)](#)



The Spartans FC Season Tickets

First Team season tickets are now on sale. They cost £100 (Adult) and £50 (Concession: 16-18, over 65 and students) with U16's free. They are excellent value for money.

They give you access to 17 home league games, local cup competitions plus all pre season fixtures although not the Scottish Cup.

Electronic season tickets can be purchased via the Fanbase app

You can also buy tickets online via our club online shop:

<https://ec-lions.myshopify.com/collections/season-tickets>



Popular Football YouTuber, visits Ainslie Park

Here's what Sam had to say, "This club do more good work for their community than any other I've come across. They're not bad at football either!!"

Watch here:

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=xFSkXWFmU90>