



# The Spartans Youth

Live Together Play Together Win Together

DECEMBER 2021 - THE WINTER NEWSLETTER

## Chairman's Welcome

When we started the 2021/22 season in August it almost felt like normal football again, lets hope there are no more hurdles to overcome as 2022 arrives.

There have been some important developments in the last few month. We were pleased to welcome our 2014 squad, delayed from February due to COVID. After a period of consultation with coaches, parents and players a new player pathway for the Girls Academy has been implemented in line with the changes introduced by the SWF. Thanks to successful fundraising efforts we purchased a Veo Camera to support the development of our 11aside teams. Finally we have launched our Club App, which we ultimately hope will not only improve communication directly to our Club Members but also promote a fantastic community spirit.

Further donations were made from our COVID 19 fund to support local schools ensure families receive gifts and food to make for a happy Christmas.

A huge thanks goes to all our volunteers who have kept everything going during another very challenging year.

Wishing you & your families a very Happy Christmas.

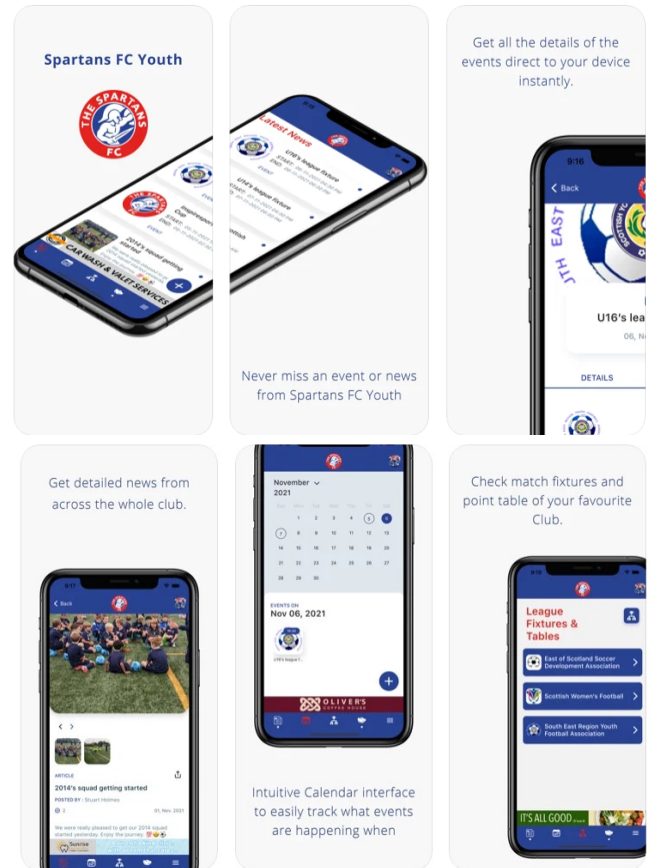
Les Atkinson

Live Together Play Together Win Together

## U13 Reilly Take the League Title!

In an exciting final play off match between two well matched teams, the U13 Reilly's did themselves and their coaches proud as they battled hard and kept the pressure on despite going 1 down after half time. The girls then brought the match back to all square from a corner.

A nail biting finale saw Spartans U13 Reilly win the title after beating Hibs Whites 4-1 in penalties. Thanks to all who came to cheer on the girls.



## Your Club - Stay Informed & Connected

In November we were excited to launch our new Club App in association with Community Club App. The App contains everything you need to know about your club in one location.

The news feed gives you the bigger picture, with stories from other teams & the wider Spartans Family. The App has details of fixtures and other key events, links to key contacts, our leagues, websites & to the Club Shop.

To download our Club App go to your App Store and search: Spartans FC Youth.





## Coach & Player Development

Stuart Gray

After the extended stop and start over the last 18 months due to covid it was great to get back to the coaching & weekend matches after the summer holidays.

Over the last few months more work has gone into the clubs coaching session plans with the younger age groups, one to one coaching session on coach education, and on the pitch we have had Donald Park "Parky" deliver an 11 aside Coach In-Service with over 30 Spartans FC Youth coaches in attendance.

We have also reintroduced our Development training sessions and Friday night Goalkeeper School too.

A number of our Youth coaches have successfully booked onto their level 2 SFA Coaching courses on the Children & Youth Pathways

In the future we will be working in partnership with a Sports Psychologist and continue to work on and off the pitch with our club curriculum.

### Our New Team Member - Veo

To mark our 25th anniversary we ran a series of fundraising events:

- 25th Anniversary Merchandise
- A Football Scavenger Hunt
- 2020 Euros Competition
- Arnold Clark Community Fund

Our goal was to raise money to purchase a Veo Camera, and we were successful!

Veo gives our teams the opportunity to rewatch and analyse their matches, providing learning and development opportunities.

With just one camera and 18 teams, our teams will be sharing this new technology.

22 matches recorded and learned from so far!



## Respect for All

Sofie Young

Following several years of horrific and vile verbal abuse aimed at one 2008 Blues players during matches from opposition teams, (because of the way he looks) the team decided to create a new logo for our strip which emphasises the core values of Spartans Youth and to show others that #respect is at the forefront. A huge thank you to Helen Davies @porridge.design for creating this amazing logo and to Colin Campbell Sports who printed it onto the strips for free.

Please show respect and sportsmanship at all levels to players, coaches, parents and officials.

## Drinking the Wind

Founder of Floras Soccer School which 25 years later has grown into Spartans FC Youth, Carlo De Angelis, has written a personal account of his experiences of growing a youth football club.

Sales of 'Drinking the Wind' for this first time author were great, with 100 copies sold. A small profit of £250 was raised and Carlo has shared this with good causes, the first Autism World Cup and to Craigroyston FC to help with repairs caused by fire damage.



## 2014 Squad Joins the Family

The 2014 squad have gone from strength to strength since a postponed introduction due to Covid-19.

The players and coaches have been working extremely hard and have all grown in confidence and developed massively whilst having lots of fun! They look forward to continuing their journey in 2022 after a joyous festive season!

Pictured with the First XI Players who came to visit.

Brandin Sharp



## U9 McAlonie Ready for U10s

After beginning the year with only 6 players, and having never played a match as a team, we are happy to report that going into 2022 we will have 20 girls all joining us next year in the new U10 team. Progression of all players has been exponential this year, with abilities improving and overall player enjoyment at a high. I am excited to continue working with the team in the New Year as well as with Steven, Alan, Erin, Joe and Andy all of whom have really helped the girls in training and at matches.

Next year will see half the team begin their first attempts at playing 7-a-side football, something the girls have already expressed excitement for. The other half will continue to build at 5-a-side level with the hope they'll be able to play 7-a-side in 2023. It has been great seeing the girls improve their abilities and teamwork this year as well as building their friendships with each other.

2021 has been an enjoyable and progressive year for the squad despite the early stop-start nature and all coaches believe this will only improve as we move up to U10s.

Rob Kallend



## 2013 Kilt Walk Fundraising

The 2013 squad had a disrupted start to their journey as they started only shortly before the first lockdown. All the restrictions have meant that there has been very little opportunity for the squad to raise funds and make some memories away from the football pitch.

Therefore the opportunity to take teams to attend their first tournament in the Edinburgh Cup over the summer was enjoyed by all.

The team have recently taken part in the Kilt Walk in Glasgow and ran a family Quiz Night raising an impressive amount of funds for the team to look forward to 2022 and 7aside football.



## 2012 First Season @ 7s

Like everyone else on earth the start to our year had been put on hold due to COVID. As our boys had missed an entire season of 5s they would be transitioning from Fun 4s into 7 aside games. We started preparation for this in February with some unofficial, socially distanced kick a-bouts in Inverleith Park. It was great to see so many of the kids together again. Little did they know that the uneven and unpredictable playing surface of Inverleith would be like a bowling green when compared to some of the pitches they'd play on when our season began in earnest.

Upon the lifting of restrictions and our return to official training at Ainslie Park we began the process of forming our four teams (Reds, Whites, Greys and Blues) and deciding which leagues the boys would compete in.

Throughout the first half of the season we rotated the boys through the four teams in order to try and give everyone the

same chance to play at a level to enhance their development and give them as much enjoyment from playing football as possible.

The second half of the season has seen us play with more settled squads although we still operate a fluid system where kids move between teams. We have ended up with four very competitive sides who have produced some great footballing moments including wonder goals, great saves and fabulous pieces of individual and team skill and endeavour. I'm sure all the parents will have been as proud of the boys efforts as we have.

Most of the boys have had their first taste of cup football. The Maradona team came within a goal of making the final of the Edinburgh South mini tournament in July and the Pele boys were outstanding in August playing in the Edinburgh Cup.

Coming up shortly in January we have our first ever team outing, a trip to watch Newcastle United v Watford and a training session in Sunderland.

Events such as tournaments and trips away have to be paid for and we'd like to say a huge thanks to the parents who have gone above and beyond with their fundraising efforts.

We were also extremely grateful to receive sponsorship from McHardy Financial providing us with a new training kit.



Thanks to experienced coaches Roger Ashworth and Alan Sinclair, who have helped us massively passing on their experience knowledge.

We were delighted to welcome Owen Craig, Jasper Kirk, Elio Rambla, Rhuraidh Murray, Arthur Schwichtenberg, Lewis Cavin, Liam Jack and Corrado Crolla to the squad.

Leaving us is Cole Love who will continue his footballing journey with Hearts. Cole is absolutely dedicated to football, giving 100% every time he plays. These attributes along with his superb natural football ability will stand him in good stead going forward. A Spartans boy since the age of three, Cole is a very popular member of our team. Good luck Cole, we are all very proud of you.

The Spartans FC Youth 2012 coaching group



## A Season to Remember - Reilly U13

The team hasn't stopped, we kept playing football, not even the summer break could stop us!

Head Coach Gergo managed to complete his UEFA C coaching qualification and as a result of that the girls were invited for a pizza night at Spartans on a Friday night. It was good fun and a great opportunity for some teambuilding!

The old-new merged squad started to bond together again, not just because of the pizza! The girls have gone on to come first in the U13 South East Jenna Fife league.

In the meantime two of our players, Storme and Klara, have trialed successfully and got into Edinburgh Sports Academy. Very well done!

The cold and frosty training sessions have returned in a blink of an eye. Luckily, thanks to some sponsorship, we were able to get some cosy winter jackets for the girls.

Half of our team went on a day tour to Newcastle, not just to see a game, but to play a bit of footie with a local team. A really fun but tiring day!

It has been a long year, it started with delivering training and social sessions over Zoom to actual football filled weeks on the pitch and now we are preparing ourselves for 11-a-side football. Exciting times ahead!

Gergely Szöllősi



## Ready for 11aside - U13 Beveridge

Spartans Beveridge U13 team receiving their runners up medals after a night out watching the Hearts v Hibs SWPL match at Tynecastle. The girls came runners up in their first competitive league.

Fiona Brian



## Great Development at 9 aside

The 2010 kids got their first taste of 9 aside action with a great day out at the Edinburgh Cup in August and have since gone from strength to strength.

The coaches have been really pleased with the transition from 4 to 3 teams. The boys have been playing great football every week and showing real teamwork and togetherness against some tough opponents.

The good football that we have been playing has not gone un-noticed by other clubs and two of our players have decided to take the opportunity to play for a Pro Youth Team and we wish Lennon Watt and Reece Waddell all the best at Hamilton Accies and Livingston respectively.

Another measure of the performance levels our kids have been achieving, is that from the next block of fixtures, our Zidane team will move up a playing level to the Maradona stage. It is tremendous to see this progress and I am confident the boys will respond well to the challenge.

The next block of 9s matches will resume after the Christmas break, in these matches we will continue our transitions towards the 11 a-side format by switching from our formation from 3-2-3 to a 4-3-1. This is part of the Spartans YS transition plan and will present the coaches and kids with some fresh challenges and opportunities to learn.

My thanks to all the coaches and secretary for their commitment and support throughout this difficult year.

I hope you and your families have a safe and enjoyable Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Paul Adam



## Hardest Working Squad

Our year group came out of lockdown and we immediately started getting ready for the move to 11 a side football and we played our first match in mid-April. We decided to pack as many games in as we could as the jump to the full size game was such a challenge for the players.

During the summer we also arranged trips to a festival at Livingston as well as the Edinburgh Cup, which the players really enjoyed. We held our 2nd annual Beach Day which was the usual carry on of fun games, rounded off with the whole squad in the sea with the fill the bucket challenge.

We entered a very competitive 9 team Division 1 league in August and it has been a steep learning curve for all concerned as we adjusted to the SERFYFA competitions. It has been brilliant to see the growth in the players football ability as they have adapted to the challenges of playing at this level. The core message to our players is to be "the hardest working squad" in the league and to concentrate on individual performances at training and games week to week. The result of this has seen the squad play some great football at times and be handily placed in the league and cups as we enter December. We will go into 2022 with loads of great games to look forward to.

In addition we have managed some social activities for the squad (thanks to support from Claire in organising!), organised some guest coaching with support from 1st team coach Derek Riddell and we have also been invited to play some Pro youth games. Lastly, we have also taken part in some additional training with Craig Dinwoodie as part of the effort from the club to support the player pathway. This is part of the club strategy which will hopefully see the Youth section provide players for the Spartans adult teams.

Gordon Daly



## Learning & Developing

Spartans U13 Blues started 11 asides in August, joining a large division 3 league.

Having lost a few players at the start of the season, the team were pleased to welcome new team mates Aaron O'Connor, Daniel Nichols Reyes and Beau Rait to the squad.

It has been a steep learning curve and the players have been working extremely hard. After a couple of heavy defeats at the beginning of the season they are showing great progress and are learning and developing as a team, which has seen them start to make some good progress in the league as well.

Keep up the good work boys!

Claire Silver



## Move to U17s

Spartans Locomotives have not had many matches mainly due to lack of refs, I am sure lots of other teams are in the same boat.

We are currently sitting 3rd place in the league after 5 matches.

We lost a couple of players one to another Spartans team and one started an apprenticeship, we wish them all the best.

We had a home game where we got to use the new VEO camera set up, this is a great system and will be a big plus to teams that get to use it.

Mike our head coach has been posting our match reports onto the new Spartans app again another great idea by the club.

Loco's wish everyone a Happy Christmas when it comes, I will ask Santa for lots more games for us to play in the New Year!

Keith Chalmers



## New Challenges

The U15 McMahon girls enjoyed a team night out and last time together as a squad. The coaches are proud of how well the girls have worked together this season, they have been a pleasure to coach. The girls battled together as a team and have had some real memorable games despite the challenges of covid and changes to the coaching team.

The girls have made their parents and coaches proud. Finishing 4th in the league with a positive goal difference.

Some of the girls progress to our U16 and U18s squads in 2022, others are continuing their development at other clubs and we wish them all the best.

Many thanks to Aaron Hunter, Head Coach and long term volunteer with Spartans Youth.



## Update from 2006s 1st team

Our 21/22 season has been going well and we are currently in the top half of the Division 1 league table.

The players have been showing more of their potential this season and performances have been boosted with Scott Johnston joining our coaching team bringing an new perspective and an increase in training intensity for all the boys. We've still got great stability in the age group with more than half of our 1st team squad having been with us since 7-a-sides, (and 6 players since Fun 4s!). In these numbers we've welcomed Blair Rennie back, a player who started with us at Fun 4s but he's had a few seasons away before taking the opportunity to return.

Nigel Miller

# What's new from the Spartans Family



## Volunteering with The Academy

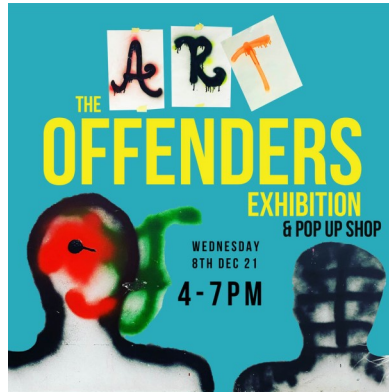
The Academy would like to give a huge thank you to Spartans U20 player Kier.

Keir has volunteered an incredible 78 hours this year with our Community Programmes.

Keir has been a terrific asset to our community coaches and a great representation of Spartans FC.

For information on volunteering with our Community Programmes contact:

[scottnoble@spartanscfa.com](mailto:scottnoble@spartanscfa.com)



## Alternative School Art Exhibition

Prior to the pandemic, the students who attend Spartans Alternative school collaborated their art with a social enterprise project and named it CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS. Their mission was to create awareness and positive change while they explored different ways of creating art.

The students had their first ever Art Exhibition and sale to raise funds for Scottish Veterans. It was an amazing event with over £700 raised so far.

You can purchase art work and gifts here: <https://spartanscfa.com/latest-news/alt-school-art-exhibition>



## SFA Para Football Award Winners

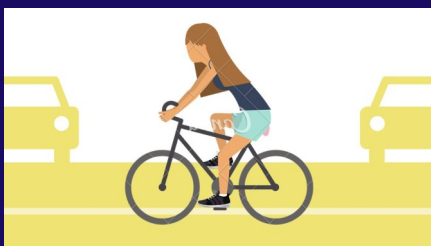
Congratulations to Spartans Connections who were winners of the Best Para Football Project.

After starting with just 6 players in 2013, they now offer playing opportunities for over 70 adults across 5 teams, with social playing opportunities.

The teams compete in the SFA Pan Para-Football Leagues and national competitions. Although not all players come along for the competitive side, some simply enjoy the fitness and social side of training.

Sessions are every Thursday. Email Garry for more info:

[garrybetts@spartanscfa.com](mailto:garrybetts@spartanscfa.com)



## Cycling to The Academy survey

The Academy is asking for some feedback on how we can encourage more cycling to and from Ainslie Park. Help by completing this survey and you can enter into a draw for some Academy goodies . Thank you!

<https://app.upshot.org.uk/survey/45972868/1803/6026b8e4/>