



Guidelines for 11 a-side transition coaches

The Spartans FC Youth Section has three key objectives:

- 1. Providing Opportunities for Children & Young People to play in a fun and safe environment**
- 2. Development of Players to play football at the highest level**
- 3. Helping children and young people learn life skills and values for later life**

While Spartans is a football club, the opportunities and responsibilities for coaches are far broader. Coaches are the role models for children and parents and have a responsibility to project and promote agreed core values. From simple things like coaches always wearing the appropriate Spartans kit through how a coach communicates with his/her peers, players, parents, opponents and officials. A coach is a leader and his/her actions and behaviour are reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of all that he/she meets. This is especially important to consider with children and young people.

Coaches are responsible for the establishment of standards within their squad and throughout the club.

- Training is organised and starts on time
- Coaches respect other coaches and communicate openly
- Coaching is a group activity and not a dictatorship
- Players and parents are treated respectfully
- Always encourage players and push them to improve
- Standards of behaviour are communicated and respected
- Youth players all develop at different rates - the key is the player's application

Spartans has an opportunity to set standards in youth football and these standards are established and promoted by the coaches of the teams.

While it's important to be competitive in Youth Football the setting of standards and the building of core values within a team and within individuals is vital. All youth team players will leave the club at some stage. The real prize is when players go to other teams they exhibit the standards and values that have been instilled in them.

Off the pitch standards lead to on the pitch success.

Managing the expectations of both players and parents is an integral part of being a coach. Establishing expectations at the beginning of the season (goal setting for squad and players) and being honest about these will mean less opportunity for dis-satisfied players and parents. Initial queries about playing, squads and opportunities to develop should be dealt with by the head coach in the first instance and then can be referred to the 11 aside co-ordinator, Coach Development Officer and Youth Section Management Committee if necessary.

Coaching 11 aside footballers can be challenging but very rewarding. Spartans will support you in your efforts to coach each player to be the best they can and encourage and support you to develop your own skills as a coach.

One of the key concepts of the club is to ensure that players are encouraged to stay with the Youth club and continue to play, train and compete at their chosen level. Ultimately one of the goals for the youth section is to see players progressing through our ranks to the U20 squad and then adult 1st team or higher and carrying the lessons they have learned with them.

Spartans is a community club with a strong vision for the future and as such the ever expanding and evolving coaching group is vital to the long-term success of the club.

Definition of coaching roles

Year Group coordinator

SFA Youth Level 3 / C, B Badge (minimum)

Ideally an experienced coach who has been with the group a while can link the different squads and coaches and provide support where required in conjunction with the CDO. This role can be combined with one of the other roles and does not necessarily need to be the Head Coach of the division 1 squad. This coach can assist in squad formation and in discussions with parents and children.

Head Coach

SFA Youth Level 3/C, B Badge (Minimum)

A well qualified and experienced coach with enthusiasm to continuously develop players. Ideally without a child in the group but parent coaches can also fulfil the role. Responsible for the players and coaches and can delegate responsibilities from team selection to admin.

Coach

SFA Youth Level 3/C, B Badge (minimum)

Primary support coach to the Head Coach, provides cover for the Head Coach and has input into all decisions for the squad. A well qualified and experienced coach with enthusiasm to continuously develop players. Ideally without a child in the group but parent coaches can also fulfil the role.

Assistant Coach

SFA Youth Level 2 and above

Providing support in all aspects of managing the group from training to admin, can focus on certain areas and have responsibility for example player fitness, player rehabilitation, goalkeeper training and team admin/fundraising.

Parent Helper

Parents can provide a great support network from admin to fundraising to lifts to training and games. Parents feel part of it so encourage as much involvement as possible especially in non-football related areas.

Moving from the 7 aside to 11 asides

There are a lot of factors that coaches need to consider when selecting squads for 11 a side as age/stage, growth and maturity all have an impact as the players head towards turning into teenagers. It has been shown that sometimes players who are the most prominent at seven a side do not always transfer this dominance to the eleven a side game for a variety of reasons and vice versa. Therefore, the initial transition to 11s must be closely observed by the coaches and consideration in later years should also be given to birth dates as some boys can be eleven months older than others in the same year group which may result in 'catch up' at a later stage. Constant squad evaluation is the key to monitor this.

The good practice of constant evaluation of the squad at 7s with movement of players between squads as they develop has been taking place so that players and parents are aware that this squad movement is a natural part of football prior to the transition to 11s.

The more facts coaches have about each player the easier it is to communicate decisions to players and parents.

At this stage coaches need to start to consider putting players into positions, this also plays a big factor in squad selection. An open mind needs to be kept by the coaches and players need to be tried in a variety of positions at the transition stage and beyond, remember at youth level they should not be labelled 'left back, centre mid' etc – they are footballers!

The most dominant seven a side players may all be naturally attacking players, some may need to move positions or move teams depending on numbers. It is vital that at 7s players have been constantly rotated positions so that they are more rounded footballers and have had experience playing all the different roles as this will stand them in good stead at 11s.

Managing the expectations of both players and parents is an integral part of being a coach. Establishing expectations at the beginning of the season and being honest about these will mean less opportunity for dissatisfied players and parents.

Formation of three squads:

- The Spartans FC (normally in 1st division)
- The Spartans FC Colts/Whites (normally in 1st or 2nd division)
- The Spartans FC Year/Reds, (normally in 2nd or 3rd division)

This is achieved by:

- There having been in the region of 40 children in the Soccer 7 age group
- Increasing to 45 Players in the last 6 months of Soccer 7s
- Splitting the Children into 3 x 16/ 17 squads for 11 aside teams

Preparation for the age group split:

- Year groups training on the same evening
- Continuous dialogue between coaches within the year group throughout the season
- At 11s transition stage organise joint training sessions and games
- Soccer 7's coaches to rotate and spend time with different teams of similar ability e.g. Pele coaches with Maradona team for a week etc. If the coaches have sons the players can be rotated into the applicable team for the week
- The head coach will co-ordinate games to give all the coaches the chance to see all players before the squads are finalised
- In House club Friendlies / SFA will organise 11 aside Festivals from March onwards

- The Head Coach will lead this process with input from all coaches
- The Head Coach to organise meetings with all age group coaches to discuss player movement and any other issues
- It is advisable in advance of this meeting to ask all coaches to place players into squads independently of each other and send this to the Head Coach. This can then be compiled into aggregated squads without 'fear or favour' and form the basis of the discussion going forward. This gives all coaches an input into the process
- CDO and YS chair to attend if requested

Historically, this transition has been a sensitive area and hopefully by operating in this way it can aid the process of splitting the current 7 aside age group into the appropriate 11 aside squads.

All coaches working together for the good of the children, coaches and squads.

Under 13 Squads: Where possible 50% Playing Time / Rotating Positions / Guidelines

Under 14 & 15: Where possible 25% Playing Time / Rotating Position / Guidelines

Administration of 11 aside squads:

- No squads to bring other coaches in without informing the CDO/11 aside co-ordinator or YSMC
- Any new coaches should meet with the CDO/11 aside co-ordinator
- No squads to disband without consultation with the YSMC
- No squads to bring in any new players without informing the other age group coaches of all squads
- Any new enquires to join the club will go through the Head Coach
- 1st Division Squad can bring up to 3 new players each season
- No Players will be asked to leave the club due to football ability - however an honest discussion should be had with relevant parents as to likely game time to allow sensible decisions to be made to provide the best football pathway for each child.
- This means players from 1st team move down and the third division squad could end up with a larger squad
- All Players & Coaches will be subject to the Club's code of conduct rules

The 11 aside squads:

The Spartans FC (normally in 1st division, developing players for the senior squad and beyond)

- Squad will consist in the region of 16-18 players
- Each player will get playing time each week although the playing opportunities and expectations need to be managed sensitively / Rolling Substitute allowed and recommended to use with all the squad
- Each Player should get Playing Time each week, recommended (See above)
- Coach to set expectations on attendance of training
- Rotate players for easier games & changing starting subs were possible each week.

- Commitment to train twice a week.
- If squad requires more players; first establish if there are players in the colt's squad who would benefit and can step up, then in discussion with the 11 aside co-ordinator source other players
- Each season 3 new players can be recruited to the team if the squad number remains manageable and the head coach explains and manages the playing opportunities for every player
- Player development will be the driver of player movement and recruitment each season
- Players are not Guaranteed to stay in the 1st Division each season
- Head Coach - SFA Youth C, B Badge (minimum)
- Assistant Coach SFA Youth Level 2.
- Head Coach will organise session in collaboration with other coaches
- All Coach's to be committed to obtain SFA Level 3 ASAP (continued personal development)
- Expectation that the Spartans FC squad will be competitive at SE Region and national level

The Spartans FC Colts/Whites (normally in 1st or 2nd division, continuous development to enable them to compete at the highest level they can)

- Squad will consist in the region of 16-18 players
- Each player will get playing time each week although it will not necessarily be equal time and the playing opportunities and expectations need to be managed sensitively /Rolling Substitute allowed & recommended
- Each Player to get Playing time each week (see above)
- Coach to set expectations on attendance of training
- Rotate players for easier games & changing starting subs were possible each week.
- Commitment to train twice a week
- If squad requires more players; first establish if there are players in the age group squad who would benefit and can step up or if there are players in the Spartans FC squad who would benefit from a step down, then in discussion with the 11 aside co-ordinator source other players
- Player development will be the driver of player movement and recruitment each season
- Head Coach - SFA Youth Level 3/ & C Badge (minimum).
- Assistant Coach SFA Youth Level 2
- Head Coach will organise session in collaboration with other coaches
- All Coach's to be committed to obtain SFA Level 3 ASAP (continued personal development)
- Expectation that the Spartans Colts squad will be competitive at a SE Region level

The Spartans FC Year/Reds (3rd Squad Normally in 2nd or 3rd division)

- Squad will consist in the region of 16-20 players
- Each player will get playing time each week although the playing opportunities and expectations need to be managed sensitively / Rolling Substitute allowed and recommended to use with all the squad
- Rolling Substitutions are allowed and recommended with all the squad

- Recommended Playing time (see above)
- Coach to set expectations on attendance of training
- Rotate players for easier games & changing starting subs were possible each week.
- Commitment to train twice week
- Opportunity may arise for players to move up to the Colts squad
- If squad requires more players; first establish if there are players in the Colts squad who would benefit from a step down, then in discussion with the 11 aside co-ordinator source other players
- Player development will be the driver of player movement and recruitment each season
- Head Coach - SFA Youth Level 3
- Assistance Coach SFA Youth Level 1 (Working towards SFA Level 2)
- Head Coach will organise session in collaboration with other coaches
- Expectation that the Spartans FC (year) squad will be competitive in their chosen division

All coaches:

- Positive Scotland workshop (attend once every 2 seasons)
- Coach the Spartans Way to ensure long term player development
- Make continuous reference to the Spartans Coaches Code of Conduct to guide behaviour
- Spartans FC Youth In-Service nights (Every 3/4 Months) all training to be cancelled

Spartans Player Pathway

Splitting players into squads (especially from 7s to 11 aside) can be difficult. It is to the benefit of all players to find a level that they enjoy and that also challenges them.

Ideally players should be playing with others of a similar ability to stretch & develop them.

Moving players between squads is normal and should be encouraged. Players should be exchanged for training purposes on a regular basis. Friendlies at training between the three squads should be encouraged.

It is important that we can move players between squads and a procedure to guide this is in place.

- All squad coaches to meet up at twice a season (October & February)
- This is to discuss: Training, Player Movement & general sharing how the season has been, any progression made and lessons to learn
- Age Group Head Coach: To give feedback from these meetings to the YSC in the form of a short email
- This will give us a clear and Transparent Pathway for Players, Coaches and Parents

Some of the issues you may wish to think about are:

Are there players who would develop more/faster by playing in a different squad?

If you are a coach/parent is your son in the squad?

If so, is this because you are the coach and would they benefit from playing in a different squad? (We understand all parents love to watch their sons play football).

Information for Parents

- It's not the Premier League
- Parents should stand on the other side of the pitch from coaches
- Remember the Players are busy with the ball (Encourage them but let them play)
- PLEASE DON'T COACH
- Spartans have a Parents Code of Conduct (Please Ask for a copy or see the website)
- Please email or text **Head Coaches 48 Hours after** the Match to arrange a suitable time to discuss any question you may have
- Any Question or Issues please talk to the Head Coach first. Any queries that they cannot deal with can be passed on to the CDO or YSMC
- Parents have an active role to play at Spartans FC Youth. The club is run by volunteers so please contact Michele Macnab to discuss any opportunities to volunteer.
- Please complete a standing order form for the payment of subs (Information is available on the website to explain what the subs are used for)
- Download a standing order form/gift aid form from the website.