

Spartans FC Youth Guidelines for Soccer 4s & 5s



MISSION STATEMENT

Spartans FC aims to develop players and coaches into 'the best, people, players and coaches they can be.'

The club looks to create an environment of excellence and learning. This involves educating young footballers both on and off the pitch. Winning is important but not at all costs.

There is a Long Term Player Development (LTPD) plan in place which is not result focussed.

The emphasis is on producing young footballers who are proud to play for Spartans.

Our aim to produce technically outstanding, innovative football players whilst also developing educating and supporting innovative coaches, who are excellent trainers in the game.

To create coaches, players and squads who are recognised as excellent ambassadors and role models.

To build a club culture of excellence, demanding 100% effort at all times.

What is the Big Picture?

- The youngest players need an opportunity to build their skills in a safe and supported environment.
- Structured coaching sessions will aid progress and ensure that fundamental skills are developed.
- An age group is successful when all players enjoy playing the game and all players are learning.
- Learning will take place in a positive environment and Ball Mastery is key.

Support available for coaching at the Soccer 4s & 5s

- Support from Coach Development Officer (CDO) and Small Sided Manager (SSM)
- Coaching objectives/culture at this age will be set by CDO and SSM
- Spartans CDO) will develop a curriculum and Themed Session plans to work to (more Spartans Coaching info will be supplied by CDO)
- Spartans Curriculum – available on website and in electronic format
- Spartans Tool Box (Homework & Player Assessment Booklet supplied)
- Spartans Youth will fund attendance at SFA coaching courses.
- Spartans FC Nike Kit supplied
- Support for continued Professional Development through mentoring and attendance at courses/workshops

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Officials and Administration of 4 aside squads

Head Coaches/Secretary will:

- Will coordinate the sessions with other coaches
- Hold coach meetings at least three times a year to ensure communication between all squad coaches
- Enable discussions between coaches regarding player development, player/squad groupings and movement between squads
- Hold Meetings with parents to enable communication and gain parental buy-in.
- Maintain a full list of the coaching and volunteer team (e.g. name, address, PVG, etc)
- Attend regular sessions with CDO.

Head Coach:

- SFA Level 1.3

Assistant Coaches:

- At least one assistant coach per age group must be SFA level 1.2 as each age group has to have a level 1.3 and level 1.2 coach on the SYFA database (SYFA rules)
- Ideally all assistant coaches will achieve at least level 1.2

All coaches to be committed to:

- Act as a role model for players
- Continued personal development through SFA coaching pathway
- Coach the Spartans Way to ensure long term player development
- Obtain the relevant Spartans and SYFA PVG to allow registration of official on SYFA database
- Rotate players in to different positions to enable greater learning
- Attending Positive Scotland workshop (attend once every 2 seasons)
- Attending Spartans FC Youth In-Service nights (Every 3/4 Months)
- Make reference to the Spartans Coaches Code of Conduct to guide behaviour

Parent Helpers / Volunteers will: (Not SFA Qualified so not recognised as Coach)

- Obtain the relevant Spartans and SYFA PVG to allow registration of official on SYFA database (Secretary, first aider and child protection officer)
- Support coaches deliver session plans under supervision
- Ensure players attendance is recorded
- When available Positive Coaching Hand-out Cards to be handed out to parents/spectators on Sunday mornings

Other roles are:

- 1) **Secretary** – registers the team, officials and players. Keep up to date record of contact details. Act as liaison between club and team official, players and parents.
- 2) **Kit Manager** – organise sizing and ordering of kit and equipment
- 3) **Match/Games Organiser** – point of contact for opposition and pitch coordinator
- 4) **Positive Scotland Ambassador/ Child Protection** – act as point of contact for parent/player/coach Child Protection concerns. Attend SYFA training course (encouraged). Promote use of Positive Scotland material and attendance at workshops
- 5) **First Aider** – obtain SYFA approved Sports First Aid qualification

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Organising players into Squads for Coaching

How Spartans approach this:

- Aim to create smaller groups of 8 to 10.
- Head Coach will organise a method after consultation with other coaches
- Ideally coaches will move round all squads and will not work with the same group all the time; this helps all coaches and players learn together and makes it easier to move players around squads.
- Every few weeks, the Head Coach will ensure all the players are mixed together into different squads; this helps to build friendship & help gauge development

Experience in some age groups suggest that organising the groups as part of the daily register process works well and enables the coaches to plan ahead for which player is in each group each week.

Our Criteria for players (7 & 8 Year Olds)

How we organise players into Squads for Coaching:

- In the Fun 4s/5s games & training all players are mixed into random groups
- Groups can be kept for 2 weeks then split into new groups
- This helps the coach`s monitor the kids & see how best they can be supported
- Warm Ups & Small Games can still be mixed within the full group

At this age we are looking for:

- **A positive attitude:** Hard work, effort, teamwork, listening and concentration skills
- **Regular attendance:** Coming to training as often as possible with a recommended attendance of 75% but **remember players should be doing other sports**

Spartans and Soccer 4s & 5s played on a Sunday

Players need to play to develop.

- None of your players will improve if they don't get the opportunity to use their skills on match day.
- If you keep your 'weak' players on the subs' bench week after week, you shouldn't be surprised that they don't improve.
- All teams/players will be in mixed ability groups at the Fun 4s & 5s age.
- Spartans teams must have an equal playing time policy - regardless of the match situation. That can be a difficult position to defend when you start losing games you know you could have won.
- To make this policy succeed requires good communication with parents and sometimes, a thick skin.
- Parents need to remember that this isn't the World Cup and young players just need the opportunity to play football in a positive environment.
- Teams will comprise 4 outfield players in a diamond formation with no goalkeepers.
- Team squads may consist of up to 6 players with rolling substitutions used throughout the match.
- Players who have been substituted may return to the field of play as often as necessary.

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- All team members should receive equal playing time
- Players should rotate in to different positions in the diamond in each game at fun 4s/5s.

We want to create an all-round football player. Whether he becomes a striker, defender, full-back or midfield player, he must all be able to accept the ball, pass it, dribble and make the correct decisions.

Not only do we want them to be a good football player, but also a good person.

MOST IMPORTANT - PLEASE LET THE PLAYERS PLAY & MAKE MISTAKES

Additional Coaching Topics

Attendance at training and matches

Players need to attend training and matches to learn. However, remember players should be doing other Sports too as this aids development.

- Coaches will set the expectation that a 75% attendance rate is the target.
- Each age group will maintain a register to ensure that player attendance rates are recorded.
- If attendances drop please discuss with Parent or Guardian.

Rotation - Building a complete footballer

At Spartans the target is to build rounded footballers and rotation is the approach. Whether a striker, defender, full-back or midfielder, he/she must be able to accept the ball, pass it, dribble and make the correct decisions

- Players need opportunities to play in different area of pitch (Defender, Striker, Left and Right).
- Rotating should occur regularly

Behaviour – Adherence to Code of Conduct

- We expect the players to demonstrate respect and to try their best at training and matches

Addressing Misbehaviour

- Tell player what is expected and why – If they continue to misbehave, get them to sit out in the 'Sin Bin' for a few minutes (remember to explain why)
- Bring them back in to the game and if they misbehave again, get them to sit out again (explain why).
- If the behaviour is significant, advise the parent – most parents want to know!

You can always talk to the CDO or Child Welfare and Protection Officer for more information or support.

Spartans Youth Development Squads.

A key challenge for the youth section is to aid players to progress through to the Spartans FC 1st team. To do this the club offers additional input for selected children to be coached in Development Squads.

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These run in parallel with the age group squads and are coached by non-parent coaches. Ask the Head Coach for more information or look at www.scottishfa.co.uk/developingtalent for more information.

Approach by a Professional Club

Our Policy for players playing 4/5-a-side football

- Any requests from a professional club to sign or offer coaching to a Spartans Youth Section player should be directed to the Team Head Coach in the first instance
- Under no circumstances should a professional club approach the player, or the parents or guardians of a player direct
- If a professional club approaches a player and/or their parents/guardians direct, Spartans Youth Section will report the club in question to the SFA. In such cases the SFA will write to the club in question to remind them of the approved procedure, namely to contact the player's Team Head Coach in the first instance
- The Team Head Coach should inform the Youth Section Coach Development Officer, Stuart Gray (stuart.gray@spartansfcyouth.com) and The Spartans Development Manager, Iain Thomson (Iain.Thomson@spartansfc.com)
- The Team Head Coach should inform the parents and/or guardians to let them know an approach has been made and to find out if the player would like to join the club in question or attend coaching with them
- In the event that the player would like to join the professional club the Team Head Coach, player and professional club will agree a 'suitable' transfer date, ensuring the player's needs come first
- The players registration with Spartans FC Youth will be cancelled
- In some cases the player can train with both a professional club and Spartans Youth Section. Such an arrangement should be agreed between all relevant parties
- If an ex Spartans player is subsequently released by the professional club and wishes to re-join the Youth Section then an approach can be made to the Team Head Coach and the request will be considered

THANK YOU FOR COACHING WITH SPARTANS & HAPPY COACHING

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Information for Parents/Guardians

The challenge for Spartans Youth is to create an environment where players can learn and develop to their full potential and parents/guardians play a key role.

Key points

Regular attendance from players – All players should attend training regularly if they want to be part of Spartans Youth. The minimum target for attendance is 75% across all sessions.

If Players are attending Additional Development Squads attendance to standard sessions is expected: Please ask Head Coach for more details on this

Game-time – If players want to play matches, they should attend training regularly. If you have a problem with this, please speak with the Head Coach.

Let the coaches coach – Coaches are volunteers, so please respect their efforts. Support the coaches and let them coach... if you want to coach – raise a hand and volunteer.

Let the players play – During training and matches, the players should be left to play – please don't distract them by calling out instructions. Players need to make their own decisions.

Encourage practice – Many players will be given homework – encourage your child to do the homework... the coaches can easily see who has practiced and who has not.

All parents can play an active role – coaching is not the only role. There are lots of small tasks that need done to run a successful age group, e.g. taking the register, writing newsletters, helping as a Child Welfare and Protection Officer or First Aider. Talk to the Head Coach to volunteer – it is fun to help the age group!

More widely - Spartans is run by volunteers so please contact Carolyn Embleton, Youth Section Manager to discuss any opportunities to volunteer beyond the age group.

Please pay your subs on time. Spartans budget carefully but relies on player subs to function effectively. Your subs pay for basic equipment, match strips, pitch bookings and supporting infrastructure.

Additional funding – if you are lucky enough to have a successful business, please sponsor an age group. A donation can help fund an age group to have additional, kit, footballs, equipment etc. (**Ask About Sponsorship details**).

Parents Code of Conduct – Please download a copy from the website and read it. Remember not only are you watching your players... they are watching you, so don't embarrass them by misbehaving.

If you have any question or issue talk to the Head Coach or alternatively see the Small-sided Age Groups Manager. If they cannot resolve the issue then speak to the Coach Development Officer or the Youth Section Committee.

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Parent's Role

Taxi Driver
Chef
Head Cheerleader

Role Model
First Aider

To parents we ask simply – please do not coach from the sidelines. Your job is to offer encouragement and praise to the children in both teams, and occasionally help the coach if your child gets upset or “opts out” for any reason.

Even as coaches, during matches we will try not to coach during matches, i.e. to make decision for the players. To be clear, examples of this include:

- Not telling them when to pass, shoot, tackle, track back, get into position, mark or anything similar. The club's emphasise at this age is on 1v1 skills and ball mastery, allowing the kids to develop confidence on the ball. So, we'd actually rather they dribbled a lot rather than pass.
- Another example is the formation. We'll put them into a diamond at the start, but then leave them to it. If the “defender” doesn't defend, so be it. We want them to figure it out - we may subtly ask them between games what they might have done differently, but that's it.

On a similar note, another policy is mixed ability squads and equal playing time for every player, regardless of ability and a match situation. We'll lose games that we could have won if we'd played the strongest kids – but winning isn't the aim at this age, development is.

As we all know, in the main they're a competitive bunch of individuals, so they'll soon figure out themselves how to succeed and won't be slow in telling each other. Also, as coaches we'll be “doing our stuff” during training:

- 1v1 drills include as much defending as attacking;
- 2v1 drills will naturally involve passing

PLEASE DO NOT COACH FROM THE SIDELINES / LEAVE THAT TO THE COACHES

For further information see our website at: <http://spartansfcyouth.com/>

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