

Spartans FC Youth Guidelines for Soccer 7s



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) in place which is not result focused.

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 Scottish Youth FA and East of Scotland Soccer Association (ESSDA) recognise that playing football in groups of similar ability is the way forward both for children's development and enjoyment.
- An age group is successful when all players enjoy playing the game at the level appropriate to the best they can achieve.
- Winning is Important but not everything... learning to be positive with Ball Mastery and passing the ball from the Goalkeeper is key.

Support available for coaching at the Soccer 7s

- 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 7 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 squad must be SFA level 1.2 as every 7 aside squad has to have a level 1.3 and level 1.2 coach on the SYFA database (SYFA rules)

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

Why do this?

- Teaching young players in completely mixed ability groups is very difficult both for the coaches but primarily for the children
- Coaches inevitably end up teaching to the middle-level with players on either side losing out
- Players develop at different rates and age/maturity is a big factor at the early stages
- A child does not learn anything in a game if he/she doesn't get any touches of a ball and this will easily happen when stronger players dominate activities
- We hope that everyone will enjoy playing the game at a level appropriate to the best they can achieve and enjoy
- At this stage, being stronger does not necessarily mean that they will develop into the better players as they get older.
- Soccer 7's is organised into divisions, reflecting the variety of levels of football ability that children exhibit. The aim is to give all children a game, at a level where they have a fair chance of competing. Movement between teams within clubs is encouraged, as children become confident. The "strongest" division is named Pele, with Maradona, Zidane (or Zoff) and Beckham (or Beckenbauer).
 - At Spartans we would split the squads for 4/8 weeks & Head Coach & coaches will review at this time, (players can & should be moved between squads on a weekly basis too)

How Spartans approach this

- Aim to create smaller groups of 8/10 to 16
- Head Coach will organise 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 get to know each other and makes it easier to move players around squads.
- Every few weeks the Head Coach will ensure players are mixed together into different squads. This helps to build friendships, gauge development and challenge all players.
- This also helps with the players development by working with different coaching styles and personalities

Our Criteria for players (9, 10, 11 & 12 Year Olds)

Speed / Agility

- Running with the ball
- Running without the ball
- Changing direction
- Reactions /Multi Directions

Technical Skills

- Passing – both feet
- Control – all parts of the body
- Shooting – different variations
- Ball Mastery & Moves to Beat a Player

Learning & improving

- Accepting of positive coaching

Game Awareness

- Understanding the game
- When to pass or not?
- Support / Switching Play etc.
- When & Where to run to
- Checking the Shoulder.

Character

- Respect (for coaches, teammates, opposition, parents)
- Bounce-back-ability
- Leadership qualities
- Willing to help

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- Demonstrate desire and positive attitude
- Willingness to Practise/Complete homework tasks

Note: At a young age, size, height and strength will not be a significant factor. Being stronger and bigger now does not mean a player will be the best in 5 years' time. Players mature and develop at different times so please look at all players D.O.B for a guide.

Other Considerations:

Attitude: Hard work, effort, teamwork, listening and concentration skills

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 7s played on a Sunday

ESSDA Soccer 7s has different divisions to allow players and teams to play at an appropriate level. These leagues are Pele (strongest), Maradonna, Zidane and Beckham (least strong).

Key Points to Remember

- In the first block of Soccer 7`s splitting players into ability levels can be difficult
- Groupings should not be set in stone and players can move around (ongoing development)
- A player does not learn anything in a game if he/she doesn't get any touches of a ball
- Spartans teams must have an **equal playing time policy** - all players play for a similar length of time on match day, 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

7-a-sides matches

- Teams consist of 1 goalkeeper and 6 outfield players. Experience suggests that a squad of 9 boys attending a match is ideal
- Rolling substitutions are used throughout the match. Players who have been substituted may return to the field of play as often as necessary
- It is best to plan ahead to ensure that substitutions are fair but be prepared to be flexible
- Through planning encourage players to play in more than one position during a match
- Winning is Important but at this age it is not the main objective of the games for Spartans
- **Parents and Coaches need to remember this not the World Cup and young players need the opportunity to play in a Positive, Challenging and Fun environment**
- **MOST IMPORTANT - PLEASE LET THE PLAYERS PLAY and 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).

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- Rotating should occur regularly and at least every two weeks and with planning it can occur during a game – each coach can determine the frequency.

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 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.

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 7-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 player's 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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