



**BERKS & BUCKS FA
DEVELOPING THE
NEXT GENERATION**

Kids football is changing

- smaller pitches - smaller teams
- smaller goals - child-friendly competition



This booklet aims to provide players, clubs and leagues with a guide to the developments taking place in youth football

These positive changes have been put in place to improve enjoyment, fun and development of young players allowing more touches, on a better proportioned pitch with an increase of involvement in the game as a whole.

The key changes taking place over the coming seasons are outlined below:

Introducing a 5v5 format for the U-7 & U-8 age groups

Introducing a 9v9 format for the U-11 & U-12 age groups

Developing a new competition pathway for the U-7 to U-11 age groups

Developing the laws of Mini-Soccer

Why do Children play Football ?



The FA consulted with thousands of young people to find out exactly what they thought about football.

The top six reasons why children play football are highlighted below:

- Trying my hardest is more important to me than winning
- I love playing football because it's fun
- It helps keep me fit and healthy
- I like meeting new friends through football
- It's a really good game and I love it
- Like playing with my friends.



You can see here that children's and adults values are quite different when it comes to playing football. You will also notice that medals or trophies do not appear on this list- this is something clubs and leagues should consider when they spend thousands of pounds on trophies each year

New Player Pathway



The new player pathway will see a journey for young people that builds and progresses their learning and development as they head towards the adult version of the game. The new formats are based up on all the academic research, evidence about child development and player development that has been gathered throughout the extensive consultation process.

Put simply, smaller versions of the game will enable players to:

Have more touches of the ball to develop technique

Have more dribbling opportunities and 1v1s

Have more shots and score more goals

Have more involvement in the game

More involvement means more enjoyment through playing football

Introduction of New Formats



Season 2013/14 (maximum format, but can play smaller numbers)	Season 2014/15 (maximum format, but can play smaller numbers)	Season 2015/16 (maximum format, but can play smaller numbers)
Under 7's: 5 v 5	Under 7's: 5 v 5	Under 7's: 5 v 5
Under 8's: 7 v 7	Under 8's: 5 v 5	Under 8's: 5 v 5
Under 9's: 7 v 7	Under 9's: 7 v 7	Under 9's: 7 v 7
Under 10's: 7 v 7	Under 10's: 7 v 7	Under 10's: 7 v 7
Under 11's: 9 v 9	Under 11's: 9 v 9	Under 11's: 9 v 9
Under 12's: 9 v 9 / 11 v 11	Under 12's: 9 v 9	Under 12's: 9 v 9
Under 13's: 11 v 11	Under 13's: 9 v 9 / 11 v 11	Under 13's: 9 v 9 / 11 v 11

Child Friendly Competition From Season 2013/14



Age Group	Format
U-7	No league tables published. No single 8-month season. 3 trophy events allowed per mini season lasting two weeks each
U-8	No league tables published. No single 8-month season. 3 trophy events allowed per mini season lasting two weeks each
U-9	No league tables published. No single 8-month season. 3 trophy events allowed per mini season Lasting three weeks each
U-10	League tables published
U-11	League tables published
U-12	League tables published

The Competition Pathway for 2014/15 will look like the table below:



Under 7	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 2 weeks each
Under 8	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 2 weeks each
Under 9	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 4 weeks each
Under 10	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 4 weeks each
Under 11	League tables allowed
Under 12+	League tables allowed

The Competition Pathway for 2015/16 will look like the table below:



Under 7	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 2 weeks each
Under 8	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 2 weeks each
Under 9	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 4 weeks each
Under 10	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 4 weeks each
Under 11	No League tables published. No single eight-month long season. Three trophy events allowed per mini-season, lasting 6 weeks each
Under 12+	League tables allowed

Child Friendly Competition



Provides variety in the competition programme.

Gives ownership and flexibility to Youth Leagues.

Focuses on learning the game, without pressure of win-at-all costs.

Focuses on periods of development matches, interspersed with competition.

No focus on league tables and no three points every week.

Learning to win is still important but in an age-appropriate context.

New process will actually increase competition for more teams.



Child Friendly Competition Example 2015/16



	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
U7	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy
U8	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy
U9	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy
U10	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy
U11	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy	Development	Trophy

 Development Matches
 Trophy Events

What is a Trophy Event?



The new approach to youth football will phase out the one 'season-long competition' for young players and bring in a mixture of learning opportunities. This will provide youth leagues with the ownership to run different approaches to competition that capture the attention of young players in modern way.

Leagues will have flexibility during the blocks of competition to organise different events that still promote the importance of winning and losing but build this progression as players get older.

Leagues cannot publish league tables throughout the season up to U-11 as part of the new approach to a child-friendly competition. However, they will be able to promote and publicise the winners of the different competitions.

This will allow recognition of winners where appropriate but without the pressure of three points and goal difference on the children every week for 26 weeks.

Thinking Ahead...

This is what the Complete Pathway will look like by the 2015/16 Season



Age Group	Maximum Format	Recommended Pitch Size (yds)	Ball Size	Ideal Goal Size	Approach to Competition
U-7	5v5	40x30	3	12x6	3x Trophy Events over two weeks each
U-8	5v5	40x30	3	12x6	3x Trophy Events over two weeks each
U-9	7v7	60x40	3	12x6	3x Trophy Events over four weeks each
U-10	7v7	60x40	4	12x6	3x Trophy Events over four weeks each
U-11	9v9	80x50	4	16x7	3x Trophy Events over six weeks each
U-12	9v9	80x50	4	16x7	Any varieties inc. one season long league table
U-13	11v11	90x55	4	21x7	Any varieties inc. one season long league table
U-14	11v11	90x55	4	21x7	Any varieties inc. one season long league table
U-15	11v11	100x60	5	24x8	Any varieties inc. one season long league table
U-16	11v11	100x60	5	24x8	Any varieties inc. one season long league table
U-17	11v11	110x70	5	24x8	Any varieties inc. one season long league table
U-18	11v11	110x70	5	24x8	Any varieties inc. one season long league table

Mini Soccer Developments



Mini-Soccer offers an introduction to the game of football at a size and scale that meets the needs of the young people playing – with smaller goals and pitches and less players per team.

- Ball size for U-9s is a size 3 & for U-10s is a size 4
- All team members should receive equal playing time where possible with a best practice recommendation of 50% per player for each game
- Development matches may be split into quarters instead of just halves
- U-7 & U-8 children can roll the ball in underarm with one or both hands or take a normal throw-in the children have the option to choose
- The halfway line acts as a retreat line on goal kicks. The opponents must drop off to the halfway line to help the goalkeeper learn to play out from the back. However, if they want to play quickly they can do. The ball is in play as soon as it leaves the goal area – this Law is mandatory

Qualifications of Players



The changes to the competition structure has meant there is affect on the age banding over the coming three seasons:

Children who have attained the age of six but are under the age of (a) seven as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2013/14 (b) eight as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2014/15 may be permitted to play in a match between sides with a maximum of five players and shall play according to the correct Laws of The Game for that format.

Children who have attained the age of (a) seven as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2013/14 (b) eight as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2014/15 may be permitted to play in a match between sides with a maximum of seven players and shall play according to the correct Laws of the Game for that format.

Children who have attained the age of ten but are under the age of (a) eleven as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2013/14 (b) twelve as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2014/15 may be permitted to play in a match between sides with a maximum of nine players and shall play according to the correct Laws of the Game for that format.

Children who have attained the age of (a) eleven as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2013/14 (b) twelve as at midnight on the 31st August in season 2014/15 may play in a match between sides with a maximum of eleven players and shall play according to the correct Laws of the Game for that format.

Children who have attained the age of six as at midnight on the 31st August in a playing season may play Futsal according to the Laws of the Game Futsal. The particular age ranges for such activity are subject to amendment by The Football Association from time to time.

A child who has not attained nor will have attained the age of six as at midnight on 31st August in a playing season shall not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match of any kind in that playing season.

Rules on Mixed Football



The FA has increased the mixed football age group to U-15.

A change to the age limit at which boys and girls can play football in the same teams has been unanimously voted in by The FA.

The resolution to increase the mixed football age limit from U-14s to U-15s has been approved by The FA shareholders at their AGM after The FA Board, FA Executive and FA Council agreed the proposal.

The change will come into effect for the forthcoming 2013-14 season and will enable The FA to conduct further research into mixed football at this older age group.

Coaching Top Tips



Try not to overload your players with lots of information. Before the game you may just want to set a couple of basic targets for the players to achieve.

Just before the kick off remind the players what they were again and possibly ask the substitutes to watch the game and see if they are achieving them.

The focus at half time can now be on whether the players have completed the tasks. Get the substitutes to help feed this back. It will almost certainly be a more powerful message coming from them rather than you.

After the game, think of the different ways that you can use to debrief the players. Once again refer back to the targets you set the players and link these into what actually happened during the game.

You may want to arrange the players into small groups and ask them to debrief amongst themselves then feedback to other small groups.

Parents Best Practise



The most influential people in terms of a child's development are his or her parents. A child's beliefs, values, perceptions, attitudes and goals are shaped by their home influences and have a profound effect in later life.

Evidence suggests that interest and support from the home are vital in a child's overall development. With this evidence, engaging parents in the learning experience of their children, if guided and educated correctly can lead to positive effects in reinforcing messages of support you offer to the players during the sliver of time you have with them. Working with parents should be seen as a three-way process, between you, the player and the parent.

Why Not:

- Organise a pre-season meeting for players and parents
- Talk to the parents before/after coaching and explain what you are doing and why you are doing it; explain the benefits
- Use a questionnaire to get the views from the parents, what else can be improved
- Hold a Parents' Evening – hold evenings when parents can come along with their child and discuss how they are getting on
- Set them basic tasks – this could be asking for support around setting out equipment or keeping a record of playing time
- Direct them towards FA online courses to help develop their knowledge too!

Further Information



Further reading & information:

- The FA Youth Development Review: U7/U8 (Booklet)
- The FA Youth Development Review: U9/U10 (Booklet)
- The FA Youth Development Review: U11/U12 (Booklet)
- The FA Youth Development Review: Youth Leagues (Booklet)
- The FA Guide to Pitch and Goalpost Dimensions (Booklet)
- The FA: Series of Youth Development Review video clips
- The FA Standard Code of Rules for Youth Football (2013/14)



For further information on the Youth Development Review please visit TheFA.com/kidsfootball or if you have any questions regarding the Youth Development Review please contact our Football Development Officer, Naomi Loveless on 01367 246817 or via e-mail Naomi.Loveless@Berks-BucksFA.com.

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