



# How can you attract young players to join your 11v11 adult football team?

## 1 USE THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As we all know, young people tend to be the most avid users of social media. In fact, 89% of internet users aged 18-29 use social media. A team or club twitter or Facebook page with details of the team and events can be a great way to spread the word and engage with a younger audience.

## 2 OFFER TASTER AND OPEN SESSIONS

These sessions offer a great opportunity for new players to learn more about the team. You can also introduce them to existing players and share the ethos and aims of the team.

## 3 REASSURE THEM THAT THEY DON'T NEED EXPERIENCE OF THE ADULT GAME

The jump from youth to 11v11 adult football can be a daunting experience and unknown for many young people. Don't expect them to all be at the same level of understanding as those who have played in the adult game before.

## 4 PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON FUN & FRIENDS

Having fun, meeting new people and socialising with existing friends is key to young people continuing their love of the game. The wrong environment can sap energy and deter them from staying in the game. The right environment can leave young people feeling empowered and part of something bigger than just a football team.

## 5 PROMOTE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS SUCH AS 'KEEPING IN SHAPE'

Regular exercise provides many benefits to young people including strong muscles and bones, weight control, decreased risk of long term illness, better sleep and a better outlook on life. Healthy, physically active young people are also more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful. Physical competence builds self-esteem at every age.

## 6 OFFER THEM CHALLENGE

Young people can be more competitive than others and offering them realistic challenges can motivate them to be enthused and feel they are contributing to the overall team objectives. Challenges may vary from breaking into the starting line up or measurable targets such as number of goals scored.

By understanding what the players' aims and ambitions are you can tailor the experience for them, leading to players being engaged and not being left disappointed.

## 7 DEVELOP LINKS WITH YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUBS

Players could be making the transition to your 11v11 adult team from a large community youth football club. Establishing a link with a youth football club will help make the transition smoother with shared ethos and understanding between the clubs.

## 8 ENSURE THE ENVIRONMENT IS INCLUSIVE

One of the highlighted barriers for new players joining a team is them having to break into already formed friendship groups within the team. Introducing the new players and encouraging existing ones to welcome them will create greater team spirit and togetherness. Consider appropriate team building opportunities to create cohesion and encourage more experienced players to respect the players age and have realistic expectations of new players.

## WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THEY ATTEND TRAINING AND MATCHES?

- Support them to continuously improve.
- Encourage friendship amongst the whole group.
- Make challenges realistic and achievable.
- Keep the environment safe and supportive to reduce fear and judgement.
- Connect keeping fit and feeling good about themselves having made the effort to take part.



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