

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME FOR EXCELLENCE (FEMALE) REGULATIONS 2011-12

FA Rule C4 (b) applies to all players within The Football Association Programme for Excellence.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of The Football Association Programme for Excellence is to identify players of outstanding ability and place them in a technical and educational programme designed to produce football excellence in conjunction with personal development.

2. SCOPE

Any Club or organisation may not designate any technical or educational programme as a Centre of Excellence unless that Centre of Excellence is licensed by The Football Association under these regulations.

3. QUALITY CONTROL

3.1 *Requirements to authorise the award of Licences*

3.1.1 Grant Aid Licence Application - To be submitted annually and to reflect the agreed regulations. The business plan for the licence application is to be made available for review at the request of The Football Association Women's Football Committee.

3.1.2 Monitoring - The Football Association to institute a programme of visits to monitor the regulations.

3.1.3 Reports - Each visit to a Centre of Excellence to be reported and copies of the reports to be available for review on the request of The Football Association Women's Football Committee.

3.1.4 Financial Monitoring - Each Centre will submit a financial monitoring report and The FA cash flow template twice yearly to The Football Association.

3.1.5 The Football Association Women's Football Committee has the right to refuse/withdraw a Centre's licence with immediate effect.

3.2 *Registration*

3.2.1 The Football Association to be responsible for providing registration forms for the registration of all players at a Centre of Excellence.

3.2.2 Centres may de-register players during the transfer window. Any player who de-registers may only register for another Centre within the December or June transfer window. If a player wishes to leave the Centre outside of this time they can make an appeal to the Football Association.

3.2.3 Age registration to operate from 1st January of each year.

3.3 *Fixtures*

The Football Association is to provide a full programme of fixtures for Centres of Excellence.

3.4 *Fees*

Registration fees and Licence fees to be at the discretion of The Football Association.

3.5 *Learning Programme and Support Service*

The Football Association to outline the required learning programme and provide the necessary support service to assist Centres to deliver their programme.

3.5.1 Centres of Excellence are to send a minimum of 3 appropriate representatives to all In-Service training events.

3.6 *Communication*

The Football Association to provide for parents/carers and players (on any occasion that a player signs a registration form annually) the rules and guidelines relating to Centres of Excellence, with regards to: registration, welfare, educational needs, priority of activities and Respect Codes of Conduct.

This information must be given at dedicated player and parents/carers meeting at the commencement of the annual programme.

3.7 *Quality Audit*

The Football Association through its FA Centres of Excellence Committee will evaluate the performance of Centres of Excellence on objective criteria (including academic, tactical, technical and welfare).

4. **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

4.1 All staff and volunteers involved at a Centre of Excellence must be registered with the Centre. The register must be kept up to date and no person who is not registered shall have any involvement with the Centre of Excellence. This requirement shall apply to all persons involved at the Centre of Excellence, including coaching, physiotherapy, administration, welfare and ancillary staff and volunteers, talent scouts, drivers etc.

4.2. The register shall be liable to inspection and verification at any time by The Football Association as appropriate.

4.3 All persons in a specified role working with children and young people at a Centre of Excellence shall be required to be trained in safeguarding children issues at least to include satisfactory completion of The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Workshop.

4.4 One person at each Centre of Excellence shall be designated as having responsibility for safeguarding children issues as part of the promotion of the welfare of children attending the Centre of Excellence and issuing identification to all Centre staff members. All parents/carers and players must be made aware as to whom this person is and how to contact them. They shall be known as the Centre Welfare Officer and, in line with FA affiliation criteria must have attended the Welfare Officer Workshop.

5. **CRITERIA TO OPERATE A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

Centre of Excellence Licences to be awarded by The Football Association in accordance with regulations laid down by The Football Association, to be renewed annually.

5.1 An organisation may only operate one Centre of Excellence.

5.2 Public liability insurance is required with a minimum of £5m indemnity. A copy of this cover must be submitted to The Football Association with the annual business plan.

Player to player liability is recommended but is not mandatory. The Football Association does not provide Personal Accident Insurance, therefore it is recommended that Centres address this independently through other agencies.

5.3 A written reporting system to be provided to players and parents, twice a year.

5.4 All Centres of Excellence are required to comply in full with The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Policy, Procedures and Regulations. It is essential that all Centres of Excellence have a safeguarding children policy statement and procedures for dealing with concerns about the welfare of a young person that are made available to all staff, volunteers, parents/carers and players.

5.5 Centres of Excellence must operate at Under 9s (Development Centre only), Under 11s, Under 13s, Under 15s and Under 17 age groups. Centres of Excellence must register the following number of players per age group:

- Under 9: 10 min – 15 max players per year band
 Under 11: 12 min – 15 max players per year band
 Under 13: 12 min – 15 max players per year band
 Under 15: 15 min – 18 max players per year band
 Under 17: 15 min – 18 max players per year band
- 5.6 Each Centre to run for a minimum of 30 weeks, and ideally 36 weeks between the months of July to May.
 The major trial period is to be held in the month of June.
- Players currently registered at a Centre**
- Between the 1st – 30th May every Centre player should be told in writing whether they:
1. Will receive a player agreement to re-sign for their current Centre for the next season if they choose to accept it.
 2. Will need to trial to re-secure a place at their current Centre for the next season.
 3. Will be released by their current Centre and not be asked to trial for next season.
- Players can decide to accept the offer and therefore may or may not decide to trial at another Centre. If they accept the offer, after July 1st they will be registered for the next season with their existing Centre.
- Players that want to trial at another Centre will be available to do so from the 1st June.
- 5.6.1 Player Transfers:
 The Football Association will provide Centres with a 'player agreement' template for all registered Centre of Excellence players.
 Player Agreement:
- a) Every Centre of Excellence player is to be given a minimum of a 1 year agreement or a maximum of a 2 year agreement, subject to FA funding.
 - b) A player can only leave the Centre during a transfer window. The transfer window will be a 2 week period in December and a 4 week period in June.
 - c) No Centre of Excellence can sign a player from another Centre of Excellence outside of the agreement.
- A player wishing to leave the Centre of Excellence outside of the transfer window, can appeal to the Football Association.
- 5.7 Centres of Excellence must give seven clear days' notice of approach in writing to the registered youth team with which the trialist plays as per Football Association Rule C2(a).
- 5.8 A Centre may not approach, directly or indirectly, any player registered with another Centre of Excellence from 1st July until 31st May.
- 5.9 Centres are required to clearly outline to parents, players and staff in respect of educational needs, priority, objectives and welfare.
- 5.10 Registered players must receive a minimum of four hours practical training per week. This is in addition to the agreed Saturday programme of fixtures and training.
- 5.11 Centres must adhere to a maximum 90 minutes' travelling time from home to the training ground for all age groups.
- 5.12 A player is not entitled to be coached by a Centre of Excellence or to participate in games, tours or tournaments, unless the player is registered with that Centre or is on trial.

6. FACILITIES

6.1 The following minimum facilities are required for at least one of the weekly training sessions in the playing season:

- Adequate washing facilities and toilets
- Appropriate size of coaching area per age band:
- Rapid Access to qualified medical expertise
- Appropriate size of coaching area per age band

U9s, U11s & U13s – one third of an Astro turf/Grass pitch for each group – minimum 50 yards x 30 yards (45m x 27.5m)

It is good practice if the U10s train indoors but not mandatory.

U15s & U17s – one half of an Astro turf/Grass pitch for each age group - minimum 65 yards x 45 yards (60m x 40m)

6.2 The following minimum facilities are required for the additional weekly training sessions in the playing season:

- Adequate washing facilities and toilets

6.3 The following minimum facilities are required for the fixture programme:

- Adequate washing facilities and toilets
- U11s to play 7 v 7 on a maximum pitch size of 60 yards x 40 yards (55m x 37.5m) using a size 4 ball
- U13s to play 9 v 9 on a maximum pitch size of 80 yards x 50 yards (75m x 45m) using a size 4 ball
- U15s to play 11 v 11 on a maximum pitch size 90 yards x 55 yards (82m x 51m) using a size 5 ball
- U16s to play 11v11 on a maximum pitch size of 100 yards x 60 yards (91m x 56m) using a size 5 ball

7. STAFF

7.1 *General Requirements*

All coaches registered and FA licensed to coach in Centres of Excellence must by 1st July of each playing season hold the appropriate qualification to coach at that level, as outlined in the regulations:

7.1.1 One UEFA A Licence Technical Director.

The Technical Director must also have attended FA Youth Award – Modules 1 & 2 and must have attended Module 3 by April 2012. The full Youth Award Assessment must be passed by April 2013.

The Technical Director must be present at all training sessions and attend 50% of all matches.

7.1.2 U17s Head Coach and one Assistant Coach, both of whom are to hold the UEFA B licence and have attended FA Youth Award Module 1 and must have attended Module 2 by April 2012.

U15s Head Coach to hold the UEFA B licence and to have attended FA Youth Award Module 1 and must have attended Module 2 by April 2012. Assistant Coach to be a minimum Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football and must have attended FA Youth Award – Module 1 and must have attended Module 2 by April 2012.

U13s, U11s, U9s Head Coaches to be a minimum of FA Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football and have attended FA Youth Award Module 1 and must have attended Module 2 by April 2012. Assistant Coaches to be a minimum of Level 2

Certificate in Coaching Football and must have attended FA Youth Award – Module 1 and must have attended Module 2 by April 2012.

The Full Youth Award Assessment must have been passed by April 2013 for all coaching positions.

7.1.3 All female coaches Level 2 or above to be mentored through the Technical Director. Any female coaches working towards their UEFA B or above should be registered as part of The FA National Coaches Female Mentoring Programme. The support for female Level 1 coaches is encouraged but only as volunteers at the Centre and they must not coach at any training session until they have the Level 2 award.

7.1.4 One minimum Level 2 in Goalkeeping Award. Coach to provide a minimum of 1 hour per week per age band.

7.1.5 Each Centre of Excellence is to have a Chartered Physiotherapist, or as a minimum a Sports Therapist who is a registered member of the Health Professions Council.

A Chartered Physiotherapist or, as a minimum, a Sports Therapist should be a person in attendance at every match (home & away) and training sessions.

7.1.6 The Football Association to provide Centres with a programme of in-service training for coaching staff which will include a Continuing Professional Development Plan.

7.1.7 A Centre Manager should be appointed to take responsibility of all administration and organisation duties.

The Centre Manager must be present at all fixtures that the Technical Director does not attend.

8. CENTRES FOOTBALL

8.1 Players are licensed in three categories as outlined below:

A International Football and The FA Centres of Excellence Programme.

B All Schools Football.

C Local Youth Leagues including County Representative Matches.

Players registered with FA Centres of Excellence will be eligible to play in Category A football. They may be released to play in County FA and County Schools Under-16 representative competitions.

Players registered with FA Centres of Excellence shall not play in local youth leagues, as it is expected that all girls will be participating in a full fixture programme.

Players NOT registered with a Centre of Excellence will play in Categories B and C only.

It will be the responsibility of the Director of the Centre of Excellence to monitor the number of games in which the player takes part.

The recommended number of games per season is 40. This number falls in line with the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) Strategy that The FA has embraced. This figure has been worked out based on these principles:

The average:

1. number of league, cup and international fixtures.
2. length of the season.
3. of one game per week.

The conclusion and the recommendations based on LTPD guidelines is to prevent overuse, especially in young players, burn-out and encourage longevity and greater practice to match ratios.

8.2 *Avoidance of Fixture Conflicts*

It is hoped that conflict will be avoided between Schools, Counties and FA Centres of Excellence football.

Centre of Excellence players should not play more than 1 game in any given weekend.

A national programme of fixtures will be provided by The Football Association and each Centre is asked to provide this information to their County Schools and County FA representatives. This programme will include a number of 'Open Weekends', where priority will be given on those dates to County FA and County Schools Under-16 representative matches.

County Football Associations and The English Schools Football Association will advise, in writing, the dates of their matches to a Centre of Excellence with which the player is registered, no less than 14 days prior to the match. Except in the case of postponed matches, where the rearranged date shall be agreed by mutual consent and preferably during mid-week. This mid-week rearranged date will take priority over a Centre training evening.

8.3 FA Centres of Excellence may only play matches against other Centres of Excellence.

In exceptional circumstances a Centre may apply to The Football Association for permission (by written request) to play against another organisation outside of the Excellence programme.

8.4 Once a player has been identified by a Centre of Excellence member of staff as having potential to be in a Centre, the member of staff must inform the Centre Director.

8.4.1 The Centre of Excellence Director must give seven clear days' notice of approach in writing.

8.4.2 Players, including registered players and trialists, must only play one match in one day. Centres may include no more than two players from one junior team and no more than four in total on a trial basis in any one match. The normal trial period shall be regarded as four matches after which players should either become signed to the Centre or released.

8.5 The Centres of Excellence should offer the following:

- U11s to play between 4v4 to 7v7 on a maximum pitch size of 60 yards x 40 yards (55m x 37.5m).
- U13s to play 9v9 on a maximum pitch size of 80 yards x 50 yards (75m x 45m).
- U15s to play 11v11 on a maximum pitch size of 90 yards x 55 yards (82m x 51m).
- U17s to play 11v11 on a maximum pitch size of 100 yards x 60 yards (91m x 56m).

8.6 Matches for Under-11, Under-13 and Under-15:

- to be organised as coached games and must be played in at least three periods.
- the host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials.
- a qualified Chartered Physiotherapist or a minimum of a Sports Therapist to be in attendance.
- to have repeat substitutions
- to have footballs and pitches of appropriate size.
- to have no results published.
- to be played on a "friendly" basis, i.e. no competitions.

8.6.1 Matches for Under-17:

- to be organised as coached games and can be played as per FA Regulations for the 11- a-side game.
- the host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials.

- a Chartered Physiotherapist or as a minimum a Sports Therapist to be in attendance.
 - to have repeat substitutions – to be agreed prior to the commencement of fixture between both Centre Directors.
 - to have footballs and pitches of appropriate size
 - to play in a regional league
 - to compete in a national cup
- 8.6.2 Matches for 16 Year Olds:
- 16 year old players that are still registered with a Centre and want to play senior football should only play one fixture per weekend whilst still registered at the Centre. Centre fixtures must take priority over senior fixtures unless written permission is given by The Football Association.
- 8.6.3 Respect
- To adopt all 'Respect League' processes at each age group at every game.
- 8.6.4 Players playing up and down
- No player is allowed to play down an age group
 - Centres wishing to play a player up an age group should seek permission from The Football Association to do so. Analysis will be undertaken on the player before a decision whether or not to grant permission is made. This should be used to further enhance the development of the player long term.
- 8.7 Information to be kept by each Centre:
- details of each match played.
 - date.
 - venue.
 - names of all participating players.
- 8.8 Players who are cautioned or dismissed from the field of play will be reported directly to appropriate County Football Association and the English Schools Football Association.

9. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

In the event of a player, parent /carer or member of staff having a grievance against a Centre of Excellence or employee of that Centre which is FA licensed.

The grievance should be made in or reduced to writing to the Centre Manager in the first instance. An outline of the grievance should be forwarded to the Centre Manager in an envelope marked confidential stating the nature of the grievance and the player's full name.

In the event of the grievance being against the Centre Manager the outline of grievance should be forwarded to the employing body.

The grievance shall be investigated by the Centre Manager or employing body and following the investigation the findings shall be reported to the person lodging the grievance in writing within seven days of the investigation.

If the player is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance procedure, then an appeal may be made to The Football Association.