



Lincoln Red Imps Football Club

Youth Development Policy

Version	4.0	Date	20/11/24
Review	Yearly	Date	20/11/26

POLICY

About this Policy

The objective of the Lincoln Red Imps Football Club Youth Development Policy is to provide guidelines that should be used for the training, management and guidance of youth football players within the Club. No youth player is prevented from continuing their non-football education.

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1. Overview

The Club has been providing junior and youth football development since its foundation back in 1976. Over the years by developing our policies and our strategic vision, Lincoln Red Imps has become one of the most prominent and outstanding Clubs in the Gibraltar Football Scene. We have teams enrolled in all the Gibraltar Football Association's Categories from the Grassroots Under 5 Category to our Senior team. For many years the club contributes a large number of its players for the Senior Gibraltar National Team as well as the younger Categories. Amongst many achievements over the years and at every level, we are proud and relish the fact we hold a Gibraltar record of having won the Gibraltar League Champions for 14 Consecutive years as well as being the first Gibraltar team to compete in the UEFA Champions League Preliminary Rounds. The club is also the first and only Club in Gibraltar to become a member of the European Club Association

2. Our Strategic Vision

Our Strategic vision is to:

- be a thriving and self-sustained football club
- ensure that players of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to play football in a safe, positive and friendly environment
- ensure that our young players have the opportunity to develop their skills and interest in football as far as possible
- strive to play at the highest possible levels
- achieve and maintain UEFA Club Licence.
- provide the best training & playing facilities possible
- be an integral part of our local community

3. Our Development Philosophy

The Club's overarching philosophy for junior football is to develop players with proficient technical ability, tactical understanding and a will to win. This is developed through a life cycle from fun (first kicks) to competitive football.

The Club's aim is to provide each player with the best opportunities as possible to play at the highest level by the age of 16, learning as much as possible during key years, particularly from 9-12, with a focus on the players' confidence, physical, social, technical and psychological attributes.

The club also encourages coaches in the different age groups to liaise between each other to offer opportunities to players to train and play with the older age group.

The Club's philosophy at the lower age groups is to play all children in as many positions as possible in order to develop their game understanding and challenge their abilities.

The only fixed position is the Goal Keeper, however, in the younger age groups there may be occasions where the Goal Keeper will be playing outfield as well.

There is also an emotional aspect to consider as players mature mentally as they grow older and this can affect their confidence. The coaches will take a more holistic approach in order to identify the areas of development required by each individual player.

The coaches will make sure that all players understand the importance of learning to play in different positions in order to thoroughly develop skills, tactical understanding and the will to win. All these "ingredients" will lead to players increasing their confidence.

4. Training Sessions

The club encourages players to attend every training session and show great attitude and respect towards team mates, coaches and parents. If a child misses training or has been sick, priority for the starting lineup may be given to players that have attended all trainings. Attending training doesn't guarantee players to start games or play an equal amount of time if their attitude or behaviour has been of insufficient standard during the time leading to kick off (training or pre match). Positive attitude and a good standard of behaviour is the most important requisite the Club is seeking from its players. The Club and the coaches will not penalise children if their parents' behaviour is not in line with Club standards. The parents' behaviour will be addressed separately in accordance with other club policies.

All coaches (voluntary or professional) at the Club are fully equipped with gear in order to run effective training sessions.

The fact that we do not have our own facilities for Training Sessions, the Club works tirelessly to obtain as many pitch allocations as possible in Gibraltar and in the neighbouring Country Spain.

Over the years the club has developed a very good rapport with Youth Clubs in Spain. This allows for our youth teams to regularly play in Tournaments and Friendly games in Spain, thus exposing our players to different surfaces and a diverse level of Competitiveness. The club sees this as the perfect opportunity to continue developing our Players in every aspect of the game.

5. Game Day Philosophy

Playing time is necessary to develop players' ability and confidence. The game is the real-life scenario where the learning process takes place. This is also a very important opportunity for coaches to check where individuals are at with their football development. The game is used by the coach to establish what interventions and methodology can be applied to correct or improve technical ability, tactical understanding and confidence for each player.

Under 7 to Under 8 (first Kicks)

These age groups are at the beginning of the football journey so it is important to provide players with an enjoyable and pressure free environment. Subs rotate and rotation is also recommended for "starting line-up" each week so all players have the opportunity to start the game during the Weekend development league.

Under 9 and Under 10

Under 9 and Under 10 age group is where we start to structure training and games in a more specific and detailed way. Technical development (skills development), will to win and tactical understanding (moments of the game) are taught and advanced by our Club coaches (professional coaches and volunteer coaches). Game time is very important in order to monitor players' development and game understanding.

A minimum of a half of game time per player is recommended (*some exceptions apply) and it is entirely up to the coach in how to do so. Players rotation must guarantee balance, team structure and the required game time to all players. Coaches rotate players in as many positions as possible particularly in this age.

Under 11 and 12

The same playing time philosophy applies and the rotation is still in place. More emphasis is placed on detailing each position to each player, giving players an objective (task) to achieve during the game. All players play a similar amount of time each game.

Under 14 to Under 18

As teams start to play 11 a-side on a full-size pitch from the age of 13 for boys and 14 for girls, the Club's game day philosophy changes slightly. The focus becomes playing the best team on the day and game time may vary depending on circumstances (attitude, training attendance, balance and tactical needs). At this age players start to specialise around specific positions. More emphasis is placed on tactical understanding and the learning takes place through a more tasks-based process where players are asked to perform certain tasks during matches and trainings.

The coaches run teams based on the team's needs first and foremost however each player will still play in each game unless there are legitimate reasons for the player not to start. These reasons are likely to be the player returning from injury, training attendance or poor behaviours. There may be occasions where a player is underutilized for a game. When this happens, the coach will provide feedback to the player and make sure the player plays at least half of the following game.

More expectations are placed on players and parents, not just at training or games but also at school and home where nutrition and recovery become very important.

In these age groups the rotations are to take into account their physical development and maturity in addition to their technical ability. This is due to players starting to go through growth spurts which can temporarily affect their performance.

6. Development v Winning

The Club places a lot of emphasis on players' development particularly in the age bracket from the Under 10 downwards. In those years it is important to teach as much as possible (technical ability, game understanding, will to win, love for the game) in order to prepare players for the 11 a-side game where results will start to count a little more.

In our Under 9 and 10 age groups, although the focus is purely developmental particularly because results are not recorded making the environment safe and pressure free, here we develop players' skills, balance, coordination and speed. Coaches start talking about the "will to win" focusing more on winning the ball back and desire to be the best (attitude at training, desire to try new things, desire to play 100% all the time, support of team mates).

Positive attitude and desire to learn is what the Club expects from all players. To facilitate this process all appointed coaches work in a positive and safe environment where players can enjoy their practice and learn something new each session.

In the under 12 we follow the same principles and working with players that have learned and developed in the previous seasons we start to look at the results in a different way. We start asking players to deliver performances based on what has been coached during the week. Usually teams start working on all aspects of the game as part of their skills development and by the time the league starts all teams are well prepared, instilling the "will to win", whether it is "being first to recover a ball or play the final pass to score or save a goal", is key in guaranteeing positive outcomes.

In the Under 14 and 16, at this stage results become more important. This results in teams being run in a more structured way with a goal to present the best team for each game. The best team means all players having the right mentality, fitness and will to strive for the success of the team. Coaches will be looking had having all the squad on the same "band width" each weekend so they can give everyone a fair amount of football and challenge in different positions. This way we will prepare players tactically and mentally while still placing emphasis on their skill acquisition.

7. Code of Conduct

All players, coaches, team managers, parents and supporters will be expected to follow the Codes of Behaviour as laid down by the club in the:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Gibraltar Football Association Rules and Regulation.
- SES One Team Policy driven by GFA

8. Team Nominations

The number of team's entered into The Gibraltar Football Association Grassroot Competition will be decided by the Club's Youth Coordinator and Youth Coaching Staff. In general, the decision will be based on the number of players available in each age group and the number of teams playing at any age group annually.

The Club's objective is to have a minimum of one team in every age group.

9. Youth Management Committee

The Youth Management Committee (YMC) shall have responsibility for:

- a. The appointment of coaching staff including team managers and assistants in consultation with the Club's Youth Development Officer and shall ensure as far as they are able, that the person is suitable personally and skilled in football skills to a sufficient standard and has all the compulsory qualifications as obligated by the Gibraltar Football Association.
- b. The YMC will actively support coaching staff, team managers and assistants who wish to attend other courses by recognised bodies.
- c. The YMC shall be responsible for all aspects of youth football.
- d. Coaches, Team managers and Assistants shall be normally appointed annually prior to the start of the season.
- e. The YMC shall be responsible for all administrative and financial matters relating to youth teams.
- f. The YMC shall be responsible for providing all playing strip and equipment for youth teams and making available suitable training venues and training aids (subject to financial constraints). Equipment, etc. Over and above what is normally supplied by the Club shall be the subject of discussion by the YMC.
- g. To coordinate all off field football activities for the Club's youth teams to ensure that all players and Coaching staff are provided with the highest level of support to enable them to compete and perform at the highest level.

10. Youth Development Officer

The duties and responsibilities of the Youth Development Officer are:

- a. To provide support to the Club's YMC to assist with the efficient operation of the Club.
- b. Advise the YMC on all matters relating to youth football.
- c. Be the first point of contact for any feedback regarding youth football issues that need to be addressed at Club level or escalated to a higher level.

- d. In consultation with the Club's YMC appoint Squad Coaches and Support Staff (Team managers and Assistants)
- e. Arrange all training sessions including time and venues.
- f. Coordinate for senior players to provide assistance with youth training and to include older age group players in senior squads as a way of introduction to senior football.
- g. Assist the Club's Executive Board with the preparation of any budgetary documentation
- h. Assist Youth Coaches to attain the appropriate levels of coaching accreditation
- i. Advise the Club's YMC on the number of teams to be entered into their respective age/leagues
- j. Provision of suitable training plans, activities and exercises for coaches to allow their football skills to develop.
- k. Deliver training workshops for all coaches.
- l. Assist with the registration of all Youth Players, Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants by utilising The Gibraltar Football Association electronic system (Comet) and ensure that all regulations are complied with.
- m. Assist the Club with the conduct of Players, Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants.
- n. Ensure all teams have the appropriate equipment for the whole season.
- o. Have regular meeting with Coaches, Managers and Assistants and Provide an Annual report. (See Para 13)
- p. Ensure any player attending disciplinary hearings are supported by quality advocates.
- q. Attend Gibraltar Football Association Youth meetings as the Club's representative.
- r. Undertake any tasks at the request of the President, Executive Board.

11. Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants

It shall be the responsibility of Youth Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants to develop the football skills of the youth players and promote sportsmanship and social recreation amongst its members.

All Youth Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants should be aware that the way which young players are trained throughout their football career could influence the way they approach life as whole.

Youth Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants are responsible for:

- a. The progression of youth players into the senior playing sides and Senior Coaches will assist in this task at the older age groups.
- b. Youth Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants will ensure training is delivered as per training plans agreed and provided by the Youth Development Officer.
- c. Ensure parents are kept fully informed of arrangements for match days and training sessions.
- d. Advise any training and match cancellations to players and parent group due to bad weather, ground closures and/or other personal reasons.
- e. Administrative matters relating to youth teams on match days.
- f. The safety and welfare of players while at training sessions and matches.
- g. Youth Coaches, Team Managers and Assistants shall be responsible for ensuring that no child is left alone at the end of training, matches, etc. A suitable adult must be left with the child until they
- h. are collected or taken home by an adult.
- i. Comply with the rules of all competitions in which they are entered.
- j. Promote, Comply and ensure their players comply with all Club rules and Policies.

12. Medical Support:

Medical support is available and offered to all our youth players in the eventuality of any player injury, at training or during a match.

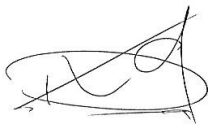
All Coaches, managers and Assistants are trained in First Aid to be able to deal with any minor injury. Any other injury that requires further treatment or medical attention, the qualified first aider (Coach, Manager or Assistant) will be responsible to ensure the player is referred and/or taken to the local hospital or subject to the evaluation at the time, refer the matter to the Team Doctor and/or Physiotherapist.

Subject to the injury and subsequent reports, The Team Doctor and/or Physiotherapist will draw up a programme of rehabilitation for the player in conjunction with the Club Medical Hospital or Local Hospital.

13. Review and Feedback Process

The Youth Development Officer will have regular meeting with the Coaches, Managers and Assistants to keep abreast on Progress and any other issues. Monthly reviews of the Training Sessions will be documented, made available and discussed with Coaches, Managers and Assistants at the meetings.

The Youth Development Officer will provide an Annual Review and Feedback to all involved in the youth structure. This is discussed in detail at the end of the season. The aim is to capture, analyse and address the season's progression, performance and shortfalls in preparation for the new season.



Dylan Viagas
Club President