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SANDBACH UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

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[Football pathway for Sandbach United football club](#)



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Introduction

A 'football pathway' is a term used to describe the different opportunities available for a football player. All football clubs provide different 'paths' for young footballers wanting to develop their skills and gain experience within the football 'profession'. This document aims to depict the new pathway for all youth age groups available at Sandbach United. As a club we are committed to ensuring that, first and foremost, all children enjoy playing football at the club.

In line with the good practice guidance documented on the FA website (www.theFA.com), there are certain expectations held by Sandbach United that will need to be upheld throughout the children's football journey. These include:

- *Showing respect*

Respect is core value of Sandbach United. This includes showing respect to fellow team-mates, coaches, opposition, and all officials. Examples of respect may include but are not limited to applause for good play for both teams, handshakes prior or after the game, supporting and encouraging players and letting the coach's coach. Further examples of good practice are documented in the *FA guide to Grassroots Youth Football*.

- *Understanding the different roles*

Sandbach United are a community of different football opportunities, so whatever your role, coach, parent, player, referee, for example, everyone needs to adhere to the code of conduct instilled at the club. Spectators, for example, are to remain behind barriers. All roles will be held responsible for any unacceptable behaviours.

Sandbach United's Youth Football Pathway

The FA's Youth Review in 2010 changed the way that Youth Football was structured in England. Youth football teams, for example, were moved into smaller formats of the game. This pathway outlines the different format of games available at Sandbach United. All coaches/managers at Sandbach United, will be expected to follow Sandbach United's adapted interpretation of the FA's review. This is to ensure that, as a football club, we are attending to and supporting each child, based on their level of skill and ability, in order to develop such skills in a person-centred and meaningful way. The enjoyment and skill development of each child will be paramount to every coach/manager at Sandbach United, to ensure a smooth transition for each child through the different age groups available.



An

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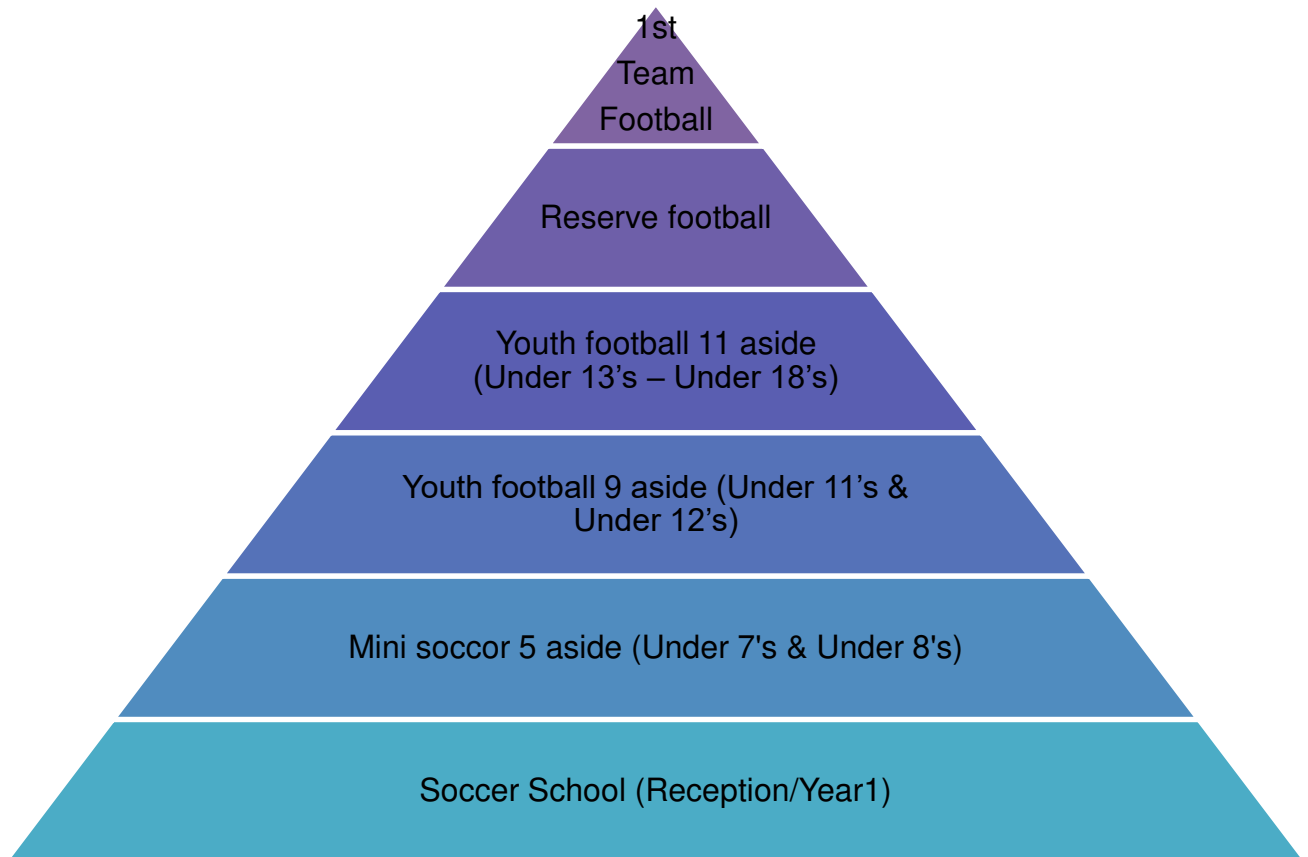
important part of this pathway is the Sandbach United's streaming process. Streaming is the method by which children are divided into teams, commencing at transition from the under 10's to under 11's age groups, and continuing up until the player finishes their youth football. The streaming process will consider factors such as, but not limited to, ability, work ethic, commitment, and attitude. This process aims to nurture the skills of each child at the club, ensure that they are playing at the right level to support their ongoing development and maintain the core value of the club, enjoyment! This pathway outlines the timeline for this streaming process.

In line with the FA guidelines, Sandbach United promotes flexibility and growth within its streaming process. If, for example, following this process a coach/manager identifies development within a player, that player can move up a level to support and further develop their skills and experience. The player, however, has autonomy in this decision. Their voice is heard and prioritised. Sandbach United, however, wish to encourage and support all players to reach their full potential, so support will be given to ease any concerns or anxieties around transitions. If, however, they decide that they wish to stay with their current squad, this decision is respected, and no pressure will be applied to influence this. On the other hand, a child or parent will not be able to refuse to move down a level if the coach/manager believes, that this will be in the best interest of the player. This is a difficult but imperative part of the streaming process, as a priority of this process is to nurture and support football skills and opportunity.



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Player Pathway



Age	Format	Pitch max size (yds)	Goals (max size-ft)	Ball size	Maximum squad size
U7's & U8's	5 v 5	40 x 30		3	21
U9's	7 v 7	60 x 40		3	20
U10's	7 v 7	60 x 40		4	20
U11's & U12's	9 v 9	80 x 50		4	13
U13's & U14's	11 v 11	100 x 60		4	16
U15's +	11 v 11	100 x 70		5	16



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Soccer school

In recent years we have seen a considerable uptake on the children attending soccer school. This has created difficulties when selecting the new squads for under 7's, as there are not enough spaces to accommodate every child. The core principles, illustrated below, outline the aims and expectations of soccer school.

Main Aims	Commitment	Team Allocation	Parent Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The main aim of soccer school is to allow all kids attending to enjoy and learn the basics of football.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Children with the highest attendance and up-to-date payments will be secured a position moving from soccer school to U7's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Children will be split on schools when deciding the two U7 sides. If this is not possible then it will be on geographical area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Parents will be asked to participate in coaching, in preparation to leading facilitation of coaching when progressing to U7's. Parents will be required to undertake the Level 1 coaching course (introduction to coaching), first aid and safeguarding. The cost of these courses, will be reimbursed following completion.



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Under 7's & 8's (5-aside format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill development of the players - not the result of the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 squads with a maximum squad size of 21.• 3 teams within the squad (7 players in 1 team).• Each side will play mixed ability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All players will have equal game time.• If no designated goalkeeper, each player will take turns (best option swapping the goalkeeper at half time).• Managers will not be able to move players on to allow others in, except in exceptional circumstances.• If players leave for any circumstance, waiting list must be used first before adding external players.• Any new players will be placed within their friendship group, wherever possible.

Under 9's (7-aside format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquiring Skills• Demonstrating effort and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 squads• Maximum squad size of 20.• Move to 7-aside football.• 2 teams within the squad.• Coaches will select an advanced and development side within the squad. This must be under constant review with movement expected between the 2 teams on a bi-weekly basis.• Team sheets will need to be seen by the HOF/FDO's to ensure movement is happening either by handing in to club or photo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equal game time must still be adhered to.• Training will not be split between the 2 sides, therefore all players will play together, allowing coaches to see who is improving and who might need more time to develop.• Within the new squad, all new players will form the new team. With possible movement of players from existing squads if needed.



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Under 10's (7-side format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning to play as part of a team• Opportunities to develop 'game play'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same format as U9's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throughout the season, coaches must be monitoring all children, ready for the streaming process that will occur at the end of the season.

Information about the streaming process

Coaches from all sides will make the children's ability paramount at the end of the season, to ensure we have the children playing at the right level for them going into next season, allowing the coaches to get the best out of their potential.

If discrepancies between managers judging the ability of players occur, Head of Football (HOF) and Football Development Officers (FDO's) will monitor the situation and make their judgement.

Streaming will begin after February half term, with mixed training between all sides, this will continue until Easter when they have mixed games instead of training. Streaming process will be attended by FDO's and HOF. Streaming process will be completed by the beginning of June.



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Under 11's (9-aside format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill development• Football oppourtunites• Increased 'game play'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant change within the teams• 4 teams with a maximum of 13 players in each team• Team names will be United, Kites, Falcons, Harriers• Move to 9 aside football• Coaches will be appointed to each side depending on player movement. (This will be completed after the streaming process ready for the new season).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start of competitive football• Equal game time must still be adhered to.• Teams will be reviewed twice a season by managers/FDO/HOF to ensure the children are still playing at the right level for their ability. Mid-season/end of season• Coaches must put the children first and if a player is ready to move up a level this has to occur. Vice versa if a player is struggling.

Under 12's (9-aside format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill development• Football oppourtunites• Increased 'game play'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each team will now be in a league format• Streaming will continue to take place twice a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaches at this point will be expected to know of other players within the age group at the club who would be able to step up or need to move down on the transition to 11 aside.• Towards the end of the season, it is advised to organise 11 aside friendlies, in order to prepare the children for 11 aside football. (big difference)



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Under 13 (11-aside format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking responsibility• Positional Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Max squad of 16• Streaming will still continue twice a season.• Additional players will be needed in each squad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equal game time is still to be adhered to.• All new players will train with the United side when starting, the coach there will then decide on the ability and what team is best suited.• If managers/coach's child need to be streamed up or down, HOF will allocate new manager if needed.• If any member of the teams has JPL players a maximum of 5 are allowed in district and county cup competitions.

Under 14's, 15's, 16's (11-aside format)

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking responsibility• Positional Awareness• In-game decisions• Tactical appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Max squad of 16.• Streaming will still continue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change from equal game time to fair game time. Fair game time is ensuring that the children, over a certain period of time (e.g., a month/3 months or season) play the same amount of time (or as close as possible) but in certain games some children will get longer than others. Coaches will be expected to plan ahead to ensure this is being adhered to and to communicate the change to parents alongside the time frame for this change.• Coaches should aim to give each child a minimum of 30 mins.



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U17's

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-game decisions• Tactical appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Max squad of 16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United side to enter northwest youth alliance development league.• Players will play at their own age group to ensure we are as competitive as possible.• Game time to be considered by the coaches depending on player's attitude towards training and match games.• United players on the fringe of squad to be duel registered with another Sandbach side to allow them game time when appropriate• All other sides to be entered into appropriate league to ensure competitive competition.

U18's

Main Aims	Squad Details	Player Oppourtunites
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-game decisions• Tactical appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Max squad of 16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United side to enter northwest youth alliance.• Preparation for players to enter reserve or first team football.• Duel registered players who are ready to make the step into men's football.• Training on the same night as both reserves/first team will be imperative for United side.



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Additional information

- All managers and assistant managers will be appointed by the HOF and FDO's, no self-appointments are allowed. This allows the club to ensure everyone at the club has the relevant courses to be associated with the club, such as an update DBS.
- Any team that needs additional players, managers/coaches need to contact the HOF/FDO as their first point of call to ensure we can get children involved of the waiting list.
- Any new player that joins the club from u11's upwards, will begin training with the United side. A decision will then be made on the individual's ability on which side the player should join. This will be done by the United manager alongside the guidance of the FDO's/HOF.
- Throughout the club, from u11's upwards, it is advised that the United side keep a space available within their squad for any Academy players that maybe released.
- Players will now play at their **own** age group, existing members (pre-2023) will be allowed to continue with their side but are strongly advised to play at their own age group.
- Any tournaments entered under the name of any of the Sandbach names, will be entered with players from your squad only.
- Train only players will be allowed in all age groups however will be dependent on squad size already, this will also need to be communicated to the FDO's/HOF before accepting the player to train.

Coaches and their Qualifications

We understand that all our coaches at Sandbach United, support their teams on a voluntary basis, however, as a club we insist that all coaches are qualified to the standard that is set out in our manager information pack. If for any reason these are not adhered to, then another coach will be appointed to take over. Additionally, we expect that as a coach, you are dedicated to improving each child to the best of their ability. This involves weekly training sessions and a consistent presence at match days to observe all the games depending on what age group you are coaching.

Being a manager of a grassroots team is a big commitment but extremely rewarding. The club will support you along this journey wherever possible. The club, for example, support funding for higher coaching qualifications, yet this will be dependent on the commitment you can offer the club. We at Sandbach United are one club, and by working together we can make sure that the kids flourish into the best they can be both as footballers and people.