

Club Academy Scotland

Regulations 2015 – 2018 Cycle 2015 – 2016 Season

INTRODUCTION

- a) Club Academy Scotland is a performance based youth football development programme organised and managed by the Scottish FA for clubs in membership of the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL).
- b) For the start of season 2015 -16, clubs participating in the Club Academy Scotland programme shall be organised into a new grading structure on the basis of pre-determined Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze 2 and Bronze 1 criteria. Thereafter, participating clubs will be formally assessed and graded by the Scottish FA Club Licensing Department using the Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze Grading Programme developed by the Association's Performance Department.
- c) The Scottish FA Professional Game Board will have specific responsibility for the technical review and assessment of the Club Academy Scotland programme, and shall reserve the right to appoint a Technical Review Panel comprising experts from within the Club Academy Scotland programme.
- d) The Scottish FA Licensing Committee will have specific responsibility for the verification of applicable criteria standards developed for implementation within the Club Academy Scotland programme. The terms of the Scottish FA Club Licensing Manual are relevant in relation to the processes and procedures followed by the Scottish FA Licensing Committee.
- e) The Club Academy Scotland games programme at dual age band 16s/17s will be organised in the form of a tabulated League system. The League system at elite level (Games Programme 1) will be used to determine the club eligible to participate in the UEFA Youth League (2015-16) as Scottish domestic youth champions.

1. Club Academy Scotland - Aims and Objectives

- a) To promote, foster and develop the game of Association football for elite and talented young players at age levels 11s, 12s, 13s, 14s, 15s, and dual age band 16s/17s.
- b) To develop a challenging performance environment and structure for Scotland's elite and talented young players through the implementation, assessment and evaluation of agreed Club Academy Scotland standards.
- c) Observe and comply with the terms of the Scottish FA Performance Strategy.
- d) The provision and control of an organised youth development match programme for clubs participating in the Club Academy Scotland programme in accordance with the principles set out above.
- e) To develop world class standards in all areas of the Club Academy Scotland programme.

2. Applicable Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze Grading Criteria

The full schedule of Club Academy Scotland Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze criteria, and information related to the Scottish FA Grading Programme, is available in appendices separate from the Regulations document.

Compliance with Club Academy Scotland criteria will be the subject of regular audit and assessment. The Scottish FA reserves the right to carry out audit spot checks at clubs without prior notice.

In observing the terms of specified Club Academy Scotland criteria, clubs are obliged to formally notify the Scottish FA of variances which occur outside of designated audit windows.

3. Scope of Application

Clubs have already been awarded a grading level. This level will remain in place for a period of three consecutive seasons unless a) a club fails to meet its stated minimum criteria standard or b) a club applies for a lower grading level.

Clubs will be required to complete an application form prior to the beginning of the new season. This application form will provide the information required to perform the monitoring aspect of the Club Academy Scotland programme.

Clubs will be monitored against the information provided by the clubs. This will include the following;

- 1) Academy and Player Development Plans
- 2) Head of Youth Development qualifications.
- 3) Coaching Staff Qualifications.
- 4) Match Day Facilities.
- 5) Training Facilities.
- 6) Sports Science Staff.
- 7) Medical Staff.
- 8) Player Recruitment.
- 9) Education and Welfare, Child Protection, Parent Liaison Staff.
- 10) Supplementary Staff Provision.

A desktop audit, to be conducted in August 2015, will be used to determine that the award granted by the Scottish FA Licensing Committee in 2014 or 2015 remains as previously confirmed.

Clubs will retain their grading level for Season 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, as determined by the Scottish FA Licensing Committee in 2014 or 2015, unless the club fails to comply with Club Academy Scotland Minimum Criteria related to its grading level or the club makes a formal request to transfer to a lower level. Matters will be referred to the Scottish FA Licensing Committee in such circumstances.

4. Games Programme

The Performance Director from time to time may make such recommendations to the Professional Game Board (PGB) in respect of invitations to such club(s) to participate at a specific level within the Games Programme. Such recommendations shall be considered by the PGB in its absolute discretion.

For the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 seasons, only Clubs or Regional Academies at the Platinum, Gold or Silver standard will be admitted to the Elite Games Programme (EGP). Furthermore, the Club Academy Scotland Elite Games Programme for Seasons 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 will have a top tier of 14 Clubs or Regional Academies ("the participants"). All Clubs or Regional Academies at Platinum and Gold standard will be admitted as participants. The remaining participants will be drawn from the Silver standard applicants. Should this number, combined with the Platinum and Gold participants, total more than 14, then, the Measurable Performance Outcomes (MPO) document will be used to determine between the Silver standard applications.

It should be noted that, for the purposes of the three year Games Programme, the MPO score obtained by a club in August 2015 will apply for the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 Seasons.

NB – In the case of a Regional Academy, the MPO score will be determined from the combined score of each club comprising the Academy if relevant for the period in question.

5. Players

- a) **Eligibility to Play in the Club Academy Scotland Programme**

A club may only register a maximum of 20 players per age level during the season.

In order to be eligible to participate in a Club Academy Scotland match, a player will require to be registered for his club by means of SFA "Non-Recreational Player Registration – Youth" form, with the exception of a player playing as a Trialist in accordance with the terms of paragraph 3c) below. Exceptionally, at dual age band 16/17s, a club's compliment of 20 players may be supplemented by players registered on a Scottish FA Amateur or Professional Registration Form.

The terms and conditions of the Scottish FA Registration Procedures apply.

It is recommended that players should be involved in at least 75% of fixtures.

b) Applicable Age Levels in the Club Academy Scotland Programme

Age Level 11s – Players born on or after 1st January, 2005

Age Level 12s – Players born on or after 1st January, 2004

Age Level 13s – Players born on or after 1st January, 2003

Age Level 14s – Players born on or after 1st January, 2002

Age Level 15s – Players born on or after 1st January, 2001

Age Level (Dual Band) 16s/17s – Players born on or after 1st January, 1999

Platinum, Gold and Silver

In addition to the age levels defined above, clubs achieving Platinum, Gold and Silver status (inclusive) will require to formally demonstrate, in writing, the operation of an organised programme for the sourcing and development of players' age 10 years and below.

c) Playing of Players without Registration

No more than three (four for 7-a-side matches) trial players (per team) may be allowed to participate in any Club Academy Scotland match. Each trial player may be allowed to participate in a maximum of five matches (ten matches at age level 11s) in the Club Academy Scotland programme for any one club providing he is otherwise eligible to do so.

Use of Overseas Trialists

Within the Club Academy Scotland programme it will be permitted for clubs to bring a maximum number of 10 overseas trial players per club to train and be assessed during the season.

A club may have the trial players visit Scotland no more than twice in the season and for a maximum of two weeks in total in any season, during which time he may play in no more than two Club Academy Scotland games within his relevant age group at 15s level during the two week period.

A club may list and play only two overseas trial players in a Club Academy Scotland match at any one time (i.e. leaving space for one Scottish trial player to be fielded in a match).

The proposed use of overseas trial players requires to be formally notified to the Scottish FA Registrations Department in writing, together with satisfactory evidence of approvals and welfare arrangements in each case. Such information should be provided at least 10 business days in advance of a player's proposed visit. For the avoidance of doubt, the Scottish FA must receive:-

1. The player's parent/guardian's written consent
2. The written consent of the player's overseas club, and
3. Details of accommodation and welfare information for the player whilst in transit and whilst in Scotland with the host club.

Upon receipt of the information above, the Scottish FA Registrations Department will contact the foreign national association and request consent for the player to play in Scotland during the period in question (NB. The 10 day period allows the Registrations Department sufficient time to pursue foreign association consent and also allows time for cancellation of arrangements by the club should consent not be provided).

d) **Participation in Schools' Football**

A player's participation in schools' football will be subject to the policy and discretion of the club for which he has signed, the detail of such policy having been clearly communicated to the player and his parents prior to signing the registration form.

e) **Physical Development Exceptions (Platinum, Gold and Silver Graded Clubs)**

Clubs participating at Elite Academy level are entitled to nominate ("in total") a maximum of three (3) registered players whom, for reasons of slower physical development, may be permitted to play at the age level immediately below their designated age category for a period of one season.

During this period any nominated player(s) must have their physical development closely monitored in tandem with sports science criteria.

Nominations in this regard must, in the first instance, be directed in writing to the Scottish FA, and may be submitted at any time during the course of the season.

In terms of dual age level 16/17, clubs may apply for dispensation to use a player from the age level immediately above (born 1998). Such an application must be well founded and agreed in advance with the Scottish FA Performance Director who will be the sole arbiter in the consideration of such an application. All decisions to accept such applications will be communicated to all clubs in the programme.

f) **Physical Development Exceptions (Bronze Graded Clubs) – 2 Teams and 4 Teams**

Clubs participating at Initiative level are entitled to nominate ("in total") a maximum of three (3) registered players whom, for reasons of slower physical development, may be permitted to play at the age level immediately below their designated age category for a period of one season.

During this period any nominated player(s) must have their physical development closely monitored in tandem with sports science provision criteria.

Nominations in this regard must, in the first instance, be directed in writing to the Scottish FA, and may be submitted at any time during the course of the season.

g) **Goalkeepers**

A goalkeeper may be permitted to play at the age level immediately below their designated age category for a period of one season.

h) **Approaches by and to Clubs**

Other than in accordance with Scottish Professional Football League Rules in relation to Commitment Letters which must be strictly adhered to, a club shall not, either directly or indirectly, make any approach to or communicate with a player registered with another participating club or a player with whom another participating club has entered into a pre-registration agreement which remains current.

i) **Player Education / "In-Service" Training**

As a minimum requirement, clubs must ensure that players have access to supplementary educational provision and career planning services developed and provided by the Scottish FA Football Development Department.

Attendance at Scottish FA "in-service" training courses for club coaches and staff involved in the Club Academy Scotland programme is mandatory.

j) **Release of Players for Regional / National Performance Squad Gatherings**

It is a mandatory obligation for clubs participating in the Club Academy Scotland programme to release players selected for Scottish FA Regional / National Performance Squad gatherings.

6. **Format of Club Academy Scotland Matches**

Age Levels 11s and 12s (7-a-side and 11-a-side football)

At age level 11s, the Club Academy Scotland programme will involve all participating clubs playing 7-a-side matches for the duration of season 2015/16.

The Laws of the Game, as authorised by the International FA Board, relative to offside will not apply at age level 11s, however, the Laws of the Game relating to the pass back to the goalkeeper **will** apply.

At age level 11s a retreating line shall be introduced to help to develop the building of play from the defensive area: -

- The retreating line shall be 12 yards from the goal line.
- The opposing team shall only be allowed to have one player in the defensive area when the goalkeeper has the ball in his hands.
- A second attacker can only enter the defensive area once the defending outfield player has taken his first touch of the ball.

At age level 12s, clubs will play 7-a-side matches during the period August to December, 2015. During the period February to June, 2016, all age level 12s matches will be played on an 11-a-side basis (3 x 30 minute periods) using midi sized goals (21ft x 7ft) and a reduced size pitch.

7-a-side matches will be played between teams comprising 6 outfield players and a goalkeeper. Team squads may consist of up to 10 players with rolling substitutions used throughout the match.

For the avoidance of doubt, a 7-a-side match may involve one or two squads representing a club subject always to the prior confirmation with an opponent and the Scottish FA Performance Department.

The duration of 7-a-side matches shall be: -

“A” and “B” squads v. “A” and “B” squads = 2 x 40 minute matches (20 minutes each way) with 5 minute intervals after each 20 minute period (playing time 80 minutes)

The Club Academy Scotland match programme at Age Levels 11s and 12s is only available for 3-6 Star rated Clubs.

Age Levels 13s, 14s, 15s and dual age band 16s/17s

At age levels 13s, 14s, 15s and dual age band 16s/17s the Club Academy Scotland programme will involve all participating clubs playing 11-a-side matches for the duration of season 2015/16.

The duration of matches played at 13s and 14s shall normally be 90 minutes. It is mandatory that matches be split into a maximum of three periods of 30 minutes with a 5-minute interval between each period. The final 30 period minute period of a match will be divided into two periods of 15 minutes in the interests of fair play (e.g. inclement weather).

The format of matches at Age Level 15s shall be 90 minutes split into two periods of 45 minutes.

The format of matches at dual age band 16/17s shall be 90 minutes split into two periods of 45 minutes.

At Age Levels, Under 11, Under 12, Under 13 and Under 14, rolling substitutions may be made throughout the match. This shall be extended to age levels Under 15 and dual age band 16/17 should the Club Academy Scotland games programme not be in tabulated format.

The Association reserves the right to organise the Club Academy Scotland games programme at Under 15 and dual age band 16/17s in a tabulated League format.

a) Match Ball Sizes

A size 4 football should be used for all matches at age levels 11s, 12s and 13s. At all other age levels in the Club Academy Scotland programme, a size 5 FIFA approved football shall be used.

b) Coaching, Advice and Tuition (All Age Levels)

At the conclusion of each period of play, the coaches of each participating club shall be permitted to offer coaching, advice and tuition to players. In addition, the match referee and where applicable, the Referee Observer in attendance, shall also be permitted to offer advice on the Laws of the Game and the reasons for decisions that have taken place during the preceding period of play.

7. Format, Organisation & Governance of Club Academy Scotland League System (Age Level 16s/17s)

a) Format of 16s/17s League System

For Season 2015-16, a system of officially tabulated and recorded League matches will be organised within the 16s/17s programme as follows: -

Games Programme 1 (Platinum, Gold and Silver clubs) - 26 League fixtures

Games Programme 2 North / East (Bronze clubs) - 14 League fixtures

Games Programme 2 South / West (Bronze clubs) - 16 League fixtures

All 16s/17s League matches will be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

A referee and two assistant referees will be appointed to officiate at all fixtures within Games Programme 1, with Games Programme 2 matches being officiated by referee only.

Substitutions

In accordance with the derogation granted to the Scottish FA by the International FA Board, a club will be permitted to make a maximum of five substitutions (from seven available substitutes) during the course of a 16s/17s League match.

For the avoidance of doubt, a player substituted during a 16s/17s League fixture may take no further part in that match.

b) Organisation of 16s/17s League System – Games Programme 1

The Club Academy Scotland 16s/17s League system will be directed and administered by the Scottish FA Events & Competitions Department.

A separate set of Competition Rules, for Games Programme 1, will be provided to participating clubs by the Scottish FA Events and Competitions Department.

Official team line templates and related match / venue control documentation will be provided to participating clubs prior to the commencement of the League programme.

A system of weekly e-circular communications including results and League table updates will be implemented to assist and support clubs within the programme. Match results and League tables will not be published by the Scottish FA through any other media or forum.

c) Organisation of 16s/17s League System – Games Programme 2

The Club Academy Scotland 16s/17s League system will be directed and administered by the Scottish FA Performance Department.

Official team line templates and related match / venue control documentation will be provided to participating clubs prior to the commencement of the League programme.

A system of weekly e-circular communications including results and League table updates will be implemented to assist and support clubs within the programme. Match results and League tables will not be published by the Scottish FA through any other media or forum.

d) **Governance of 16/17s League System**

As an integral part of the Club Academy Scotland youth development programme, the 16s/17s League system will be governed by the administration in accordance with the terms of these regulations, the Laws of the Game and Scottish FA Articles of Association.

Responsibility for the governance of Club Academy Scotland is vested with the PGB In keeping with the terms of Board Protocols (paragraphs 3.13(v) and 3.14).

8. Match Venues, Dates, Kick-off Times and the Fulfilment of Fixtures

- a) Venues for matches played in the Club Academy Scotland programme must be selected strictly in accordance with the terms of applicable Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze grading criteria.
- b) The quality of pitches used within the Club Academy Scotland games programme shall be subject to a new marking system determined by the match referee.
- c) Clubs are required to formally notify, in writing, the Scottish FA of the venues at which their matches will be played, and must officially register (by means of a match facilities pro-forma) their list of proposed playing facilities prior to the commencement of the season, subject to the above.
- d) Matches in the Club Academy Scotland programme will be scheduled for and will normally be played on a Saturday (age levels 11s and 12s) and Sunday (age levels 13s, 14s, 15s and dual age band 16s/17s). The Scottish FA reserves the right to permit matches to be played on other days subject to the substantiated written request of competing clubs.
- e) The Scottish FA reserves the right to co-ordinate the kick-off times of all matches played in the Club Academy Scotland programme.
- f) The fulfilment of scheduled fixtures in the Club Academy Scotland programme is mandatory. In circumstances where a club is required to postpone or re-schedule a Club Academy Scotland fixture, formal written notice must be communicated to the club's opponent and the Scottish FA within three working days of the date of the originally scheduled fixture. An official Club Academy Scotland pro-forma will be supplied in this regard. Failure to fulfil Club Academy Scotland fixtures will result in the review of a club's status within the programme, or other financial sanctions as deemed appropriate.

9. Appointment of Match Officials

The Scottish FA shall appoint, through a designated Regional Referee Co-ordinator, a match referee for all matches played in the Club Academy Scotland programme. The Scottish FA shall decide the tariff for referees at the commencement of each season.

10. Responsibility of Home Clubs

It is the responsibility of the home club to advise the Scottish FA and referee of the agreed venue, date and time of kick-off for matches played in the Club Academy Scotland programme.

Notification shall be made in writing at least one week in advance of the match and, in all cases, not less than three working days before the match. Alterations to the venue, date and time of kick-off must also be notified by the home club to its opponents, the referee and the Scottish FA.

11. Discipline

Players having received three cautions for breaches of discipline in the Club Academy Scotland programme will automatically be subject to a one-match ban. A similar one-match ban will also be applied for any sending-off offence.

Suspensions will be recorded and effective in all Club Academy Scotland matches for which the player is eligible.

At the interval of any Club Academy Scotland match, a team which has had a player or players sent off, may introduce substitute players in order to return to a full complement of 11 (where applicable) to start the next period. A player sent off in a Club Academy Scotland match may not play any further part in that match.

Matters of repeated indiscipline by players or clubs will be investigated by the Scottish FA as an integral part of the on-going assessment and evaluation of the Club Academy Scotland programme, its stated aims and objectives.

12. Team Scouts

Team Scouts of clubs participating in Club Academy Scotland will require to complete and sign the Scottish FA's "Team Scout Registration Form" agreeing to adhere to the Scottish FA's Articles, Registration Procedures, as agreed or amended from time to time by the Scottish FA, for approaching players of Scottish Youth FA clubs or other Affiliated National Association clubs. Team Scouts will also require to be in attendance, as and when required, an approved course run by the Scottish FA on the Scottish FA Protocol and any other matters concerning the duties, responsibilities and obligations on Team Scouts in relation to but not solely limited to the approach to players and clubs.

13. Technical Review and Assessment Form

Every match played in the Club Academy Scotland programme will be subject to the completion of a Technical Review and Assessment form by the appointed match referee, respective Head Coaches and, for Elite Academy matches, the designated Scottish FA Technical Observer.