



Ashbourne United Football Practices

Compiled by club Football Committee

March 2018

Revision: March 2020

As football is ever changing and developing the game/ethos of today is not what many of us as coaches/managers/volunteers grew up with.

The Player Development Plan (PDP) and emergence of calendar season football has seen major changes in the game in Ireland - the most radical since leagues like the NDSL and DDSL introduced Small Sided Games (SSGs) in the 1990s.

Ashbourne United has also seen major changes and the formation of a Football Committee (and at times the appointment of a Director of Football) has allowed the club focus on the changes in the game and what they mean to the club - but more importantly, what they mean to the player/child.

On the following pages are a set of football practices which the club will endeavour to implement season on season. As with everything there may be some exceptions to the norm but they will be dealt with separately/individually as the occasion occurs but predominantly this booklet will explain how Ashbourne United AFC will treat a player from when they walk through the gates until adulthood and what is expected from managers on a football front.

Style of play

Some clubs insist on all teams playing the same style and formation.

FACT: At International level all Irish teams must play a certain style and formation (4-3-3), the only exception to this is the full international team.

The FAI believe the benefits of all their underage teams playing the same style and formation means players are comfortable with the system as they move up through the age groups - a fair argument.

At Ashbourne United we will not impose a playing formation on any team but we would like to adopt and implement a playing style. A passing game, from back to front that starts from the keeper being comfortable on the ball and full backs looking to receive. Ball playing centre halves, through midfield and onto forward line.

We endorse the PDP plan of retreat line and pass to full backs and so feel that this should follow through into 9-a-side and 11-a-side football - the SSG children are already used to it, so why change from that?? To adopt a style you have to be 'brave' as a manager and not be afraid to lose because while trying to implement a passing game mistakes will be made and games will be lost but the benefits far out weigh this.

Age Alignment

Since 2013 Ashbourne United has had an age alignment policy - in that all children should play in their correct age group for their year of birth. *(sometimes, particularly at older age groups, the football committee may allow some players play out of age - to facilitate the formation of a team).*

Since schoolgirls football is not currently as structured as schoolboys i.e. divisions at every age group and different divisional levels, for the moment, and to encourage participation, the club is very flexible with age alignment in schoolgirls football.

Ashbourne United Pre-Academy

A private venture, aligned to the club, for children aged 2 - 4 years - currently held in Ashbourne Library. The children play fun games related to flexibility and movement.

Ashbourne United 'Bourne Buddies' Academy

For children aged between 4½ and 6 years of age. Before they go into organised football. Held on the clubs all weather facility on Saturdays during the season, the Academy focuses on teaching the children the FUNdamentals of football while continuing the focus on flexibility, agility and movement.

U7 (if we go this route) and U8

When the children are of age to leave the Academy and enter a league the Football Committee, the Academy Director and the future managers of the teams will organise the children into teams/squads for twin games structure.

Ashbourne United **DO NOT GRADE children (or coaches) coming out of the Academy.**

Team selection process is as follows:

Taking 2010 as an example age group

One third of the squad taken from children born Jan - April 2010

One third of the squad taken from children born May - Aug 2010

One third of the team taken from children born Sept - Dec 2010

- The squads go into 5-a-side twin game set ups in NDSL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 14 - which gives 5 players with 2 subs per 5-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 14 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 14 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 14 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 14 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

U8s is about participation and is non-competitive - **there's no league table.** Naturally children will want to compete and keep scores etc, which is no harm - but we should not worry about this as managers/coaches - ultimately the scores are only used for the leagues continual assessment/divisional grading policy.

Through the course of the season the league will assess results and try to find the most enjoyable level of football for all teams - where children can develop as players and enjoy their game each week.

Throughout the first season:

- We expect each manager to follow PDP guidelines on player participation for their age group.
- Each team (squad) will be allocated ONE training slot per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slot is made by the manager for a day that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate that slot*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for continual assessment on divisions.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following U9 season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U9

With the information from their first playing season the club will begin the process of assessing players in order to find them the most appropriate team/squad/level for their ability/commitment/physique at that moment in their football 'career'. This process will continue from U9 to U16 (each closed season) in an effort to keep all members participating, and more importantly, enjoying their football at a level that suits them.

There will **NOT** be assessment/trial matches but the information collected from the managers and football committee from the previous season will be discussed and decisions made, with managers involvement, to ensure that players get to play at the appropriate level for them. **This is a player/child focused process, not a coach/winning mentality focus.**

There will be player movement, but our experience is that it's only 2 to 3 players affected up and down.

- The squads continue in 5-a-side twin game set ups in NDSL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 14 - which gives 5 players with 2 subs per 5-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 14 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 14 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 14 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 14 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

U9s is about participation and is non-competitive - **there's no league table.** Naturally children will want to compete and keep scores etc, which is no harm - but we should not worry about this as managers/coaches - ultimately the scores are only used for the leagues continual assessment/divisional grading policy.

At U9:

- We expect each manager to follow PDP guidelines on player participation for their age group.
- Each team (squad) will be allocated a minimum of ONE training slot per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slot(s) is made by the manager for a day(s) that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate that slot*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for continual assessment on divisions.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following U10 season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U10

The club will continue the process of assessing players in order to find them the most appropriate team/squad/level for their ability/commitment/physique at that moment in their football 'career'. This process will continue from U9 to U16 (each closed season) in an effort to keep all members participating, and more importantly, enjoying their football at a level that suits them.

This is our first age group to hold assessment/trial matches but the information collected from the managers and football committee from the previous season will be used to make decisions, with managers involvement, to ensure that players get to play at the appropriate level for them. This is a player/child focused process, not a coach/winning mentality focus, however we will begin to 'fine tune' the squads as regards playing levels and ability.

There will be player movement but our experience is that it's only 2 to 3 players affected up and down.

- The squads move on to 7-a-side game set ups in NDSL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 12 - which gives 7 players with 5 subs for 7-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 12 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 12 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 12 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 12 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

U10s is about participation and is non-competitive - there's no league table - however there will be one competitive cup competition per season. Naturally children will want to compete and keep scores etc, which is no harm - but we should not worry about this as managers/coaches - ultimately the scores are only used for the leagues continual assessment/divisional grading policy.

At U10:

- We expect each manager to follow PDP guidelines on player participation for their age group.
- Each team (squad) will be allocated TWO training slots per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slots is made by the manager for days that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate those slots*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for continual assessment on divisions.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following U11 season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U11

The club will continue the process of assessing players in order to find them the most appropriate team/squad/level for their ability/commitment/physique at that moment in their football 'career'. This process will continue from U9 to U16 (each closed season) in an effort to keep all members participating, and more importantly, enjoying their football at a level that suits them.

We will hold assessment/trial matches but the information collected from the managers and football committee from the previous season will be used to make decisions, with managers involvement, to ensure that players get to play at the appropriate level for them. This is a player/child focused process, not a coach/winning mentality focus, however we will continue to 'fine tune' the squads as regards playing levels and ability.

There will be player movement but our experience is that it's only 2 to 3 players affected up and down.

- The squads continue with 7-a-side game set ups in NDSL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 12 - which gives 7 players with 5 subs for 7-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 12 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 12 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 12 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 12 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

U11s is about participation and is non-competitive - **there's no league table** - however there will be one competitive cup competition per season. Naturally children will want to compete and keep scores etc, which is no harm - but we should not worry about this as managers/coaches - ultimately the scores are only used for the leagues divisional grading policy for competitive football at U12.

At U11:

- We expect each manager to follow PDP guidelines on player participation for their age group.
- Each team (squad) will be allocated TWO training slots per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slots is made by the manager for days that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate those slots*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for continual assessment on divisions.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following U12 season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U12

The club will continue the process of assessing players in order to find them the most appropriate team/squad/level for their ability/commitment/physique at that moment in their football 'career'. This process will continue from U9 to U16 (each closed season) in an effort to keep all members participating, and more importantly, enjoying their football at a level that suits them.

We will hold assessment/trial matches but the information collected from the managers and football committee from the previous season will be used to make decisions, with managers involvement, to ensure that players get to play at the appropriate level for them. Now that teams are entering competitive divisions

There will be player movement and because of the increased squad numbers our experience tells us that this can be a time of big change - however, because of our continual assessment through the years we believe parents are aware of why there's need for change.

- The squads move onto 9-a-side game set ups in NDSL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 14 - which gives 9 players with 5 subs for 9-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 14 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 14 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 14 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 14 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

Players are now moving into competitive football, with league tables and at least one cup competition per season. The groundwork from Academy to U11 should have the club close to having players in the right environment for their football level. As per PDP we expect each player of the 14 to participate in the weekend fixture.

At U12:

- We expect each manager to follow PDP guidelines on player participation for their age group.
- Each team (squad) will be allocated TWO training slots per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slots is made by the manager for days that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate those slots*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for updating league tables.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following U13 season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U13

The club will continue the process of assessing players in order to find them the most appropriate team/squad/level for their ability/commitment/physique at that moment in their football 'career'. This process will continue from U9 to U16 (each closed season) in an effort to keep all members participating, and more importantly, enjoying their football at a level that suits them.

We will hold assessment/trial matches but the information collected from the managers and football committee from the previous season will be used to make decisions, with managers involvement, to ensure that players get to play at the appropriate level for them. Now that teams are moving from 9-a-side to 11-a-side football.

There will be player movement particularly as players physique starts to become a major element.

- The squads move onto 11-a-side game set ups in NDSL, MGL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 16 - which gives 11 players with 5 subs for 11-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 16 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 16 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 16 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 16 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

Players are now moving into 11-a-side football, with league tables and at least one cup competition per season. As per PDP we expect each player of the 16 to participate in the weekend fixture.

However, we are aware that certain games in a season may become too tight for many (or any) changes - we expect the manager to have a word with the player affected that week to tell them they'll start the next week or whatever plan you can commit to - and to also relay this to the parents.

At U13:

- We expect each manager to follow PDP guidelines on player participation for their age group.
- Each team (squad) will be allocated TWO training slots per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slots is made by the manager for days that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate those slots*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for updating league tables.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following U14 season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U14 - U16

The club will continue the process of assessing players in order to find them the most appropriate team/squad/level for their ability/commitment/physique at that moment in their football 'career'. This process will continue from U9 to U16 (each closed season) in an effort to keep all members participating, and more importantly, enjoying their football at a level that suits them.

We will hold assessment/trial matches but the information collected from the managers and football committee from the previous season will be used to make decisions, with managers involvement, to ensure that players get to play at the appropriate level for them. Now that teams are entering competitive divisions

There will be player movement particularly as players physique starts to become a major element.

- The squads continue in 11-a-side game set ups in NDSL, MGL or DDSL.
- The minimum number in a squad will be 16 - which gives 11 players with 5 subs for 11-a-side game.
- If the numbers are below 16 in a given season, the club will endeavour to increase to 16 throughout the season.
- If the numbers are above 16 and we cannot form another full squad then the club will ask managers to take on all children *and at the very least* create a roster system to allow 16 travel for each game OR *preferably* work with the bigger squad.

Players are now established in 11-a-side football, with league tables and at least one cup competition per season.

*However, we are aware that competition is now very high on the players agenda too, so we now allow managers make decisions for competitive reasons. We respect our managers to make decisions that will in turn respect their players and keep as many players involved as possible, with as much game time throughout the season as possible - **good record keeping, particularly on training attendance & matchday/game time, is essential now for dealing with parents.***

At U14 - U16:

- Each team (squad) will be allocated TWO training slots per week (*as with any other side in the club the application for the slots is made by the manager for days that suits him/her/them and the club will endeavour to allocate those slots*).
- Each team will report their scores to the Secretary who in turn will inform the league for updating league tables.
- Over the season we ask that the managers keep note of training attendance, matchday attendance, child's behaviour/attitude and finally ability so that we can use this information to assess the player, as part of individual continual assessment, for the following season.
- The football committee will see as many games as possible and check that procedures are being followed.

U17 - Adult

From U17 age group upwards the club pass the responsibility of squad selection and player movement (if two squads) onto the management teams. The club has assessed the players through their schoolboy/girls years and now as Youth to adult players it is a players responsibility to impress the management for game time.

The Football Committee will appoint the management at these levels and will assist if needed in any squad development.

- The squads continue in 11-a-side game set ups in NDSL, MGL or DDSL at U17 and U18. As U19 or adult players the teams will play in the LSL or DWSL.

Volunteer Certification

All volunteers need to be Garda vetted immediately - they need to fill out the necessary documentation (available from Admin) and have the process started before they can begin to work with children. When the vetting letter returns the club needs to be given a copy of same.

Within 2 months of getting involved all volunteers need to complete the FAI Safeguarding/Child Welfare 4 hour course and again the club needs to be given copy of certification. (The club will pay for this course).

Since a lot of our volunteers start in the Academy this process needs to be done as the volunteer gets involved and should be the responsibility of the Academy Director - after the Academy the vetting and certification would be close to renewal dates and so the volunteer should start the process again before going into organised football, and ensuring this should be the responsibility of the Club Secretary.

Any volunteer joining the club outside of the Academy set up should be the responsibility of the Club Secretary to have vetted and course completed.

FAI Courses & First Aid

The club is committed to having its volunteers trained up and will fully pay for all FAI courses and First Aid courses up to UEFA C certification.

At UEFA C the club will pay two thirds of the cost of the course.

After UEFA C the applicant must make an appeal to the Football Committee and Executive Committee regarding part funding Elite Grassroots, UEFA B and UEFA A courses.

Players Living Outside of Our Jurisdiction

As a Community based club Ashbourne United has a responsibility to the community of Ashbourne and surrounding areas. To this end we require the majority of our players to come from Ashbourne and the surrounding areas.

The surrounding areas are deemed as:

Northwards: Kilmoon/Curragha/Ardcath area

Southwards: Finglas (but not including Finglas) - North Road

Westwards: Ratoath

Eastwards: Swords (but not including Swords) - Rathbeale Road

We understand that as a team moves up the age levels and the divisions, that players might wish to move to the club from outside the area and so the club will allow **4 outfield players plus 1 goalkeeper** (because they're so hard to get) **from outside our jurisdiction to play for an 11-a-side team**. Which means the squad will always have 75% of players from Ashbourne and surrounding areas.

Why put all the years into developing players to 'dismiss' them for others.

Friendlies and Tournament Entry

On the foot of insurance claims in other clubs around the country for players injured during friendlies/tournaments and the discovery that those players were not insured, ALL the leagues and the Referees Association require that clubs request permission for all friendlies and tournament entries.

On receipt of this request and provided the league permit the game/tournament then the players are fully insured under club policy.

Procedure, without exception (home or away): Inform Club Secretary of any friendlies or entry into tournaments (in and out of season), who in turn will request permission from the league.

N.B. referees are under instruction from their Association not to take friendlies or ref in tournaments that have not been sanctioned.

The Football Committees decision on allowing your entry into a tournament or not, is final.

Training Allocation

Training slots are re-allocated each closed season and are done by the Football Committee with the best intent and interest of all. Managers request slots and days and the Football Committee endeavour to accommodate, without favouritism but using the following guidelines:

U8 teams will only ever receive one training day with 1 hour slot

U9 to U11 teams will receive two training days with 1 hour slots

U12 to adult teams will receive two training days with 90 min slots

FAI International matches and LOI matches

Through experience the club no longer receive an allocation of International match tickets and do not envisage doing so before this document review in 2020.

Any manager who wishes to bring a team to a home International game or League of Ireland game must look for permission from the club so that such trip can be covered under club insurance.

There is certain criteria which must be adhered to before permission will be granted:

1. The quota of children to adults must be 4:1
2. All children must have a permission slip signed by parents
3. All tickets, transport, expenditure must be paid for by the parents - the club will not subsidize the trip.
4. Before and after the trip the Club Treasurer must be sent a record of all financials of the trip - this is for managers security as well as the clubs.

International Travel and Tournaments

Because of a substantial legacy bill from a kit supplier, accrued on several overseas trips, the club has had a no travel policy since the mid 2000's. This rule is still in place.

Any plan to travel internationally with a team must be brought before the **Executive Committee** of the club with a proposal and presentation on the full trip and meeting the criteria (1. to 4.) above must be part of the proposal.

Club Code of Conduct

The club code of conduct is basically a set of standards describing the behaviour we expect of our club members.

Why do we have one?

Well, as a football club we are governed by the relevant laws, regulations and standards of the leagues we are affiliated to, the FAI, Uefa and Fifa - but we recognise that these do not govern all behaviour. The Executive feel it is important for all our members to understand exactly what we stand for and how they can expect us to conduct ourselves.

The code is for all members and has specific areas for players, parents and coaches but within this handbook all three are presented so that each can see what is expected of the other also.

You can find the FAI's code of ethics and child welfare policy on:
www.fai.ie/domestic/safeguarding/documents

PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the club I hereby agree that I will:

- Abide by the rules and procedures as approved by Ashbourne Utd FC
- Abide to all rules related to team selection set out by the head coach/manager
- Act in a sportsmanlike manner, consistent with the spirit of the club
- Will strive to maintain a level of performance and readiness consistent with the clubs ethos
- Will behave in the appropriate manner both on and off the field while representing the club both locally and elsewhere (which includes the use of foul and abusive language)
- On matchdays wear the regulation club kit as supplied by the club
- As an adult player, endeavour to act as a good role model for the younger members of the club so as to maintain a high standard of behaviour at training/games

COACH/MANAGER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the club I hereby agree that I will:

- Create a positive, player and team centred learning environment
- Ensure professional standards are attained and maintained
- Apply best practice when working with children
- Strive to improve each individual within the team structure
- Promote development over winning at all costs when working with young players
- Ensure all players wear the regulation club kit as supplied by the club
- Strive to follow the guidelines laid down by the PDP regarding player game time in non-competitive leagues (up to Under 12)

PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the club I hereby agree that I will:

- Encourage my child to behave in the appropriate manner while representing the club
- Encourage my child to attend all training sessions and games
- Encourage my child to lead a healthy lifestyle
- Assist coaches to fulfil my child's potential
- On matchdays, ensure my child wears the regulation club kit as supplied by the club
- Allow game instructions to come from the coach/manager
Children can often become confused when many people are giving them instruction (even their parent/guardian)
- Try to encourage every player as they are all part of a team
- Be aware the club is about my child's development and not just winning games - all divisions, up to and including U12, are non-competitive as per league rule - (ndsl.ie/rules,content)
- Will behave in the appropriate manner as a spectator while my child is representing the club both locally and elsewhere (which includes the use of foul and abusive language)
- Have realistic footballing goals for my child



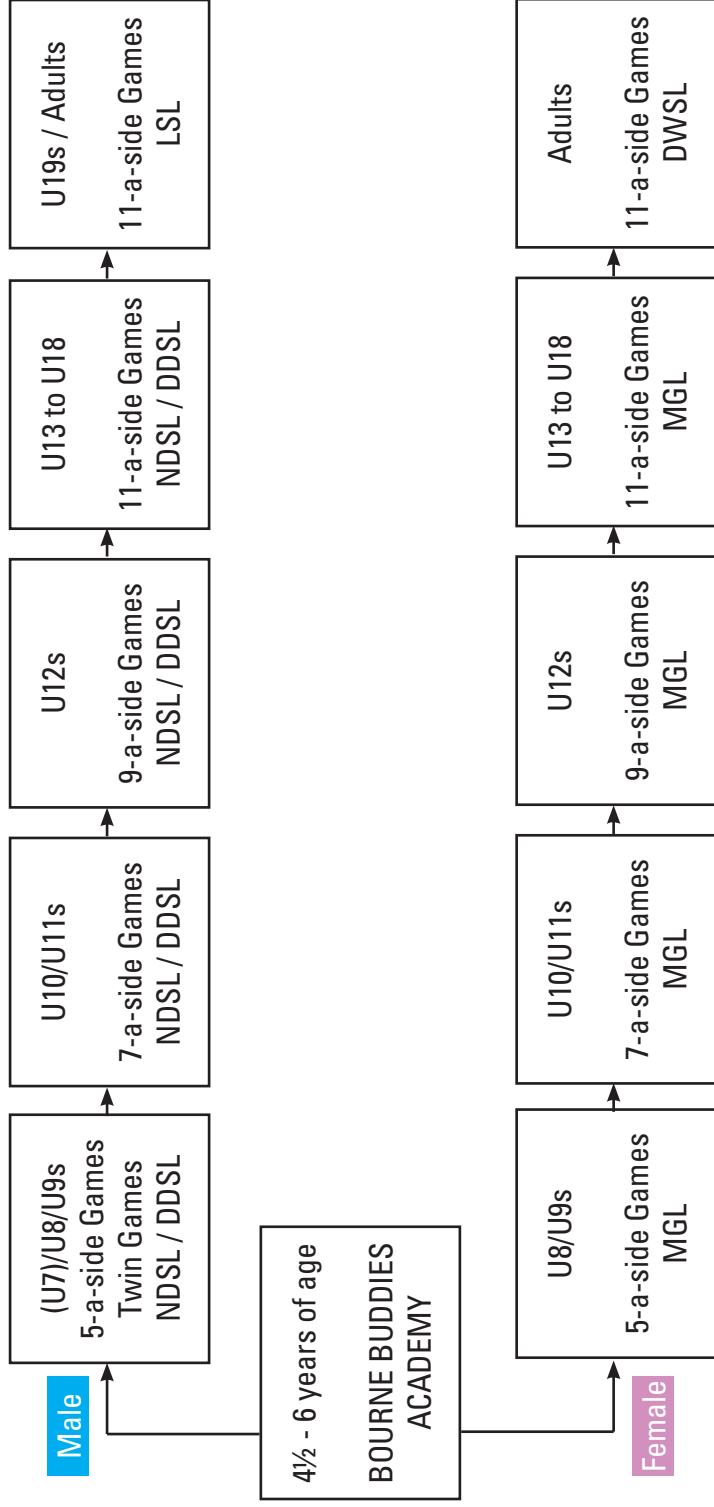
ASHBOURNE UNITED COACH PATHWAY

Stages	Requirements/Courses	Age Groups	Club Support
Years 1 to 2	Garda Vetting Form Safe Guarding / Child Protection Course First Aid Course (CPR, Defib training)	4½ - 6 years of age	Club will pay for Child Protection & First Aid Training
Years 3 to 4	PDP 1 (Old Kickstart 1) 4 v 4 Workshop The Fundamentals of Goalkeeping (Optional)	7 - 10 years of age	Club will pay for PDP 1, 4 v 4 Workshop and goalkeeping if chosen
Year 5 to 7	PDP 2 (Old Kickstart 2) 7 v 7 Workshop Strength & Conditioning Workshop Goalkeeping Award (Optional)	10 - 14 years of age	Club will pay for PDP 2, 7 v 7 Workshop, Strength & Conditioning Workshop and goalkeeping if chosen
Year 8 onwards	Uefa C (Old Youth Cert) Goalkeeping Certificate (Optional)	15 years of age upwards	Club will pay two thirds of Uefa C Cert
*If ever . . .	FAI Elite Grassroots Coach	High level teams (Premier) / Adults	For discussion at time and reliant on circumstances
	Uefa B		
	Uefa A		
	Uefa A Goalkeeper Licence		
	Uefa Pro Licence		

*After Uefa C cert to move onto others is optional/reliant on what team a coach works with



ASHBOURNE UNITED PLAYER PATHWAY





ASHBOURNE UNITED ASSESSMENT PATHWAY

Based on NDSL & PDP Formats 2017

ACADEMY PLAYERS
Players assessed by Academy Director, Football Committee & Future Coaches and *assigned to squads of 14*

U8s and U9s
5-a-side Twin Games
Players assessed by Football Committee & team Coaches and *re-assigned to squads of 14*

U10s and U11s
7-a-side Games
Assessment games assessed by Football Committee & team Coaches and *re-assigned to squads of 12*

U12s
9-a-side Games
Assessment games assessed by Football Committee & team Coaches and *re-assigned to squads of 14*

U13s
11-a-side Games
Assessment games assessed by Football Committee & team Coaches and *re-assigned to squads of 14 - 16+*

U14s to U18s
11-a-side Games
IF NEEDED
Assessment games assessed by Football Committee & team Coaches and *re-assigned to squads of 14 - 16+*