

Draft Boys Juvenile Football Policy 2016

Introduction

The focus & objective of Juvenile Football is to create an environment in which all our players experience a sense of Fun, Achievement, and Fair Play, as they learn and develop the basic skills to fulfil their full potential. Juvenile Football Coaches will follow the GAA Coaching Pathway to Elite Performance (PEP) model. The PEP is a Gaelic Games specific player development pathway which outlines the key playing opportunities available to players as they progress through their playing careers. The opportunities are appropriate to their needs and abilities as they mature and challenge for success.

The model is comprised of four key stages; Fun Do (Recreation), Can Do (Talent Identification), Want To (Talent Transfer) and Will Do (Elite Performance). These stages are spanned by three phases; Play to Learn (Kids), Learn to Compete (Youths) and Compete to Win (Adults), which reflect the focus of participation as players develop. This focus also mirrors Naas GAA Club's strategy for success with teams competing at the appropriate levels (Minor, Under 21 & Senior) for silverware.

The Recreation (Fun Do) stage is structured so that our young boys can 'Play to Learn', i.e. develop the underlying techniques of Gaelic Football, as reflected in the Naas GAA Skills Challenge Document, through activities that are 'Fun to Do'. This stage has been identified by Naas Juvenile Football Section as from Nursery up to, and including, under 13 Boys Football. The acquisition of technical proficiency during this stage will enable young players progress to the Talent Identification (Can do) Stage with a sense of belief in their own ability. It is important that the maximum number of our players feel they 'Can Do' what's required from them as they 'Learn to Compete'. The 'Can Do' stage has been identified by Naas Juvenile Football Section from under 14 Boys up to and including Under 16 Football.

Footballers leave Juvenile Football after Under 16 and move into Senior Football to continue their progress through the stages and phases of player development. Juvenile Football policy aims to feed into Senior Football, ensuring that transition to the Talent Transfer (Want To) Stage (Minor Football) is maximised both in relation to playing potential and retention of players.

Proper coaching and example from Juvenile Football Coaches, combined with commitment and willingness to learn from Juvenile Football Players, plus support with required resources from our Club Executive and parental support will help ensure that maximum numbers of our players reach the Talent Transfer (Want To) Stage (Minor Football) with a desire to commit the time and make the effort required to participate at a higher level of competition.

Naas GAA

Membership Registration of Juvenile Members:

All Juvenile coaches and players must be registered and paid up members of Naas GAA, before being eligible to play or coach with juvenile football teams within our club. Membership registration will take place at the start of the calendar year (January), and will be coordinated by the Naas GAA Registrar. Membership of Naas GAA covers the period 01 January – 31 December.

In addition to the January registration, Juvenile football must ensure that all primary school junior infant classes in the locality are informed of the on-going nursery and are invited to participate.

Other new players who wish to join during the year must be given the appropriate registration information by the lead mentor of that age group and make sure registration is completed before commencement of activities.

Juvenile Football, in conjunction with the lead mentors, will work with the Club and Juvenile Football Committee Registrar to monitor the Club's online database periodically to ensure that all players and coaches are duly registered.

Any costs to players and/or parents, in relation to Naas Juvenile Football training and player development related activities, over and above their membership payment, must be discussed and approved by the Core Officers of the Juvenile Football Sub Committee and ratified by Club Executive.

Grading and Panel Selection:

From Nursery to Under 13 -- teams will not be streamed.

The main coaching focus will be on developing the underlying techniques, skills of Gaelic Football, as reflected in the Naas GAA Skills Challenge Document, through activities that are '*Fun to Do*'. Naas GAA Skill Challenges document will ensure coach focus on skill acquisition and provide a framework for skill development, primarily from Under 7 to post primary.

Starting Sept 2016, all New Juvenile Football Entrants, will be assigned an appropriate age group based on their respective Chronological Age. All new entrants will start with the nursery from U 4 – U 6 and will only move into the U 7 team with their appropriate Chronological age group. Thereafter all players will progress through Juvenile Football with their chronological age group from 2016 onwards.

This ***will not affect*** current teams that may have players playing above their chronological age group.

From Under 14 to Under 16, teams within the age group will be streamed.

The coaching focus will be on the continued development of technical proficiency using the Naas GAA Skills Challenge Document, whilst introducing competition on skills developed during the '*Fun Do*' stage and '*Play to Learn*' phase. Coaches will stream teams from Under 14 as the focus moves to the Talent Identification stage (*Can Do*) and '*Learning to Compete*' phase of the player's development.

Naas GAA

Players playing with a chronological age group either a year above or below¹ may be selected based on ability and on receipt of parental consent. This will **only occur once the player's chronological age group competition is completed.**

Under 14 Football Age Group:

All Under 14 players will be streamed, based on their football and physical ability, to compete within this age. Players playing one year above their chronological age group ***must remain at U 14 for a second season*** to allow their chronological age group 'catch up' with them.

Under U15 – U 16 Age Group:

All Under 15/16 players will be streamed based on their football and physical ability to compete within this age. Players playing one year above their chronological age group ***must remain at U 15/16 for a second season*** to allow their chronological age group 'catch up' with them before moving into the Senior Football.

Panel Selection for U 14 – U 16 teams:

Panels will be selected as per the following criteria:

- An overall Lead Mentor, age group Point Of Contact (POC), will be appointed by the Juvenile Football Committee, on the recommendation of the core² officers.
 - i. The Lead Mentor will be appointed by the Juvenile football committee during the subcommittee monthly meeting, on the recommendation of the core officers and then brought before the next executive meeting for ratification.
 - ii. Mentors have selection of all available players within their chronological year group and the year below.
 - iii. Mentors will select a panel of between 20-24 players, dependent on the overall number of players available to the specific age group. The A panel will be reflective of the best players and if the numbers allow, then the B panel will be the next best panel and so forth.
 - iv. All players will be allocated a panel reflective of their ability, commitment and current disposition³ which ensures competition, improvement and retention.

¹Some children start school slightly (4 yrs) earlier which means they commence playing football one (1) before their chronological year commences. This anomaly is addressed at U 14 age group within Naas Juvenile Football. From 2016 on, this anomaly for all new entrants will not occur.

In the case of U 15 Football, this refers to players just finished playing U 14 competitions where all competitions relevant to their age group have completed.

² Naas Juvenile Core Officers comprising Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer can seek the advice of other club members with this process. In the case where one of Juvenile Football's Core Officers is being nominated as Lead Mentor, that core Officer will not be part of the recommending process and their place will be taken by the Club Officer mirroring their role within Juvenile football ensuring transparency and fairness eg. Juvenile Football Chairman replaced by Club Chairman or Juvenile Football Treasurer replaced by Club Treasurer etc during selection process.

³ A player returning from and a long term injury might be best suited being placed in a lower streamed panel to allow him regain fitness and technical proficiency prior to re-association with higher streamed panel.

Naas GAA

- v. The lifespan of any streamed panel is only for a specific competition, league or championship, and will be reviewed by the Lead Mentor on completion of that competition to enable movement between panels reflective of player progress/regress within the age group during the last competition.⁴

The age group lead coach, supported by Naas Juvenile Football Committee, will be responsible for organising an information night for parents of the children within his/her cohort to apprise them of grading and panel selection policy and the benefits of this policy towards child development.

Mentors / Manager Selection:

All mentors must have committed to complete required mandatory GAA courses⁵ and submitted a Garda Vetting form to the Juvenile Football Committee prior to their commencement as coaches / mentor with any Naas Juvenile Football Team. The Lead Coach from Nursery to U 12 will be nominated by other coaches within the group. The nomination must reflect the individual's ability to commit to the coordination of the age group. The Lead Mentor from U 13 – U 16 will be appointed by the Juvenile Football Committee, on recommendation of the core officer's, and brought to the Club executive for ratification.

Nursery – Under 12;

Mentors involved from Nursery to U 12 are selected on a voluntary basis, which is reflective of involvement from parents in boys' Juvenile football. All mentors will be required to undertake an appropriate coaching course⁶ to ensure best coaching practice within the age groups.

- From U 7 onwards, mentors are required to nominate a group POC (lead mentor) and inform the Juvenile Football committee of his/her name and also the names and relevant details of all other coaches involved.
- In the event of internal disagreement within any age group up to U 13, the Juvenile Football Committee will nominate the lead coach based on coaching qualifications, coaching experience, playing experience and availability.

The Juvenile Football Committee will hold an information night for all parents of players from Nursery to U 12 to ensure awareness of the following:

- Juvenile Football Policy
- Skills Challenge Pathway for Skill development

⁴ Players will improve once appropriate coaching is received and this improvement has to be reflected in advancement within streamed panels to maintain development. Also players will regress and will need re-grading to regain confidence and focus.

⁵ Naas GAA will identify mandatory Child Welfare courses, if any, that Juvenile Football coaches may be required to complete prior to assuming a coaching role with a team. The delivery of such courses will be coordinated through the club executive.

⁶ Foundation Level Coaching Course is a basic requirement for all coaches, to be organised over a weekend within the Club. Thereafter coaches will be selected to complete further Leinster GAA coaching courses by the Juvenile Football committee.

Naas GAA

- Planned excursions
- Any other relevant points to parents

Under 13-16:

- The Lead Mentor, involved in the U 13 – U 16, will be appointed by Juvenile Football based on the following criteria :
 - i. Have completed a GAA Award 1 Youth & Adult GAA coaching course within the last 5 years.
 - ii. Have completed Basic Code of Ethics Course
 - iii. Have experience to coach at the Talent Identification stage (*Can Do*) and ‘Learning to Compete’ phase of the player’s development.
- The Lead Mentor for U 13 / U 14 will:
 - i. Be appointed for a two year term⁷, and will be announced in the autumn preceding their appointment to enable planning.
 - ii. Work with the coaches involved with this age group to advise and lead this age group through the next two years.
- Mentors for U 15 / 16 will:
 - i. Be appointed for a two year term⁸ and announced in the autumn preceding their appointment to enable planning.
 - ii. Work with the coaches involved with this age group to advise and lead this age group through the next two years.
- Naas Juvenile Football Committee reserve the right to recommend to the Club executive the withdrawal any management team, or member therein, if any elements associated with this policy, including behaviour, player development and coach development / education is not complied with fully.

Management Ratification at Club executive Level:

All Juvenile Football U 13- U 16 Lead Mentors will be approved by the Naas Juvenile Football Committee at their monthly meeting, on the recommendation of the Core Officers, before being presented to the Club Executive for ratification.

Role of the Lead Mentor – Under 13 – Under 16

The roles of any coach / mentor are many and varied, however the Lead Mentor will endeavour to:

- Organise a meeting with all parents to inform them of the plan for their sons for the next two years and link with PEP.
- Provide the best standard of coaching, in conjunction with the other coaches, to the First streamed team and advise the other teams in relation to their plan, focus etc.
- Assess the current level of *coach education* within the group and advise on further courses or workshops to assist with the transition for the coaches between stages and phases.

⁷ Lead mentor will be appointed to advise and influence coaching for the two year period that the players compete at U 13 & U 14 within Naas Juvenile Football.

⁸ Lead Mentor will be appointed to advise and influence coaching from U 15 until the teams are finished all U 16 competitions. This leads to continuity and is best practice for player development.

Naas GAA

- Ensure that opportunities for talent identification are continued throughout this stage through attendance at second stream matches, joint training sessions, meetings etc to ensure that player improvement is reflected in transition within panels.
- Ensure that their age group is represented at all monthly Juvenile Subcommittee meetings, preferably by the Lead Mentor, and that the core officers are updated on all developments relevant to their groups progression.
- Plan a programme of training, in conjunction with Naas Juvenile Football Committee, ensuring the following areas are reflected within:
 - i. Appropriate transition between stages and phases of PEP for players with an individual player analysis conducted and reviewed over the period.
 - ii. Progressive Athletic Development programme.
 - iii. Diet, Nutrition and general wellness presentation to both Parents and Players separately.
 - iv. Injury Prevention talks with qualified physio for both Parents and Players separately to educate about burn-out.
 - v. Co-ordination of activities with other GAA coaches within the club to be cognisant of :
 1. Overall commitment of players with School, Club and other non-GAA sports.
 2. Exams.
 3. Physical and mental fatigue and a player's general wellness.
- Ensure that all mentors associated with the group are:
 - i. Respectful, Responsible and Professional.
 - ii. Dependable and Enthusiastic.
 - iii. Empathic, Fair and Firm.
 - iv. Helpful, Honourable and Knowledgeable.
 - v. Motivated, Organised and Supportive.
- Ensure that the intent of this policy is complied with to the best of their ability.

Commitment Contract between Coach, Parent and Player

Naas Juvenile Football acknowledges that the most important thing is that all boys are actively involved in sport, regardless of which sport / code they choose.

However, in recognition of PEP model stages and phases, the primary responsibility of Juvenile Football is to ensure that boys who opt to play Gaelic Football with Naas are afforded proper coaching and example, to ensure that maximum numbers reach the Talent Transfer (*Want To*) Stage (Minor Football), deciding that they want to commit the time and make the effort required to participate at a higher level of competition and **compete to win**. In this context Naas Juvenile Football commit to ensuring the delivery of Best Coaching Practice in support of Player Development for Naas Juvenile players. Furthermore, Naas Juvenile Coaches will maintain the highest standards in relation to all aspects of interaction with Naas Juvenile players.

Parents, as part of this contact, are requested to ensure that coaches are informed as early as possible of availability of their Boys for matches / training in recognition of the planning that

Naas GAA

goes into both. It is important to note that maximum attendance from Under 14 on will increase the potential of your son to transition between the last stages / phases of the PEP model. Failure to attend both coaching session and matches ultimately lead to retention challenges further down the line and a significant gap in ability, compared to those that commit.

Players, for their part, are requested to commit to adhering to timing for both matches and training. All Naas players will wear official Naas kit to all matches.

Player Retention within Naas Juvenile Football Section

The challenge of retaining maximum players participating in Gaelic Football to the Talent Transfer (Will Do) stage is central to the overall objectives of Juvenile Football. With that in mind, player retention is an area that all Coaches should be continually cognisant of and the following options are presented as a reference for coaches regarding activities that may assist retaining player interest and commitment throughout a season.

Retention is bracketed into the following categories:

Nursery:

- Maximum fun filled activities that want to ensure that the kids return the following week – ‘*Fun Do*’ stage of their development.
- Club activities – movie nights in the club for nursery kids with treats bag.
- Possible kit (First Touch GAA Ball, Knicks, Socks etc) given to reflect their attendance at training.
- Camp run internally by club U 14-U16 players, with cost, following coordination with other club subcommittees.

Under 7 - Under 12

- Focus on fun filled activities in training whilst developing skills using the player pathway.
- Provide equal opportunities for all players, reflective of a non-streamed environment for maximum progression.
- Guest Coaches – Naas / Kildare Players or outside coaches.
- Outings to Kildare GAA match in St Conleth’s or Croke Park.
- Possible kit (GAA Ball, Knicks, Socks etc) given to reflect their attendance at training.
- Camp run internally by club U 14-U16 players, with cost, following coordination with other club subcommittees.
- Consider organising street league blitz during the summer.
- Consider winter programme on astro to maintain cohesion of group and player development.

Under 13 - Under 14

- Proper **coaching** to ensure that the players are being challenged in a competitive environment to progress through *Can Do* stage as they learn to compete.
- Ensure that all players are afforded appropriate playing time.
- Guest Coaches – Naas / Kildare Players or other coaches in club.
- An outing to Kildare GAA matches in St Conleth’s or Croke Park.

Naas GAA

- Self-funded team building activities.
- Possible Kit initiatives to develop group cohesion.
- Honest appraisals from coaches in relation to player progression through teams as they improve.
- Consider winter programme to introduce new areas of training (Athletic Development) as part of player development and maintain cohesion of group.

Under 15 – Under 16

- Proper **coaching** to ensure that the players are being challenged in a competitive environment to progress through *Can Do* stage as they learn to compete – Technical, Tactical, Physical and Psychological player development.
- Ensure that all players are afforded appropriate playing time.
- Guest Coaches – Naas / Kildare Players or other coaches in club.
- An outing to Kildare GAA matches in St Conleth's or Croke Park.
- Self-funded team building activities.
- Possible Kit initiatives to develop group cohesion.
- Honest appraisals from coaches in relation to player progression through teams as they improve.
- Consider winter programme to maintain player development and cohesion of group.
- Juvenile Football Academy.

In conclusion, this policy is focussed on ensuring that Naas Juvenile Football, in conjunction with Coaches, Players, the Club Executive and Parents, endeavours to support the development of our players in order to maximise the numbers who eventually reach the Talent Transfer (*Want To*) Stage (Minor Football). It is very important that all players enjoy their years and develop in Juvenile Football because it is this enjoyment and development that will make them want to commit the time and effort required to participate at a higher level of competition as they progress into Senior Football. New developments being introduced as part of the GAA's response to overall player burn-out will influence player development in Naas GAA. However, consideration should be given to the challenges associated with the transition from Juvenile Football to Senior Football, as a matter of urgency.

It is recommended that this policy is continuously reviewed to ensure it is current and appropriate for our players and coaches and updated, if required, every 18 months.