

Planning For Success

Monivea Abbey GAA

Youth Player
Development Pathway



Why?



Player Pathway Purpose:

- Per the club GAA Games & Coaching Policy: “The Club philosophy is to bring as many players as possible through the younger ages to play at Adult level”.
- To achieve this club goal coaches should target incremental progression and improvement of all areas of development outlined in the four quadrants player development below from the younger ages through to adult level.
- Provide a systematic approach to maximise player potential and increase the enjoyment of all our players.
- Help guide coaches, managers, mentors and parents who play an active role in the development of our young Gaelic Footballers.
- Provide a framework for the development of skills, fundamental movement, physical focus and game specific capacities that coaches can follow stage by stage.
- NOTE: This booklet can also be viewed as an interactive document. Please contact the club officers to receive your digital version where you can click on the various links to learn how to coach the various skills of Gaelic football.
- Refer to the club GAA Games & Coaching Policy and Gaelic Games Player Pathway for all guidelines on player development.

TECHNICAL

Technical Execution
First Touch
Passing Range
Individual Flair
Defending in 1v1

TACTICAL

Vision
Game Intelligence
Positional Awareness
Impact in the Game

PHYSICAL

Speed and Pace
Flexibility
Athleticism
Strength on the Ball
Workload

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Lifestyle
Coachability
Character
Winning Mentality
Social Qualities

Underage Coaching Guidelines:

- We recommend an open meeting in which all parents are encouraged to attend at the start of each year. An outline for the year to be discussed at this meeting.
- The training mantra has to be “the maximum activity for the maximum number for the maximum amount of time” i.e. All players are active in training not just the stronger players.
- Trainings should not be overly technical. There should be a focus on skill development through a games based approach.
- Identify what you want the kids to learn. Then give time to that.
- Training plans are important see example provided in Appendix
- Mentors must have at least one football for every two players and ideally every player should have a ball at younger age groups.
- Targets in terms of technical and tactical skills/targets must be identified that the children should be able to achieve at the various age-groups. These targets are outlined in this document.
- Coaches forum should occur on a regular basis throughout the season. Good ideas should be shared amongst coaches.
- U6-11 are non-competitive age groups, U12-16 are competitive age groups
- A list of common coaching acronyms and terms are included in the appendices to aid understanding
- To support coach development coaches should seek or avail of opportunities to coach/help other age groups in addition to their own age group.
- This is a live document which will be reviewed on a yearly basis

Our Clubs Long-Term DEVELOPMENT MODEL

7 Stages LTDM

1. Active Fun start - Fun & part of daily life.
2. FUNdamental - Build overall Physical Literacy & Motor Skills.
3. Learning to Train - Learn FUNdamental Sports Skills.
4. Training to Train - build 'the engine' and consolidate sport-specific skills.
5. Training to Compete - fine-tune 'the engine', skills and performance.
6. Training to Win -maximise performance, skills and 'engine'.
7. Retirement/Retainment - adjustment/retain players/athletes for coaching/administration.

5 Stages of Coaching

There are 5 key stages outlined in our pathway which have detailed player characteristics. They describe the practical elements that must be coached during these ages.

STAGE	AGE	EMPHASIS
Learn to Master the Ball (Me and my ball)	5-7 Years	Should be about fun and participation with key emphasis on physical literacy and fundamental movement skills with the ball.
Learn to Use the Ball Well (Me and my ball and my friends)	8-9 Years	Major skills learning phase where all the basic skills in football are learned. Emphasis on the fundamental movements.
Learn to Play Together (The start of us)	10-12 Years	Emphasis on understanding how to play and work together as a team.
Learning about Positions (Where & how we play)	13-15 Years	The principles of play and applying good game sense increase.
Learning to Perform (The formal phase)	16-18 Years	Combining all aspects of performance including decision making, higher physical demands of the game and coping with competition.

What?



Target skills and progression per age group

SKILL	U 5 / U 6	U 7	U 8 / U 9	U 10 / U 11
Kick - Ground	✓	✓	✓	
Kick - Punt		✓	✓	✓
Kick - Hook			✓	✓
Hand Pass	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tackle – Near Hand			✓	✓
Tackle – Frontal			✓	✓
Block Down			✓	✓
Shadowing				✓
Pick Up		✓	✓	✓
Catch - Body	✓	✓	✓	
Catch - Reach		✓		
Catch - High			✓	✓
Bounce	✓	✓		
Solo		✓	✓	✓

LEARNING TO
MASTER THE
BALL 5 - 7 YEARS
BOBBY JOE



Level 1: Football Skills key learnings, 5 – 7 Year Old's

KEY LEARNING/SKILL	GAME ENVIRONMENT*
1. Body Catch	Uncontested
2. Reach Catch	Uncontested
3. Pick Up (stationary)	Uncontested
4. Hand Pass	Uncontested
5. Ground Kick	Uncontested
6. Punt Kick	Uncontested
7. Bounce	Uncontested
8. Solo	Uncontested

Uncontested: Master the skill in isolation. Focus on drills and fun games that allow the player to execute the skill on their own.

**See terms for explanation in appendices*

Learning to master the ball 5-7 Year

- **FUN IS THE KEY FOR THIS AGE GROUP**

- Children of this age are self-centred and co-operation is largely absent.
- At this age many still think that the ball is their own 'toy', so they will try to run with the ball and score rather than pass.
- They will respond to partner work and skills practice for a short time. This helps introduce them to team work and co-operation.
- These children will only watch the ball. They cannot and will not look for space to run into.
- They usually enjoy being asked questions and this should give the coach plenty of opportunities to check for understanding.
- When their team is not in possession they find it difficult to understand defending a goal. To them they are merely chasing a ball.
- They respond best to chasing/fleeing games and target games. (Catching, throwing & running)
- Warm up using chasing/fleeing game, cool down with a fun game

Learning to Master the Ball 5-7 Years

SKILL EMPHASIS	GAME SPECIFIC	FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT
<u>FOOTBALL SKILLS</u>	<u>CLICK LINK FOR EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES - GAA GAMES PLANNER</u>	<u>ABC & RTJ</u>
<p>Maintaining Possession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throw • <u>One & Two handed bounce</u> • <u>Kicking</u> & Solo <p>Gaining Possession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Catch • <u>Pick up</u> (stationery & moving) • Hand Pass <p>Travelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knee tap solo 	<p>Chasing/Fleeing Games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Back to base ▪ Cat and mouse ▪ Dodge and tag <p>Target Games</p> <p>The simplest form of a game which challenges players to use the technique previously learned is the aim or target. Players have lots of time to perform the task without any distraction from other players.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear the circle ▪ Kicking Rounders ▪ Skittles <p>Court Games</p> <p>Court games require players to pass ball over an obstacle like a net or zone to a receiver. The level of decision making has increased but is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over the River ▪ Bridge Ball ▪ Knock out ball 	<p><u>Agility</u></p> <p>Back-to-Back, Follow the Leader, Hopscotch, Lateral Jumps</p> <p><u>Balance</u></p> <p>Hop in & out of hoops, bunny hops, 1 legged balance & hop</p> <p><u>Coordination</u></p> <p>Skipping, Ladder Work, Bean Bag toss</p> <p><u>Running</u></p> <p>Without the ball then with the Football Forward, Backward, sideways (multiple change of direction) High knees & heels</p> <p><u>Jumping</u></p> <p>Jump & <u>Landing</u> then Change Direction, Jump Jacks, Squat Jumps, Jump & Turn</p> <p><u>Throwing</u></p> <p>Target Roll, Skittles, Bowling</p>

Game Specific Options

NAME	AIM & FOCUS	EXPLANATION	EQUIPMENT
Bounce & kick	This exercise designed to improve kicking from the hand provides the players with more time to perform the kick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each player has a ball In a stationary position drop the ball allowing it to bounce Kick the ball as it returns from the ground. Kicking through a target i.e. 2 cones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cones Ball per 2 players
Over the River	Develops catching and Kicking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split group into two even teams Each team to remain inside their own square Scoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kicking team lands the ball inside the other teams square, they get a score If receiving team catches the ball before it bounces they get a score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ball Cones
Rob the Nest	Develops pick up, bouncing, soloing, evading, tackling, travelling with ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break group into 4 – 6 teams, each inside their own small square 10m from central point. On whistle one player can leave his square and collect a ball from the middle of the area. When all the balls are gone from the middle every player can leave their square and rob from other teams square. Only one ball allowed at a time per player. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 cones of 4 to 6 different colours As much balls of any sort as possible Separate colour bibs if possible
Toss & Catch	This exercise to develop catching & passing skills is generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each player has a ball. Toss the ball into the air to catch on the way down Varying the ball size, practice using both two hands and one hand to toss and catch Begin in a stationary position before introducing movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As many footballs as possible – 1 per child if possible

U7 Football Example Season Plan

	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT.
CODE SKILL		GROUND KICK			PUNT KICK	
ASSOCIATED SKILL 1		BODY CATCH		REACH CATCH		Hand Pass
ASSOCIATED SKILL 2		BOUNCE		SOLO		PICK UP
FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT	FLEXIBILITY AND SPEED: CONTINUATION OF EVASION AND CHASE GAMES. INTRODUCTION TO EXPLOSIVE EXERCISES SUCH AS FROG JUMPS, SQUAT JUMPS USING BODY WEIGHT ONLY. STABILITY AND BALANCE EXERCISES, JUMPING AND STEADY LANDING, LANDING ON ONE FOOT, MULTI DIRECTIONAL JUMPS ETC					
TYPES OF SESSIONS	PRIORITY FOR U7 IS FUN. SESSIONS SHOULD BE MAINLY GAMES BASED. CHILDREN AT THIS STAGE OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT ARE LIKE SPONGES AND WILL LEARN EXERCISES AND SKILLS VERY QUICKLY. SMALL SIDED GAMES ARE THE PRIORITY WHERE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF BALL CONTACTS CAN BE ACHIEVED. ELIMINATION OF STRAIGHT LINE EXERCISES. IDEALLY 1 BALL PER PLAYER.					
COMMENTS	<p>OBVIOUSLY, IF POSSIBLE TO INCORPORATE MORE SKILLS INTO THE TRAINING SESSION, THEN BRILLIANT. THE IDEA OF THIS MATRIX IS THAT COACHES WON'T NEGLECT ANY SKILLS IN THE YEAR AND CAN ENSURE EACH SKILL GETS A CHANCE TO BE DEVELOPED OVER MANY WEEKS. THIS IS A NICE GUIDE TO START WITH AND EACH MENTOR CAN DEVELOP TO SUIT THE NEEDS OF HIS/HER ETHOS AND IN LINE WITH THE SKILL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAYERS IN THE GROUP.</p> <p>LUCKILY, IN FOOTBALL, SKILLS ARE VERY RARELY DONE IN ISOLATION. IF YOU ARE PLAYING A 3 V 3 SMALL SIDED GAME ALL THE BASIC SKILLS WILL BE PRACTISED AND SHOULD BE DONE A HIGH NUMBER OF TIMES BY THE PLAYERS DUE TO THE SMALL NUMBERS IN THE GAME.</p>					

LEARNING TO USE THE BALL WELL 8 - 9 YEARS



Level 2: Football Skills key learnings, 8 - 9 Year Old's

KEY LEARNING/SKILL	GAME ENVIRONMENT*
1. Punt Kick	Semi Contested
2. Hook Kick	Semi Contested
3. Pick Up	Contested
4. Hand Pass	Semi Contested
5. Block Down	Semi Contested
6. Tackle	Semi Contested
7. Solo	Semi Contested
8. Catch	Semi Contested

Semi Contested: Focus on drills and games that allow the player to execute the skill under a limited amount of pressure from an opponent or under additional constraints (while moving etc).

Contested: Focus on drills and games that allow the players compete to execute the skill or under a match level of pressure from an opponent.

**See terms for explanation in appendices*

Learning to use the ball well 8 – 9 Years

- We should coach kids to look up when in possession and start choosing options [e.g. passing rather than shooting]
- They will have difficulty tackling opponents but will kick the ball away from them and attempt to block any shots.
- Players will beg for a game at every opportunity, yet their technique is best improved through individual, paired and small group work. This is an ideal time to use the 'Whole-Part-Whole' approach to some sessions where the coach starts with a game, stops it after ten minutes, works on one technique for a short period then restarts the game.
- At this age players will now try to win the game not only by scoring but also by attempting to deny the opposition the opportunity to score.
- They will also begin to understand the need to change the direction of a run or a pass to be more effective and they will begin to grasp the idea that a player may need support from behind and to the side as well as in front.
- Coaches should continue to run small-sided games, one of the better games is called 'Over the River'
- At this age players must also get used to attacking the ball [i.e. running and not stopping] and breaking tackles
- Warm up using chasing/fleeing or court game, cool down with a fun game

Learning to Use the Ball Well 8 – 9 Years

SKILL EMPHASIS	GAME SPECIFIC	FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT
<u>FOOTBALL SKILLS</u>	<u>CLICK LINK FOR EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES - GAA GAMES PLANNER</u>	<u>ABC & RTJ</u>
Maintaining Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One handed Bounce Solo Run 	Target Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gates Game Kick and Tackle 	Agility Back to Back, Follow the Leader, Hopscotch, Lateral Jumps
Releasing Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand Pass (closed fist) Ground Kick Punt Kick 	Court Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captains Ball Working after the pass 	Balance Hop in & out of hoops, bunny hops, 1 legged balance & hop
Gaining Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catching Body Catch Overhead Catch Low Catch Pick Up 	Field Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four Hitters Long Ball 	Coordination Skipping, Ladder Work Running With the Football Forward, Backward, sideways (multiple change of direction) High knees & heels
Travelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knee tap solo 	Part Invasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deny Possession Boxing 	Running Jump & Land then Change Direction, Jump Jacks, Squat Jumps, Jump & Turn
		Jumping Jump & Landing then Change Direction, Jump Jacks, Squat Jumps, Jump & Turn
		Throwing Target Roll, Skittles, Bowling, Dodgeball
		Conditioning Introduce basic flexibility Whole body exercises

Game Specific Options 1/2

Progressions: Using the step method you can change the space, time, equipment and playing numbers, so alter for different age groups and abilities.

NAME	AIM & FOCUS	EXPLANATION	EQUIPMENT
No mans Land	Develops catching and Kicking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split group into two even teams Each team to remain inside their own square separated by approx. 10m between each square Object of the game is to clear out any ball in your teams area. Whichever team has the most amount of ball in the square after the allocated time. Eg 2-3 min is the losing team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cones Ball per 2 players
Over the River	Develops catching and Kicking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split group into two even teams Each team to remain inside their own square Scoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kicking team lands the ball inside the other teams square, they get a score If receiving team catches the ball before it bounces they get a score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ball Cones
Croker Run	Develops ball control, bouncing, soloing, tackling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All players line up with a ball each One player to be the catcher Players must solo the ball from one side to the other side. Approx.: 20-30m without the catcher getting the ball off them. When the player loses the ball they then become a catcher. Keep going until all players are caught and the last man standing is the winner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball per player Outlined area
Rob the Nest	Develops pick up, bouncing, soloing, evading, tackling, travelling with ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break group into 4 – 6 teams, each inside their own small square 10m from central point. On whistle one player can leave his square and collect a ball from the middle of the area. When all the balls are gone from the middle every player can leave their square and rob from other teams square. Only one ball allowed at a time per player. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 cones of 4 to 6 different colours As much balls of any sort as possible Separate colour bibs if possible
Over the bar	Develops accurate kicking, catching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using portable goals break group into two equal teams. Each team positions on either side of the goals behind line of cones approx. 20-30 metres from goal line. Whichever team reaches target number of points. E.g. 30 scores, is the winner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As many footballs as possible Cones for either side of goals.

Game Specific Options 2/2

Progressions: Using the step method you can change the space, time, equipment and playing numbers, so alter for different age groups and abilities.

NAME	AIM & FOCUS	EXPLANATION	EQUIPMENT
Goal to Goal	Develops goal scoring, ball control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players set up a goal opposite partners goal Vary distance based on players ability Whichever player has highest score after a set time is the winner. Winners play winners and keep going until overall champion is found. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Cones per player 1 Ball per player
Last man Standing	Develops pick up, solo and bounce, tackling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up wide circle of cones 10m from central point. All players to move around outside cones, coach call various movements, skipping, sideways hopping on one leg, running backwards etc. On whistle players to run in and pick up ball and return outside the cones. Whichever player is last out/ doesn't win a ball is eliminated. Continue until 1 player is left. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball per player Circle of cones
Clear the square	Develops kicking, catching, pick up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group broken into 4- 6 teams One team at a time goes inside and clears out all the ball from the circle Other team must retrieve ball and return to the centre of the circle as fast as possible. Whichever team has the least amount of ball in the circle at the end of an allocated time eg: 1-2 minutes is the winner. Each team get a chance in the middle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle of cones As many ball as possible
Shoot for glory	Develops accurate kicking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break into 2 teams. Set up 5 (e.g. 8m, 12m, 16m, 20m, 24m for 7 to 9 year olds) cones from slight angle to both pots and both teams go to one side. Players start by kicking from cone number 1. As they score player keep progressing to the next cone until they score from cone number 5. 1 point from cone 1, 2 points from cone 2 etc. After player kicks they have to go behind goals and retrieve another ball. Switch sides for round 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Cones Ball per 2 players Goalposts
Winner stays on.	Develops team play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break groups into 4 equal teams. 2 teams play on small pitch, other 2 wait their turn. First team to two goals wins the game and losing team is replaced. If a team wins 3 games in a row they are deemed winners and new teams are selected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 goals 4 sets of bibs 1 ball

U8 – U9 Football Example Season Plan

	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.
Core Skill		Kick Passing			Kicking on the run			Kicking for a score	
Associated skill 1	Hand Pass	Ground Kick	Solo Run	Hand Pass	Punt Kick	Solo Run	Ground Kick	Hook Kick	Hand Pass
Associated skill 2	Pick up	Low Catch	High Catch	Pick up	Low Catch	High Catch	Low Catch	High Catch	Pick up
Defensive skill	Frontal Tackle	Block down	Near hand Tackle	Frontal Tackle	Block down	Near hand Tackle	Block down	Near hand Tackle	Frontal Tackle
Fundamental Movement	Flexibility and Speed: Continuation of Evasion and Chase games as before. Continue explosive exercises such as frog jumps, squat jumps using body weight only. Stability and balance exercises, jumping and steady landing, landing on one foot, multi directional jumps etc								
Types of Sessions	Priority for U8-9s is FUN. Sessions should be mainly Games Based. Children at this stage of their development are like sponges and will learn exercises and skills very quickly. Small sided games are the priority where maximum amount of ball contacts can be achieved. Elimination of straight line exercises. Ideally 1 ball per player.								
Comments	Obviously, if possible to incorporate more skills into the training session, then brilliant. The idea of this matrix is that coaches won't neglect any skills in the year and can ensure each skill gets a chance to be developed over many weeks. This is a nice guide to start with and each mentor can develop to suit the needs of his/her ethos and in line with the skill development of the players in the group. Luckily, in Football, skills are very rarely done in isolation. If you are playing a 3 v 3 small sided game all the basic skills will be practised and should be done a high number of times by the players due to the small numbers in the game.								

LEARNING TO PLAY
TOGETHER
10 - 11 YEARS



Level 2: Football Skills key learnings, 10 - 11 Year Old's

KEY LEARNING/SKILL	GAME ENVIRONMENT*
1. Punt Kick	Contested
2. Hook Kick	Contested
3. Pick Up	Contested
4. Hand Pass	Contested
5. Block Down	Contested
6. Tackle	Contested
7. Solo	Contested
8. Catch	Contested

Contested: Focus on drills and games that allow the players compete to execute the skill or under a match level of pressure from an opponent.

**See terms for explanation in appendices*

Learning to play together 10 – 11 Year Old's

- Players will compete with greater intensity against each other.
- At this age players will now try to win the game not only by scoring but also by attempting to deny the opposition the opportunity to score.
- They will begin to understand the need to change the direction of a run or a pass to be more effective and they will begin to grasp the idea that a player may need support from behind and to the side as well as in front.
- Coaches should continue to run small sided games and condition the players to solve problems in a game based environment.
- During training, all players must always feel part of the session. Coaches must be ready to pay as much attention to them as to other established players and always work to improve their skills (e.g. 1-1 coaching may be needed)
- Coaches must be quick to address the problem of 1 or 2 players dominating play and preventing others from developing their skills during games. Modifying the rules can help here.
- Many players at this age fail to recognise the need to attack the ball and prefer to wait for the ball. If this is allowed to persist, that player will find it increasingly difficult to change their instincts.
- Training needs to be moderately increased at this stage
- Warm up using chasing/fleeing or court game, cool down with a fun game

Learning to Play Together 10 – 11 Year Old's

SKILL EMPHASIS	GAME SPECIFIC	FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT
<u>FOOTBALL SKILLS</u>	<u>CLICK LINK FOR EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES - GAA GAMES PLANNER</u>	<u>ABC & RTJ</u>
Maintaining Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One handed Bounce ▪ Solo Run ▪ Side Step/Feint Releasing Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hand Pass (L&R) ▪ Punt Kick (L&R) ▪ Hook Kick (L&R) Contesting Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shouldering ▪ Blockdown ▪ Near Hand Tackle ▪ Shadowing ▪ Frontal Tackle Gaining Possession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pick Up (L&R) ▪ Catch (Overhead, Body & Low) Travelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Solo at Full Speed ▪ Dummy Solo 	Court Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over the River ▪ Hit the corners Field Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rounders ▪ Crazy kicks ▪ Batter bonanza Part Invasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deny Possession ▪ Boxing Full Invasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best of 5 ▪ Continuous Play 	Speed <p>Further development of speed in warm-ups (efforts less than 6 secs) E.G. Quickness, change of direction & reaction sprints</p> Strength <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce core strength E.G. Twist with a partner ▪ Own body strength exercises E.G. Push ups, Squats, Lunges ▪ Introduce Plyometric training E. G. Bounding & Hopping Stamina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Endurance related activities e.g. Relay running ▪ Small sided games and ball drills ▪ Circuit training with the ball Flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce Dynamic stretching & mobility exercises ▪ Warm up & Cool Down concept

Level 3 Football Skills Challenge, 10-11 Year Old's

TEST		CHALLENGE	EVALUATE
1	Hand Pass (L&R)	Player runs a line and handpasses to three players and get the return. Same for opposite hand	Pass 4/6
2	Ground Kick (L&R)	From a standing position, take a full swing and Kick the ball a minimum distance of 13 metres between two posts that are 3 metres apart.	Pass 2/6
3	Punt Kick (L&R)	From a standing position, take a full swing and Kick the ball a minimum distance of 13 metres between two posts that are 3 metres apart.	Pass 4/6
4	Hook Kick (L&R)	From a standing position, take a full swing and Kick the ball a minimum distance of 13 metres between two posts that are 3 metres apart.	Pass 4/6
5	Block Down (L&R)	Player attempts to block a kick from the left and right hand side 3 x Left / 3 x Right	Pass 4/6
6	Near Hand Tackle (L&R)	One player solos along a straight line as another tries to tackle with the near hand.	Pass 2/3
7	High Catch	Coach throws the ball from 10 metres. Player Catches the ball over head	Pass 2/3
8	Kicking for a Point (L&R)	From 13 Meters minimum	Pass 4/6

Note: Coaches should assess their group at the start and at the end of the season.

U10 – U11 Football Example Season Plan

	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.
Core Skill	Kick Passing & Defending ability			Kicking on the run			Kicking for a score & Defensive Activity		
	Hand Pass	Hook Kick	1 Handed Bounce + Solo	Punt Kick	Full Speed Run Solo	Hand Pass	Ground Kick	Hook Kick	Full Speed Run Solo
	Side Step / Feint	Dummy Solo	High Catch	Dummy Solo	Side Step / Feint	High Catch	Dummy Solo	High Catch	Side Step / Feint
	Near Hand Tackle	Shadowing	Shouldering	Near Hand Tackle	Block Down	Front Tackle	Shadowing	High Catch	Side Step / Feint
Fundamental Movement	Flexibility and Speed 1 Window Continuation of Evasion and Chase games as before. Introduction to explosive exercises such as frog jumps, squat jumps using body weight only. Stability and balance exercises, jumping and steady landing, landing on one foot, multi directional jumps etc.								
Types of Sessions	Priority for U10 & U11s is FUN. Introduction of semi-competitive games for U12s. Sessions should be mainly Games Based. Skills development is key and advancement in skill competency. Small sided games are the priority where maximum amount of ball contacts can be achieved. At least 1 ball per player.								
Comments	Obviously, if possible to incorporate more skills into the training session, then brilliant. The idea of this matrix is that coaches won't neglect any skills in the year and can ensure each skill gets a chance to be developed over many weeks. This is a nice guide to start with and each mentor can develop to suit the needs of his/her ethos and in line with the skill development of the players in the group.								

How?



Good Coaching Practise

- Arrive with a plan for training (no coaching off the cuff)
- Try and arrive at least 15 minutes before start of training to set up stations.
- Start session on time no matter how many kids you have.
- Try and make sure each child gets a minimum of 200 touches of the ball during a session
- Make sure you as a coach praise EVERY child at least once during a session.
- INVOLVE all mentors in a session (no standing around)
- ALWAYS finish with a fun activity (every child goes home happy)
- Set homework , What can they work on at home. Weak leg, Weak hand, Proper technique etc.

Coaching Tips

- The Club Coaching Development Team recommend coaches target the training and games activities through the season per table below.
- Target and plan for a single skill – training session theme.
- Repeat the same session (i.e. focus on same key skill) over 3 or 4 weeks. Do not be afraid of repetition, it is key to learning.
- Target Go-Games early in season, after 3 to 4 weeks, to benchmark against other clubs. Observe the games to identify key skills that need improvement. Prioritize this skill for group for next few weeks.

	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11
Training	Once per week	Once per week	Once per week	Twice per week	Twice per week
Go Games (Blitz with another club)	3-4	6- 8	6- 8	8-10	8-10

Coaching Tips & Advice U5-U11 Non-Competitive

- Keep it simple. At this age they just want a ball and to play a match with their friends.
- The more coaches the easier to manage the training session and focus on session goals.
- Try get new coaches to prioritize helping where we need to add the value – showing/helping the player on the skill execution. The cones, balls etc. can be picked up when players are gone.
- When new drills/activities are tried for first time, they will fail (in the same way the child executing the skill for first time will fail multiple times before they grasp it). Keep trying.
- There are any number of resources available online for example drills/activities/games. Do not get bogged down trying to find the perfect one. Even better ask another coach that maybe able to show you one.
- When moving up in age groups, speak to previous coach at the age group. They know what to focus on. Similarly, be available to coaches for the age group you may be moving on from.
- Games against other clubs brings on players significantly. Prioritize and plan for these.
- Less is more for “stop and fix” approach. Remember they just want to play the game. Limit the number of “stop and fix” to 2 or 3 times.
- Use SSG to maximize number of ball touches each player gets in a training session. For example, U7s may target games of 4 v 4 or 5v 5.

Continuous Improvement



Plan

- Develop a plan for the session. Can be done by lead coach or shared between coaches during the year.
- Share plan of the session with other coaches – a plan is a good communication tool for coaches. You will not have time to explain plan for these age groups during an active session.
- Once the baseline plan/structure is in place it can be easily weekly to focus on a specific skill.
- An example plan is provided in Appendix B. (Note: This is an example developed to aid coaches and not intended to be the standard expected of coaches. A handwritten plan is perfectly fine.)
- The example plan consists of 4 exercises for the session.
- Exercise #1 (Warm up) and Exercise #4 (Match) may not need to be changed radically throughout the year but can be tweaked as needed.
- Exercise #2 and Exercise #3 focus on the specific skill for that session.



Do

- Execute the training session
- Persist with the drills/activities. Adapt if needed. It will succeed if you persist.
- Using the example in Appendix B – Try focus on correcting skill execution errors in the skill exercises. Skill cards for basic skills are easily available from GAA and are great for highlighting common errors.
- Using the example in Appendix B – Try “stop and fix” approach to correct skill execution errors in the match exercises. Pull all players in and ask questions of them on what they may be doing wrong etc.
- Use a common language to help learn the skill. “Pick it up”, “Go down on it”, “Get it up”, “Lift it” are different terms used to instruct a player to pick up the ball. Do players of this age, which are learning the skill, understand all the different terms coming from different coaches? Try agreeing on one term and all coaches use it, example “Pick it up”.



Check

- Review the session and determine improvement areas (if any). Ideally as a coaching team.
- What worked, what did not work?
- Too much exercises, not enough exercises?
- Too long on exercise 2 – players got distracted etc



Act

Update the training session plan if needed for next time

Appendix



Level 1 Fundamental Skills Challenge

Scoilnet.ie have developed Professional Development Service for Teachers that breaks down the stages of Fundamental movements for pupils.

At the age of 7 we hope our players would be at the “Mastering” stage of each of these Fundamental skills.
Click the link for each skill and use the examples to ascertain Players competency.

[RUNNING](#)

[HOPPING](#)

[SKIPPING](#)

[JUMPING](#)

[DODGING](#)

[SIDE STEPPING](#)

[LANDING](#)

[BALANCING](#)

[CATCHING](#)

[THROWING](#)

[KICKING](#)

[BOUNCING](#)

[STRIKING](#)

How is your group doing?

Acronyms & Definitions

ACRONYMS	DEFINITION
FMS	Fundamental movement skills
ABC	Agility, Balance, Coordination
RJT	Running, Jumping, Throwing
SAQ	Speed, Agility, Quickness
S&C	Strength and Conditioning
STEP	Space, Task, Equipment, People
SSG	Small-sided game
FMS	Fundamental movement skills

Terms & Definitions 1/2

TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Chasing/Fleeing games	Traditionally known as Tag Games, chasing and fleeing games involve players moving within a playing area while attempting to reach others and/or avoid being reached themselves. Appropriate for warm up activities. Involves running and turning to evade opponents, catch, trap opponents.
Target Games	Target games are those in which players send an object (such as a ball) towards a target area. Players have lots of time to perform the task without any distraction from other players.
Court games	Opponents share the same space or are divided by a defined area/zone. Requires players to pass the ball over the zone to the opposition area. Increases the level of decision making. Encourages teamwork such as communication, anticipation, and spatial awareness.
Field Games	Based on the notion of a batters (e.g. kickers) who strikes the ball into opposition territory to elude fielders (opposition players) and then use the time to score (e.g. run from A to B). Teams alternate. Feilding team try to limit scores. Batting team try to get opponents “Out”. Encourages greater decision making relative to Court games.
Part Invasion Games	Games require players to complete a task with limited direct opposition. Creates awareness of time and space and improves teamwork. Allows players to develop positional sense and limit opposition players.
Full Invasion Games	Invasion Games are played between two teams, one an attacker and one a defender. The space of one team is ‘invaded’ by the other with the aim to attack a “goal”. Key element with invasion games is the number of players involved. Adapt numbers to maximize player learning, e.g. SSG for younger players.
STEP method	Ensure activities are fully inclusive and accessible for everyone involved. Adapt to increase and decrease the level of challenge or difficulty for the participants to enhance enjoyment, motivation, and learning.
Stop & Fix method	<p>The concept that if you spot an issue – stop and fix it. Applied in a coaching context it implies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Observation of players completing an activity▪ Spot an issue (resist temptation to immediately & continuously shout instructions to correct)▪ “Stop” the activity and pull all players in▪ “Fix “the error (through discussion and questioning)
“Whole-part-whole” method	<p>Recommended to limit the interventions (2 or 3 max) during the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Start with a game▪ Stop the game and work on a specific skill▪ Restart the game

Terms & Definitions 2/2

TERMS

DEFINITIONS

Game Environment

Refers to the conditions a player will be exposed to in a match. Its an important concept to consider when designing training sessions as skills ultimately need to be executed in a game environment.

Multiple terms and phrases are uses to describe this, but they all refer/relate to same concept. Example include:

- Uncontested, semi contested, contested
- Unopposed, semi opposed, opposed
- Game based activity

Small-sided games

Small-sided games are games with a small number of players on each side, for example 3 v 3 or 5 v 5. The key point is that because there are fewer players, each player gets more touches of the ball, and there are many additional benefits. Recommended for Go Games age groups to maximize player learning.

Core Skill

The primary skill coaches should focus on for a specific age group. It does not mean the “only” skill(s) coaches should aim to achieve for that group but helps prioritize the skills they should place most emphasis on.

Associate Skill

Secondary kills coaches should focus on for a specific age group to supplement the Core skills. Ideally should be able to achieve these through activities focused on Core skill. For example, a kick passing (core skill) game will require players to execute a catch (associate skill).

Coaching Tips & Advice U5-U11 Non-Competitive

<https://moniveaabbeygaa.club/>

<https://moniveaabbeygaa.club/pages/coaches-corner>




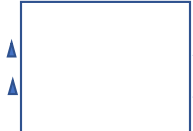
The “coaches corner” link above provides coaches with content for preparing age appropriate training sessions.

GOOD LUCK for the year ahead!



Sample U7 Training Session Plan

- Taking the time to create a good session that hits the target for the group
- Avoids confusion at the session
- Share to other coaches
- Build up a repository

Session Focus: Pick Up	Prep: 1. Split into 4 teams, approx. 6 v 6 for matches, half with bibs & half without bibs	
Exercise 1: 10 mins (a) Warm up/Fundamental Movement (b) Pick up introduction (d) Fun Game with competition/challenge	Approx 30m X 30m 	(a) Shadow (b) Introduce pick up skill – see skill card (c) Fun Game – Bulldog
Exercise 2: 10 mins Pick up uncontested	 <p>- Players on blue cones, middle cones are approx. 4 steps apart</p> <p>- Ball placed on one of middle cones, orange</p> <p>- Player run to pick up ball at orange cone, take 4 steps, place ball at red cone, continue run to second blue cone and tags next player</p> <p>- Next player goes in opposite direction</p>	
Exercise 3: 10 mins Pick up uncontested fun game – get them to count the number of pickups in 45s		<p>- Place balls inside circle, players on outside</p> <p>- Number players 1, 2 & 3</p> <p>- On whistle number 1s pick up a ball, sprint 4 steps and then drop ball</p> <p>- Repeat for 45s, different ball (aim is to pick up as many as possible in 30s)</p> <p>- Reset and then number 2s go etc</p>
Exercise 4: Match 2 x 15 (mins) Coach Focus: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick up – ensure player that attempts to pick up is rewarded 2. Penalize player that puts boot in 3. Stop & Fix 2 or 3 times (max) to explain 1&2 	Pitch 1, 2: 	
Wrap up race/fun game (5 min)	Relay Race	

Session Plan Monivea Abbey GAA

Session Theme

Date

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTIONN	DIAGRAM
Warm Up (10/15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Agility Balance Coordination▪ Physical Capacities – e.g. speed, strength		
Game 1 (10/15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No Conditions▪ With Condition (revise a technique)		
Skill Development (10/15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Basic activity (Drill / Game)▪ Progression▪ Advanced activity		
Game 2 (5/10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conditioned to reflect skill		
Game 3 (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Go Games – small sided▪ No conditions		
Cool Down (5 mins)		

Equipment Required