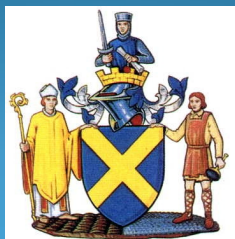


SACYFC Development Player Pathway – Discussion Document - Managers



SACYFC Mission Statement

“ To organise or provide or assist in the organisation or provision of facilities which will enable boys and girls up to 18 years of age resident in St. Albans and the surrounding area (“the area of benefit”) to play football ensuring that due attention is given to the physical, personal and educational development of such boys and girls and to the development and occupation of their minds.”



“Football For All”

- We have collectively come to know this as ‘**Football for All**’;
- Boys
- Girls
- Those with disabilities.

The Club continues to achieve on this objective and looks to continually evolve, improve and adapt to changing circumstances to achieve this.



For All?



- The Club’s current Development Plan identified a risk that players at the higher levels of attainment are leaving City Youth.
- It recognised that these player’s needs and ambitions were not being met within the current framework.
- This contradicts the ‘Football for All’ philosophy.
- The view was taken that the focus on those boys and girls at the higher levels of the ability and development spectrum had been limited resulting in players being lost to other Clubs in order to fulfil their ambitions.

St Albans City Youth Football Club – Development Plan 2011 – 2016 Ver: 1.6

- The current Development Plan looks to address this potential shortcoming suggesting a Pathway for players from Youth to Senior teams.
- This proposal looks to action that plan.



St Albans City Youth Football Club - Development Plan 2011 – 2016 Ver: 1.6

- “The Club expects the highest standard of player to progress from youth teams to senior teams.

This standard to be judged on a number of levels:

- Expect players to be technically sound.
- Expect the players to have a positive approach to training and fitness.
- The player should want to play at the highest level that they are able to achieve.
- The player should have a strong desire to have fun, progress and play senior football for the Club.
- Most importantly, the player should show respect for the Club, officials, the opposition and their fellow players.”



Girls Development Pathway – the Problem

- Previously a girls PDC was run by coaches from within the club.
- Aimed to provide extra coaching to girls who were higher on the ability spectrum
- Attendance was not great as hard to differentiate from 'normal' team coaching.
- Solution...



Girls Development Pathway – the Solution

- Arsenal Ladies were approached and offered Nicky B Astro as home to their regional 'PDP'.
- A guarantee that half of places were guaranteed to City Youth girls.
- 'PDP gives players aged 5 - 14 a chance to train with Arsenal Ladies on a weekly basis
- Arsenal Ladies run annual elite camps for our u16 - u18 at Nicky B so that these girls also have some additional coaching, but there are no weekly PDPs available these age groups.



Girls Development Pathway – the Solution

- The programme is designed to support players as individuals who are excelling within their grass roots clubs but aren't quite at regional talent club standard.
- It is designed to complement training and fixtures offered by ourselves and does not affect a girl's eligibility to represent City Youth.
- Places for their programme are offered after trials, which take place in the August prior to each season.
- We currently have a large amount of girls doing both the advanced and block offer and who are developing well as a result.



Why are players leaving SACYFC?

- A trend has begun which is likely to become more prevalent whereby players in the U14+ age groups are leaving SACYFC
- Why ?
- The lack of a clear Player Pathway to Senior Football within the 'City Family'.
- The lack of opportunity for our most developed Players to compete at the highest level of Youth Football available to them.



The Principal Challenge

- To retain the club's most ambitious and high performing players whilst not compromising the club's ethos of 'Football for All' such as;
- instigating trialling and the associated ethical pitfalls and complications that brings.
- Having a Pathway to represent the 'Club' in Senior Football where constitutionally no such teams exist.
- Provide a formal link with joint governance to SACFC .



Background – Eastern Junior Alliance

- The EJA exists to provide the highest standards of football available to young players (U13+) by ensuring minimum standards;
- Affiliation to a 'senior' club (Step 5 South Midlands, Essex Senior, Eastern Counties)
- Coaching Provision - UEFA B coaches, 2 Coaching sessions per week.
- Match-day Experience (playing & changing facilities/food/officials)
- Peer Opponents – the opportunity for all fixtures to be of a minimum benchmark standard
- In the last 3-4 seasons the EJA has expanded and continues to expand rapidly as coaches and players believe that this is the desired league for elite level players outside of EFL Academies
- EJA clubs will entice the most able SACYFC players the club will continue to lose it's 'best' (sic.) players and in fact this trend will accelerate.



Solution – Player Development Pathway

Currently

- A clearly designed Pathway from the Saturday morning Development Centre where boys and girls of all abilities learn the fundamentals of the game through to U18 Youth football.

The Proposal

- To link those Saturday morning sessions for those aged 5 and over with the potential to eventually represent St Albans City FC at their new state of the art home in the District which remains the Club's vision.
- SACFC affiliate and enter one SACYFC team from each of the U14 to U17 age groups to ensure acceptance to the EJA

How

- Several criteria will need to be met by potential Players to ensure this development does not compromise the ethos of City Youth and or the current structure of the Club and in fact enhances their potential enjoyment of and love for the game.



Playing Squads

- Trialling will not be necessary.
- In most age groups across the Club there is ample playing strength to form a squad of 15-17 players at U14-U17 who can, when combined, compete and thrive at EJA level.
- If necessary additional players can be recruited under strict criteria which the Club and Committee finds acceptable;

- An existing SACFC player

Or Two or more of the following criteria would then need to be met

- Boys at Schools based within 1 mile of boundary of AL1-5
- Boys living within 1 mile of boundary of AL1-5
- Boys representing St Albans Schools at District level as a minimum
- Boys with previous EJA experience.



Playing Squads

The aim is to ensure that the 'Community' ethos of the Club is maintained whereby all players have a clear affiliation with the City of St Albans and also to maintain a 'high' level of performance or development potential in the squad alongside the highest sporting and ethical standards.

The **goal** is to retain players and provide 'Football for All'.



EJA-Logistics.

Playing Facilities

- The Club will endeavour to provide all Teams with the best playing facilities available. However, it would be far easier to retain players if they were offered facilities at;
- Woollams (STABS)
- Oaklands College
- Herts Sports Village
- These venues would also address some of the more stringent criteria of the EJA. However, all of the above would require additional costs /funding which would be incumbent on the individual squads and not on City Youth FC.



EJA-Logistics.

Coaching

- In order to retain its most ambitious and keen to develop players the following would be a minimum criteria to retain them in the face of local competition.
- For Each EJA squad;
- 2 Sessions / week of at least 1 hour per session
- 2 coaches per session with minimum one UEFA B coach.



EJA-Logistics.

Clear Player Pathway to Senior Club

- U14 – U17 EJA squads will be affiliated to and represent St Albans City FC to ensure compliance with EJA rules
- SACYFC is not a 'Senior' Club for this purpose. The squads will in spirit remain City youth players and be subject to its ethos and governance
- It needs to be understood at the outset that at the U18 age group that all players would be required to undergo formal trials in order to maintain the integrity of SACFC's senior status if they wish to progress to the SACFC Youth Team



EJA-Logistics.

Funding

- It would be incumbent on each EJA Manager / families to undergo independent funding initiatives in order to mitigate increased costs.
- Increased Fees
- SACYFC provides some of the cheapest football in the UK to its players and their families. In order to offset (relative to other teams within the club) enhanced training provision, coaching and playing facilities annual fees would be proportionately higher for EJA teams.

However,

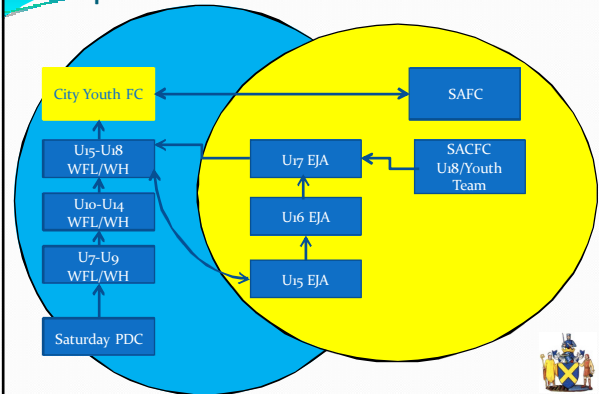
- The 'cost' of a player's football should not be a barrier to participation. No player with the benchmark ability, loyalty, attitude or aptitude should be excluded from an EJA squad based on affordability.

Parental Involvement

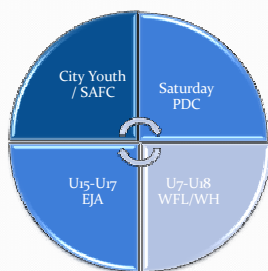
- It would need to be made very clear to all parents that they would need to contribute to refreshment rotas. Also they will need to be comfortable with increased travelling times and coaching commitments.



Proposed Structure - 'JV'



A Development Cycle



For All?.. Concerns

- At each age group managers must work together, through discussion to get the best outcome for their squads and players.
- Managers in each squad in the 'age group' should be able if best for the player and his family be able to propose joining the EJA squad.
- It will be incumbent on managers who choose to take the EJA route to find places in other squads in City Youth if so desired.
- It recognised that these player's needs and ambitions are paramount; not the ambitions of coaches/managers.
- Through discussion each squad manager in each age group should appoint the manager (should they choose to do it) whose squad is the best fit.
- No team or age group should feel obliged to enter the EJA if it does not reflect the best interests

