

## **Galway Bohemians AFC Club Player Development Plan**

This is a blueprint of our clubs' player and coach development plan. The document should be revised and updated every two years.

It is important that our club has its own identity whilst working within the FAI Player Development Plan guidelines and have coaches who have age-appropriate coaching qualifications working with their players.

As a coach, you want your team to win as many games as possible, and as a responsible coach, you want to prepare your players to win off the field, too. Few players continue their football careers beyond youth level and although Galway Bohs will primarily aim to prepare players for a professional sports career as well as instilling a passion for the game, we will also strive to provide life lessons for the players through their experience within the Club structures.

Coaches are among the most influential adults in the lives of young players. In conjunction with parent/guardians and teachers, coaches are key to developing character in our children. Research shows that children who compete in youth sports achieve better grades, are less likely to engage in dangerous behaviour and tend to live healthier lives due to improved fitness they carry forward from youth sports. One way to ensure that children gain these benefits is to offer them Responsible Coaching.

Football provides the chance to teach life lessons if coaches become Responsible Coaches. What is a Responsible Coach?

Responsible Coaching is more difficult, challenging and rewarding than taking a win-at-all-cost approach. Galway Bohs Club Coaches will commit to:

- Placing education and character development before wins
- Coaching players to master football
- Filling "Emotional Tanks" to improve performance and instil love of sport
- Understanding that the Club is a development ground for club players
- Coaching by a code of respecting the game

Responsible Coaching requires deep knowledge of football. Know your fundamentals and age-appropriate activities. The life lessons you teach your players will carry far beyond the playing field. Preparing your players for competition entails imparting values that will impact them long beyond their playing days. The best coaches build opportunities for character education into their programme by creating, recognizing, and capitalizing on teachable moments. They think about the following questions when it comes to their players:

- If they fail, will they try again?
- Are they committed to helping to make their teammates better?
- How can I cultivate their confidence and curiosity, so they seek and welcome feedback?
- Will they compete in a way that makes their coaches, families, clubs, and themselves proud?



Responsible Coaches are character educators, who seize footballs endless procession of teachable moments. They teach their players life lessons in persistence, teamwork, sacrifice, effort, empathy, discipline, leadership and overcoming adversity. Helping football players improve is rewarding, but not nearly as rewarding as helping shape the values players will carry with them throughout their lives.

## **Club Philosophy**

1. Put players first.
2. Define coaching objectives.
3. Develop character and skills.
4. Set realistic and age-appropriate goals.
5. Offer a challenging and supportive environment.
6. Create a team spirit.
7. Promote fair play & respect.
8. Educate and Develop Coaches.

## **Club Ethos**

The work of Galway Bohemians AFC is based on the following principles that will guide the development of football in this club. Children and young people's experience of football should be directed by what is best for the child. The stages of development and the ability of the child should guide the types of activity provided in the club. Adults require a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional, and personal needs.

### *Integrity in Relationships*

Adults interacting with young people and each other should do so with integrity and respect. All adult actions in football should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable

### *Quality Atmosphere and Ethos*

Football and related duties should be conducted in a safe, positive, and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place and age groups. The onus is on adults to lead by example in creating an atmosphere that benefits the club and the club's members.

### *Equality*

All people should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic back- ground or political persuasion. Children with a disability, where possible should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside their peers. Specific programmes will be required to support girls and women in both player and coach development pathways.



## *Fair Play*

Fair play is the guiding principle of Sport Ireland's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport. Fair Play is also a FIFA tagline that promotes the spirit of fair play and compassion in association football around the world.

Sport Ireland state that "all children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play". Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules".

It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption. Galway Bohemians AFC adheres to the ethos of Fair play in both a Sport Ireland and FIFA context. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

## *Competition*

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment, and satisfaction. Coaches/managers should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach based on the FAI's Player Development Plan will be followed.

Coaches and parents will need to know and understand the stages of the Player Development Plan

## **Club Mission**

To nurture the sheer fun of physical activity by creating an environment that fosters integrity, growth, and respect for people and the game of football. We are dedicated to igniting a passion for the sport while cultivating a 'team player' mentality that extends beyond the field of play.

## **Club Vision**

To re-develop Galway Bohemians into one of the country's greatest football clubs with constant progression of our members education and personal abilities.

**Age Group plan.**

The Galway Bohemians AFC player development plan will not just focus on players age. Players will be encouraged to train and play with the age group that suits there technical, physical, intellectual and emotional ability. The Club player development plan will work within the various competition rules and FAI player development plan in this respect.

Similarly, coaches will not be required to start coaching at the youngest age group and progress to olde teams as they gain experience and qualifications. Although this is a natural progression as players and group requirements and coaching complexity increase with their age, coaches may be ready to go straight in at adult level depending on playing and coaching experience.

Coaches with the highest qualifications at the Club will be expected to work within the underage structure and act as mentors for other Club coaches. The plan below is a guideline that follows a progression upwards model. Players will be encouraged to progress through the steps once coaches are satisfied that the key objectives identified in the plan have been achieved. Particular focus will be placed on technical and mobility skills.

Every player will be given the time needed to develop these fundamental skills. Nobody gets left behind in the Bohmites Nursery and Academy. The Club will have a top level 'First 4 Goals' plan that will be a guiding plan that the complete player development will be based on. Each player should achieve these 4 goals by the time they enter the Step 5 of the Player and Coach Development Plan.



**The First 4 Goals**

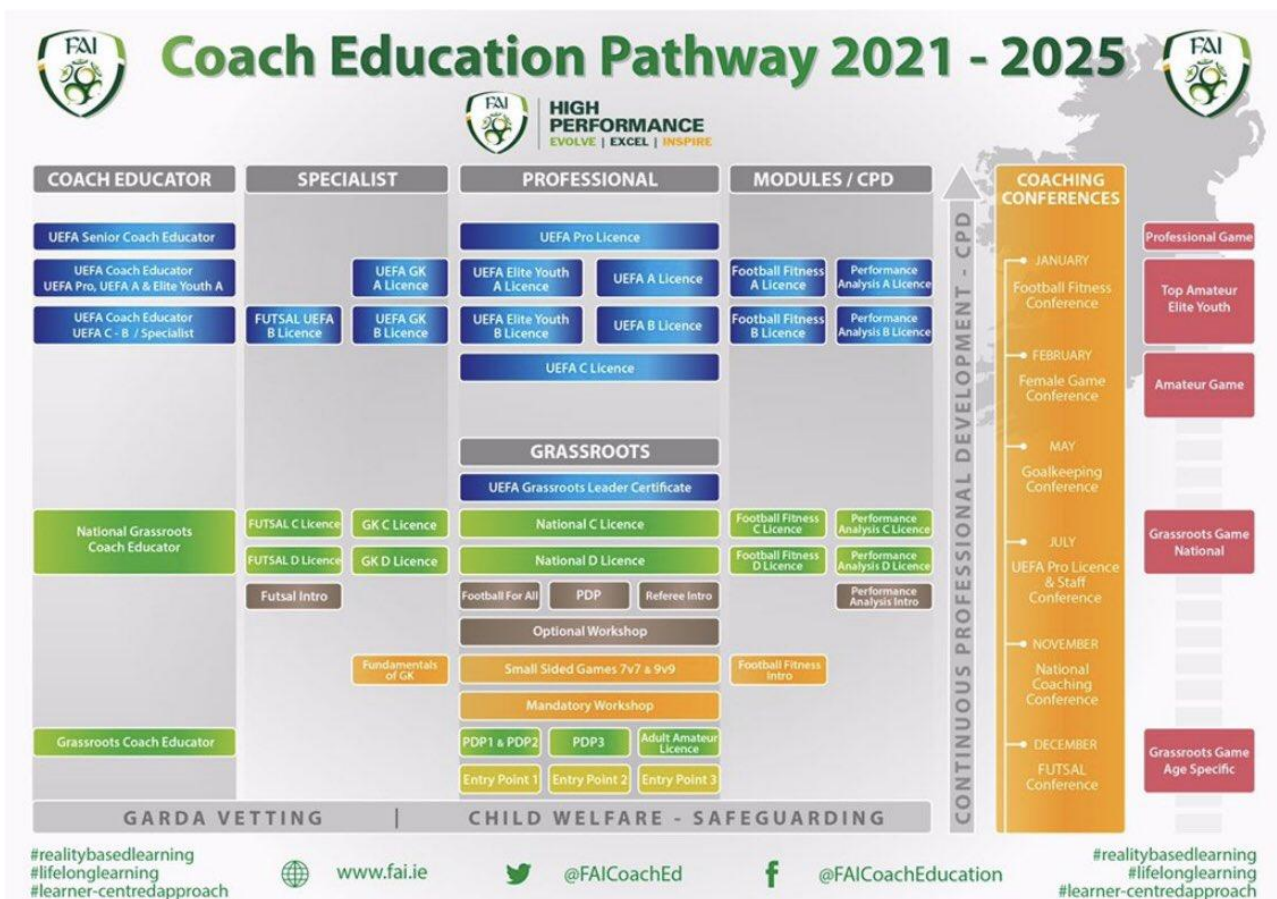
- GOAL NUMBER 1**  
**INDIVIDUAL SKILLS**  
COMFORT – DRIBBLING – TURNING – MOVEMENT – CONTROL
- GOAL NUMBER 2**  
**BUDDY SKILLS**  
PASSING – RECEIVING – HEADING – SHOOTING – TACKLING
- GOAL NUMBER 3**  
**MATCH TACTICS**  
FORMATIONS – SET PIECES
- GOAL NUMBER 4**  
**MATCH SKILLS**  
ATTACKING – DEFENDING – SWITCHING BETWEEN THEM

Every Player will be given the time needed to develop these fundamental skills  
-Nobody gets left behind in The Bohs Academy -

**FAI Coach Education**

There is now more flexibility in the FAI coach education pathway, accommodating all levels of coaches, who have various backgrounds and various coaching career goals, providing them with an opportunity to devise their own coaching pathway and give them the ability to meet their individual needs and that of the team they coach.

The Galway Bohemians AFC Coaching Coordinator will work with each coach to complete an individual Coach Development Plan. This will include advice on Club supports available to help the coach achieve their goals.



**Galway Bohemians AFC Additional Coach Supports**

The Club has created a Technical and Tactical Handbook which provides Coaches with a syllabus based on the FAI Emerging Talent Programme. The handbook details the skills that coaches are expected to adopt in their own team and group training sessions.

The Club will also agree partnerships with specialists in areas such as goalkeeping, nutrition, strength and conditioning until the club have developed these capabilities in-house.



The graphic features the Galway Bohemians AFC logo in the top left corner, which includes the text 'GALWAY BOHEMIANS A.F.C.' and 'FOUNDED 1934'. Below the logo is an illustration of four soccer players in white kits running. On the right side, a blue box contains the title 'Bohemian Support'. Below this title is a list of support areas: ACADEMIC SUPPORT, TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT, NUTRITION SUPPORT, SPORTS SCIENCE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SOCCER SUPPORT, PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORT, and TACTICAL SOCCER SUPPORT.

## Galway Bohemians AFC Player Development Plan

At Galway Bohemians AFC our mission is to nurture the sheer fun of physical activity by creating an environment that fosters integrity, growth, and respect for people and the game of football. We are dedicated to igniting a passion for the sport while cultivating a 'team player' mentality that extends beyond the field of play.

At Galway Bohs:

Our players:

- strive to master the ball fully using both feet and express excellent technical ability.
- are dedicated individuals and self-motivated to learn and develop.
- grateful for the support from their parents and coaches.
- understand that football is primarily a game and it to be played for fun and enjoyment.
- will never alienate or bully their teammates or opponents.
- be modest in victory and unruffled in defeat.

Our coaches:

- strive to gain knowledge for coaching technical skills.
- are dedicated individuals and self-motivated to learn and develop.
- are knowledgeable of the role parents play in their childrens development.
- understand that football is primarily a game and it to be played for fun and enjoyment.
- put the players needs above their own.
- will maintain the highest standards in Safeguarding Child Welfare
- be modest in victory and unruffled in defeat.

Our parents:

- encourage their child to develop and grow within sport.
- volunteer time and support whenever possible.
- are knowledgeable of the role they play in their childrens development.
- understand that football is primarily a game and it to be played for fun and enjoyment.
- commit to raising any concerns and queries as outlined in Club Policies.
- be modest in victory and unruffled in defeat.

### **Fundamental Movement Skills**

This is particularly important in our youngest groups from U4 to U9. Safe fundamental movement means less chance of injury through conditioning and appropriate technique. Conditioning means preparing the body to absorb the forces experienced during movement. Educating players on efficient movement which is maximum force with minimum energy will become more focussed at the players get older and their physiques develop.

Improving motor competency will produce the below positive benefits:

- Physical Activity
- Health Related Fitness
- Perceived Competence
- Weight Status

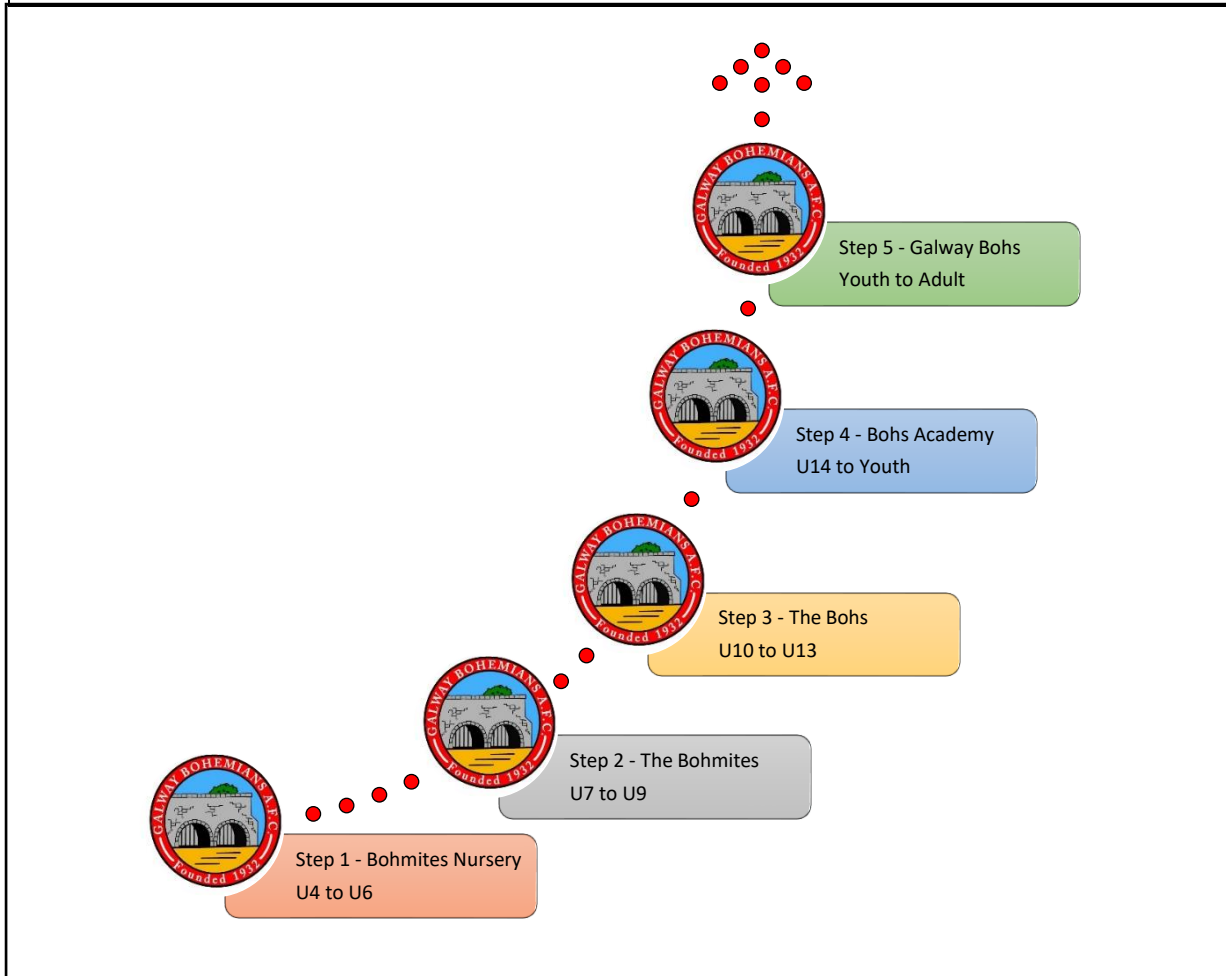
The areas of focus for improving fundamental movement include, locomotor skills, object control skills and stability skills. The below tables show examples of these fundamental movement skills that must be incorporated into coaches training plans. Strength training will also be introduced at early age groups through exercises such as reverse wrestling, tug-o-war or press-up trips.

4-6 years	6-9 years
Running	Striking a ball
Throwing & Catching	Dribbling a ball
Falling & Tumbling	Flexibility
Hopping & Jumping	Stretching
Skipping	Understanding Centre of Gravity
Cycling	Balance

Stability (agility/balance)	Object Control	Locomotor
Posture: Sitting, Standing, Readiness, moving, Shape	Send: Exchange, throw, slide, skim, roll, kick, punt, strike (hand), strike (object)	Basic: Walking, running, hands and feet, supine and prone.
Coordination 1: Uni and cross lateral movements.	Receive: Hand, feet, object.	Rhythmical: Bounding, side shuffles, skipping.
Coordination 2: Stopping, starting, accelerating, decelerating, changing direction, different levels.	Send and receive: Hand, feet, object.	Jumps: 1-1, 2-1, 1-2, 2-2 (high), 2-2 (long). Number signify leg(s).
Coordination 3: Spatial and body awareness, turns, twists, spins, rolls.	Travel: (move an object) using hands, feet, and/or another object.	Apparatus/Equipment: In, Out, round, over, through, along, off.
In and out of balance: A variety of body parts.		



## Age Specific Plan for Galway Bohemians AFC



### The Bohemian Pathway

The Bohemian Pathway details the objectives for four key age groups:

- Galway Bohmites U7 – U9**  
**Learn the FUNDamentals**
  - Learn the importance of movement
  - Discover the ball
  - Have Fun in physical activity
- The Bohs U10 – U13**  
**Learn the Techniques**
  - Master body movement
  - Master the ball
  - Basic Strength & Conditioning
- The Bohs Academy U14 – U18**  
**Learn to Train**
  - Master self-training
  - Discover Competitive Training
  - Sync S & C with natural body development
- Galway Bohemians Junior Soccer Teams**  
**Master the Game**
  - Maintain High standards
  - Master running the game
  - Continue Development

### **Step 1 – The Bohmites Nursery**

Progression through the nursery is not rigid to age. Coaches must continually assess players abilities and development with consistency in approach to training structure each session. This age group can challenge each other to develop critical skills through natural competition and bonding.

#### **U4**

- The beginning of activity at the Club.
- Primary objective is to introduce the idea of motor competency.
- This means improving fundamental movement including, locomotor skills, object control skills and stability skills.

**Format:** Programme runs every second weekend for 45 minutes.

**Coach Qualifications:** Physical Education Skills, PDP1, Fundamentals of Football Fitness or similar.

#### **U5**

- Continuation of improving fundamental movement.
- Introduction to stability skills also.
- Players in year two can progress to include object control skills such as kicking, receiving, passing, throwing, etc.

**Format:** Programme runs every weekend for minimum 45 minutes.

**Coach Qualifications:** Physical Education Skills, PDP 1, Fundamentals of Football Fitness or similar.

#### **U6**

- Continuation of improving fundamental movement.
- Increase to stability skills.
- Increase object control skills with a focus on passing, receiving and shooting.

**Format:** Games are 4v4 (no goalkeeper). Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes.

**Coach Qualifications:** Physical Education Skills, PDP 1, Fundamentals of Football Fitness or similar.  
Futsal Intro

**Step 2 – The Bohmites**

Progression through this age is not over reliant on age. Younger players can move up to be challenged by older players and players who need to improve certain skills by getting more time 'on the ball' can also train with younger players if deemed beneficial. Coaches in this age group should be working towards D Licence.

**U7**

- Understand the importance of body movement for sport.
- Discover ball mastery, 1<sup>st</sup> touch control, 1v1s, skills/tricks, etc.
- Maintain having Fun in Physical Activity.

**Format:** Games are 4v4 (no goalkeeper). Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes. One additional midweek session for minimum 45 minutes can start at this age.

**Coach Qualifications:** PDP 1, PDP 2, Futsal intro.

**U8**

- Understand the importance of body movement for sport.
- Discover ball mastery, combination play for possession, 2v1s, 3v1s, etc.
- Introduction to tackling.

**Format:** Games are 5v5. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes. One additional midweek session for minimum 45 minutes. Regular Blitzes with other Clubs.

**Coach Qualifications:** PDP 1, PDP 2, Futsal intro, Goalkeeper Fundamentals.

**U9**

- Demonstrate the importance of body movement in matches.
- Discover ball mastery, combination play for creating goalscoring, 3v1s, 4v2s, etc.
- Introduction to tackling.

**Format:** Games are 5v5. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes. One additional midweek session for minimum 60 minutes. Regular Blitzes with other Clubs. Enter any Galway FA development Leagues.

**Coach Qualifications:** PDP 1, PDP 2, PDP 3, Futsal intro, Goalkeeper Fundamentals.

### **Step 3 – The Bohs**

Progression through this age is becoming more reliant on age as teams enter structured competitions. Younger players can move up to be challenged by older players. Coaches in this age group should be working towards having D Licence (D Licence will be required for U12 Head Coach).

#### **U10**

- Introduce playing out from the back.
- Master the Ball, understand various foot surfaces.
- Introduction to team defending / pressure.

*Format:* Games are 7v7. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes. One additional midweek session for minimum 60 minutes. Enter Galway FA development League.

*Coach Qualifications:* PDP 1, PDP 2, PDP 3, 7v7, Futsal intro, Goalkeeper Fundamentals.

#### **U11**

- Master playing out from the back.
- Master the Ball, understand various foot surfaces.
- Introduction to team attacking / defending (phase of play)

*Format:* Games are 7v7. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes. One additional midweek session for minimum 60 minutes. Enter Galway FA development League.

*Coach Qualifications:* PDP 1, PDP 2, PDP 3, 7v7, Futsal intro, Goalkeeper Fundamentals.

#### **U12**

- Master quick restart play. (Particular work on GK importance).
- Master the Ball, understand various foot surfaces for long-range passing.
- Understanding team movement (Introduce Transition phase).

*Format:* Games are 9v9. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 60 minutes. One additional midweek session for minimum 60 minutes. Enter Galway FA League & External Cups.

*Coach Qualifications:* D Licence, PDP 2, PDP 3, 9v9, Futsal D Licence, Goalkeeper D Licence.

#### **U13**

- Work on set pieces. (Particular work on GK Leadership).
- Master the Ball, recognise ball movement when looking to receive ball.
- Understanding team movement (Style of play and 11v11 formations).

*Format:* Games are 11v11. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 90 minutes. Two additional midweek session for minimum 60 minutes.

*Coach Qualifications:* C Licence, D Licence, PDP 3, Futsal D Licence, Goalkeeper D Licence.

#### **Step 4 – Bohs Academy**

Players in this group will learn the importance of self-training. Training competitiveness will increase incrementally through this phase. Coaches can begin to tailor programmes for each teams' abilities and personnel capabilities. Strength and Conditioning will be aligned with natural body development of each player. Coaches in this age group should be working towards having C Licence and/or specific area of expertise such as football analysis etc. (C Licence will be required for U15 Head Coach).

##### **U14**

- Work on set pieces. (Zonal Marking v Man Marking and Combos).
- Strength and Conditioning begins.
- Understanding team movement (Style of play and 11v11 formations).

**Format:** Games are 11v11. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 90 minutes. Two additional midweek session for minimum 75 minutes.

**Coach Qualifications:** C Licence, D Licence, Futsal D Licence, Goalkeeper D Licence, Futsal C Licence, Goalkeeper C Licence.

##### **U15**

- Strength and Conditioning to include player specific programmes.
- Players begin specialising in specific roles i.e. defensive or attacking player.
- Understanding team movement (Style of play and 11v11 formations).

**Format:** Games are 11v11. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 90 minutes. Two additional midweek session for minimum 90 minutes.

**Coach Qualifications:** C Licence, D Licence, Futsal D Licence, Goalkeeper D Licence, Futsal C Licence, Goalkeeper C Licence.

##### **U16**

- Strength and Conditioning to include player specific programmes.
- Players begin specialising in specific roles i.e. defensive or attacking player.
- Understanding team movement (Style of play and 11v11 formations).

**Format:** Games are 11v11. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 90 minutes. Three additional midweek session for minimum 90 minutes.

**Coach Qualifications:** C Licence, B Licence, Futsal B Licence, Goalkeeper B Licence, Futsal C Licence, Goalkeeper C Licence.

### **Step 5 – Galway Bohs**

Players in this group will be targeting progression to adult team. Players should be begin to train with the adult team and look to get into match day squads. Coaches in this age group should be working towards having B Licence and/or specific area of expertise such as football analysis etc. (B Licence will be required for Youth Head Coach from 2025).

#### **Youth**

- Strength and Conditioning to include weight training.
- Players begin specialising in specific positions i.e. CDM or ST.
- Understanding individual movement for first ball (Player Quadrants).

**Format:** Games are 11v11. Programme runs every weekend for minimum 90 minutes. Three additional midweek session for minimum 90 minutes. One of these sessions is full S&C.

**Coach Qualifications:** C Licence, B Licence, Futsal B Licence, Goalkeeper B Licence, Futsal C Licence, Goalkeeper C Licence.

#### **U21**

- Strength and Conditioning to include weight training.
- Players specialise in specific positions i.e. CDM or ST.
- Understanding individual movement for second and third ball (Player Quadrants).

**Format:** Games are 11v11. Full programme to include periodisation and match schedule specific strategies.

**Coach Qualifications:** C Licence, B Licence, Futsal B Licence, Goalkeeper B Licence, Futsal C Licence, Goalkeeper C Licence, Adult Licence.

#### **Junior/Adult**

- Strength and Conditioning to include player specific programmes.
- Introduce players to coaching roles and specific skills such as video analysis.
- Players should influence Club Playing Ethos and style.

**Format:** Games are 11v11. Full programme to include periodisation and match schedule specific strategies.

**Coach Qualifications:** B Licence, Futsal B Licence, Goalkeeper B Licence, Futsal C Licence, Goalkeeper C Licence, Adult Licence, A Licence.