



**FLOREANT LET THE
SEPTUM SEVENOAKS
QUERCUS FLOURISH**



**PLAYER
PATHWAY**

Our Commitment

Sevenoaks Town FC is committed to providing football to children of all ages that enables them to develop both on and off the field and enjoy the game. All players are coached by minimum FA Level 1 qualified coaches with a focus on development.

A major challenge for each age group is organising players into appropriate ability-based squads. It is important that players, parents and coaches are aware of the club's guiding principles on this objective.

This policy is driven by our Charter Standard Community Club status

and is an integral part of the club's Football Development Plan that must be approved by the Kent FA each year. The way in which the club upholds this policy is one of the determining factors in respect of grant applications to The Football Foundation and Sport England.

The club is currently represented in the following youth leagues: Crowborough & District Junior Football League, Maidstone Invicta Primary League (MIPL), Tandridge Youth League, Kent Girls & Ladies League, Kent Youth League and Ryman Youth League.

Basic Principles

- squads are organised based on ability – the club attempts to match players with other players of similar ability
- for mini-soccer teams (U7s to U10s) transition between squads can take place during the close season and if necessary, at the Christmas break, to balance the squads or to move a player into a squad which better matches their ability and development
- for youth teams (U11s to U18s) transition between squads can take place at any time during the season as long as it complies with league rules
- the club endeavours to ensure that all parents understand exactly what the club can offer their child in terms of development and provision of football
- the club wants to develop a pathway from U7s through to U18s, U21s and senior football creating links between all club members

Club Structure

U7s to U10s Foundation Phase

We would expect to run:

- a minimum of one pair of teams in the Crowborough League
- one team from U8s to U10s in the Maidstone League

The U7s squads are to be run flexibly. The Age Group Coordinator decides which team each child plays for each week. The U8s squads will be selected based on ability where possible.

U11's to U18's Youth Development Phase

We would expect to run:

- one team per age group in the Crowborough League and Tandridge League
- one team per age group in the Kent Youth League from U13s to U18s
- one team in the Ryman Youth League at U18s (optional)
- one team per age group in the Kent Girls & Ladies League, with a minimum of three girls' teams across the whole club in any one season

Squad Size

The recommended squad sizes are as follows:

- each U7s and U8s (five-a-side) squad will contain a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine players
- each U9s and U10s (seven-a-side) squad will contain a minimum

of nine and a maximum of ten players

- each U11s and U12s (nine-a-side) squad will contain a minimum of twelve and a maximum number determined by the league they are playing in
- each U13s to U18s (eleven-a-side) squad will contain a minimum of fourteen and a maximum number determined by the league they are playing in

Skills School

The club runs a weekly community scheme for U4s to U10s players. This provides players wanting to take up football for the first time or waiting to join a team with the opportunity to develop their skills. The club will endeavour to arrange matches for Skills School players.

The transition of players from Skills School to teams will be based on ability and the scope for improvement from an increased level of competition. This transition is also dependent on available spaces within the current league-registered teams.

Development Centre

The club operates a Development Centre for U8s to U13s. The purpose of the Development Centre is to provide high-level technical coaching for players with good ability and a willingness to learn and develop. A place at the Development Centre is by invitation only from the Development Centre coaches.

Players Playing ‘Up A Year’

It may be felt by the coaches or an Age Group Coordinator that a player would benefit from playing ‘up a year’ and competing in a higher age group. If this is the case, it will be reviewed each season to make

sure from a football and friendship perspective this is the right decision for the player. The player would be expected to attend the trials for their correct age group each year as part of this process.

Managing Each Group

The nature of development means it is possible that squads may change during the season and may change significantly over the course of a number of years.

Each age group should be made up of a variety of teams each playing at a different level, consistent with the ability of their players.

From U7s to U12s, towards the end of each season the players within each group should be assessed by a Sevenoaks Town FC coach, independent from the coaches of each individual age group. These independent coaches will provide an assessment on the abilities of the players and make a recommendation regarding which league would be appropriate for their ability.

The players will then be assigned to a squad for the coming season. In some cases, players may have the potential to move between squads and, if permitted by the relevant leagues, will be registered to play with both teams but will be allocated a primary team.

Throughout the course of the season, coaches may recommend a player moves from one team to another depending on their development. Parents will be advised beforehand of any potential change to the team their child is playing in.

With the exception of mini-soccer, players cannot normally play for more than one team within the same league, unless a formal transfer has taken place. However, players can be dual-registered for teams in separate leagues to provide cover for absences but not to strengthen a team for a specific match. For example, a player in the Crowborough League can also be registered in the Tandridge League to provide cover. This should be made known to the Age Group Coordinator.

The club reserves the right to not enter a team into a specific league if it is believed to be to the detriment of the players both in respect of their enjoyment and development.

Equal Playing Time

The club advocates a philosophy of 'equal playing time' within the context of a whole season, rather than just a single game. This ensures selection is fair without compromising a coach's ability to maintain a competitive squad.

This inevitably forces coaches to make substitutions when they would prefer not to. Therefore, for the younger age groups in particular, substitutions should be planned prior to the match beginning.

There will be occasions when 'equal playing time' is inappropriate and coaches should abide with the spirit of this rule rather than without exception.

For a Tandridge A team, Kent Youth League team or Ryman Youth League team where the age group is U13s or above there may be a greater emphasis on playing to win but all players should still receive a reasonable amount of playing time.

New Players Joining During The Season

U7s to U10s

All new players should attend our Skills School programme. Once a team has some places within the age group then the Mini-Soccer Coordinator together with the relevant Age Group Coordinator will take a decision and establish which team or pair of teams the player should be allocated to.

U11s to U18s

If there are places within the age group then the Age Group Coordinator will take a decision in conjunction with the individual team managers. If the squads are full, then the player may join the age group for training but will not be eligible for matches until such time as a space arises.

Any additional players seeking to register mid-season must also have approval of the club's Management Committee. These players are welcome to join the club and may train with the squad but will not be eligible for competitive fixtures.

If sufficient players wish to join, the club will attempt to create an extra team subject to resources (i.e. facilities and volunteers).

Supporting Players Who Are Struggling

If a player, who is already playing matches within a team, is struggling, the club will endeavour to accommodate them as far as possible.

This will follow consultation with the player's parents and with the agreement of the club's Management Committee.

However, in exceptional circumstances, if a player is struggling in the lowest ability team and it is felt to be in the best interests of the child and their team mates they may be asked to attend training only.

Age Group Coordinator

The Age Group Coordinator within the mini-soccer section is someone who brings all the managers, coaches and players for an age group together to ensure that all the teams are aware of all the age group activities, including training, trials, team events and any other age group matters.

Coordinator is there to help the age group follow the club's policies regarding Selection and Player Pathway.

The Age Group Coordinator role for U11 and above is normally the manager of the team that plays in the highest league.

Their role is to support the other team managers and coaches, and review players who may be able to move between teams based on ability. This person is likely to be an FA Level 2 coach or higher.

In all cases the Age Group

Team Manager Structure

The club aims to operate the following team managers' structure:

Community Teams

Mini Soccer:
teams playing in the CDJFL

Typically this would be adults with a child in the team, they should possess a minimum of a FA Level 1 coaching certificate.

U11s to 18s:
CDJFL, Tandridge League B or below and Kent Girls and Ladies

The manager will typically be a parent with a child in the team. They should hold a minimum of a FA Level 1 coaching certificate

Streamed Teams

Once an age group is streamed and runs a 'top team' the club will aim to achieve the following:

Mini Soccer:
teams playing in the MIPL

Typically, and if available, the manager should be a minimum of a FA Level 2 coach and ideally independent from any of the players. The manager would be supported by a maximum of two volunteer parent coaches.

U11s to U12s:
Tandridge League A

The manager will typically hold a minimum of a FA Level 2 coaching certificate and will have completed a minimum of the FA Youth Module 1 course. They should ideally be independent with no child in the team. The manager should be supported by one additional coach, which would normally be a volunteer parent with a child in the team.

U13s to U18s:
Kent or Ryman Youth League

The manager will hold a minimum of a FA Level 2 coaching certificate and will have completed the FA Youth Module 1 course. Where possible they will be totally independent. The manager must be assisted by one additional coach who can be a volunteer parent but must hold a minimum of an FA Level 1 coaching badge.

In all cases everyone involved in managing or coaching any of the club's teams will be Criminal Record Checked (CRC – previously CRB check). Each team will have a minimum of one FA qualified First Aider and at least one person will have completed the FA Safeguarding Children course.

Prior to a manager taking charge, he or she will meet with the club's Management Committee to discuss the club's Squad Selection and Player Pathway Policy.



FA Charter Standard Community Club
www.sevenoakstownfc.co.uk | @SevenoaksTownFC
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