



Boys Charter Standard Player Development Centre

The Boys Charter Standard Player Development Centre (PDC) is one of many projects that the WFA Development Team work on to develop grassroots football within Worcestershire.

However, as this particular project focuses on the development of 'talented players' it attracts the largest interest and with that comes a number of questions. Therefore to assist in answering those questions and to give further detail on the Centre this document has been put together for (your) general information.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE CENTRE

The aim of the Centre is to offer young players with potential, the best coaching and environment we can offer to assist their personal development in football. This is achieved through coaching the players through a programme where they will be challenged technically.

Whilst the primary aim of the Centre is to develop players, the secondary aim is to develop coaches, by encouraging grassroots football coaches to attend the Player Development Centre and observe the sessions, hopefully developing new ideas that can be taken back into the club environment and reproduced in the appropriate manor for other players to benefit from. (**Please note:** the reproduction of coaching practices would have to be realistic for the age & ability of the group, therefore should be adapted accordingly with these factors in mind).

2. CENTRE COACHING STAFF

The Centre runs in accordance with the FA Centre of Excellence criteria and therefore the coaching sessions are led by coaches holding a minimum of an FA Level 3 coaching qualification (UEFA 'B' Licence) with assistant coaches holding a minimum of an FA Level 2. PDC coaching staff are overseen by the Centre Director who holds an UEFA 'A' Licence. All PDC coaching staff also hold valid child protection & emergency aid qualifications, with each coach completing an FA CRB Check.

Lead coaches are provided with the opportunity to coach at the Centre following approval of a written application form (inc. production of valid certificates) and the delivery of a practical coaching session observed by the Centre Director.

All lead coaches that are active at the Centre have a wealth of experience working with grassroots / talented players, with some coaches boasting experience of working at professional academies.

3. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

The Centre is open up to Charter Standard Clubs only and is therefore seen as an additional benefit to achieving the accreditation. With this being part of the criteria for nominating players, it has been suggested that we are penalising those players and clubs that currently do not hold the Charter Standard Mark.

This may be the case, however, its worth pointing out that **any** youth club can apply to become Charter Standard and players have the freedom of **choice** to decide which club they join i.e. Charter Standard Accredited or not. Also, as it currently stands, the majority of Worcestershire Youth Affiliated Clubs hold the Accreditation which means that the majority of clubs can exercise the right to nominate players as a benefit for achieving Charter Standard.

Ultimately, by stipulating that the Centre is available to Charter Standard Clubs only, we are practising what we preach in promoting the two priorities of youth football which are 'Child Welfare' & 'Player Development'.

Also The Football Association, who provide us with the additional funding to run the Centre, supports this decision as it is viewed that every Youth Football Club should adhere to the ethos of Charter Standard.

4. ASSESSMENT OF PLAYERS

When assessing players the most common question asked is 'what do you look for?'

When assessing & selecting players we **do not** look for the tallest, the quickest or the strongest players. We look beyond the physical attributes that a player may possess, although it's fair to say that having height, speed and strength does naturally enable a player to stand out – in this case it's how they effectively use those attributes to benefit from the game.

When assessing & selecting players for the Centre **we do** look for the following 5 attributes (5 principles of player development):

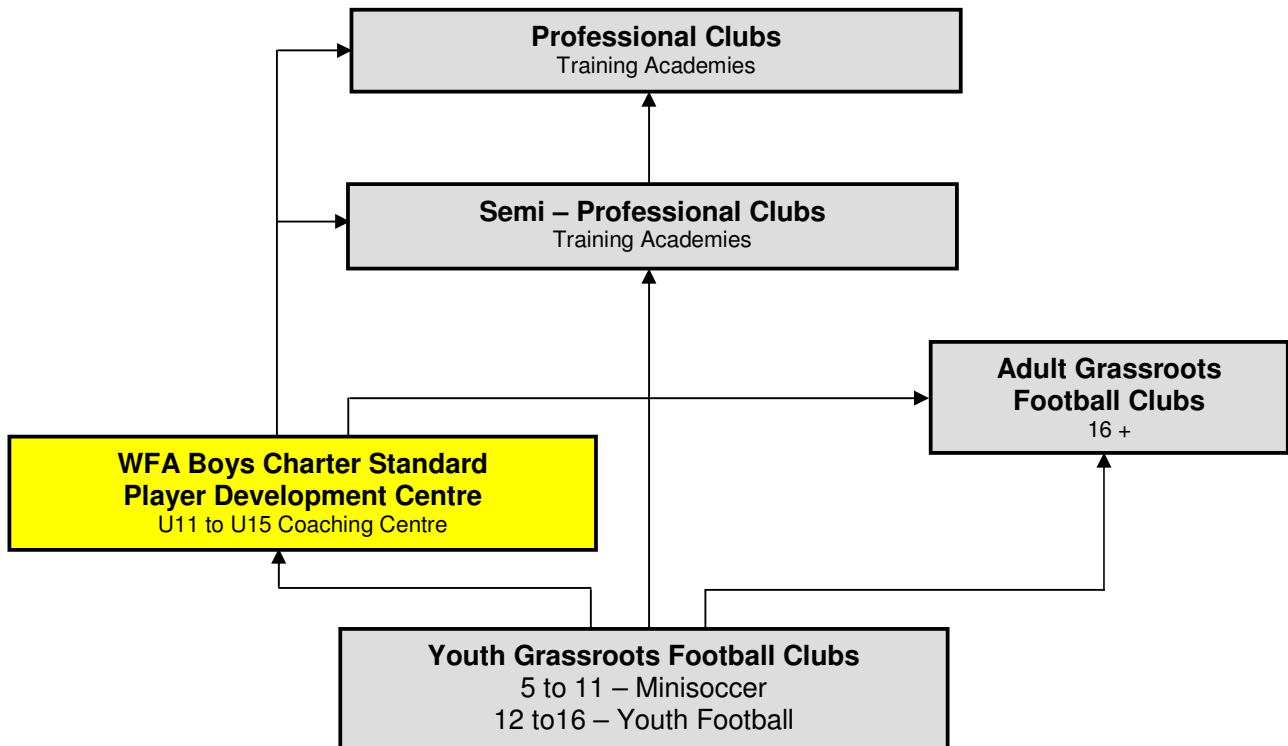
- Technical Ability
- Decision Making
- Game Understanding
- Fundamentals (Agility, Balance, Co-ordination)
- Attitude (on & off the pitch)

It is also a preference of the Centre for players to have the coach-ability factor to ensure that they make the most of the coaching programme.

5. PDC & THE PLAYER PATHWAY

Where does the PDC fit along the player pathway?

As the diagram below illustrates, the PDC is situated in-between grassroots football and semi-pro / professional academies to 'bridge the gap' as there is currently no fulltime / professional football club within the County of Worcestershire. This provides a progressive step between grassroots football in the county & semi pro / professional academies within the region.



6. REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

As the diagram on the previous page illustrates the PDC is situated in-between grassroots football and semi-pro / professional academies. With this in mind, we have to maintain realistic expectations as to what players that are invited to the PDC are likely to achieve; as there are no guarantees.

Our priority is to develop the player technically and challenge them on the 5 principles of player development with a view to improving their game by 5, 10, 15%+. If we achieve this and retain them within the game, whilst assisting them to fulfil their potential, turning them from a **good** grassroots player into a **very good** grassroots player, then the Centre has achieved its objective.

From here it is hoped that players will move onwards and upwards along the player pathway with the majority of players moving into adult grassroots football / semi-professional football. It is likely that only a very small percentage will succeed in accessing academy football at a professional club.

This was demonstrated in year 3 of the PDC (2008 – 2009) when **9** players from **89** that were involved in the Centre that year were invited by various professional academies to complete a trial. From these, **2** out of the **9** were successful in achieving a 1 year contract for the following season. This was great news and a feather in the cap for the Centre, but when you convert this into percentage terms that's **3%** from that years' intake that had moved on to a professional academy, which puts things into perspective.

'Challenge your ability & ambition, but maintain realistic expectations – do this and you will avoid being un-necessarily disappointed'.

7. EXHIBITION FIXTURES

Exhibition fixtures are not guaranteed and should be viewed as a bonus should they be arranged. The FOCUS of the PDC is to develop the player technically across the course of the 10 / 20 week coaching programme that is offered, challenging them on the 5 principles of player development.

The view may be taken that in having limited (or no fixtures) that players are not provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their improved understanding or ability, but the proof in the pudding should come when they return back to their Charter Standard Club(s) and participate in club fixtures within their respective local competitions.

Should you require any more information regarding the Boys Charter Standard Player Development Centre then please contact Matt Jones (Football Development Officer) using the details below.