



International  
Academy



**COACHING CURRICULUM**  
2023/24

# YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

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**As a coach working at an official LFC International Academy you have an obligation to follow this curriculum. To achieve our collective aim of delivering the most authentic club coaching program, that requirement is paramount.**

**Do not deviate from the guidance in this document, the programs permitted or session content in SSP, under any circumstance.**

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# 23/24 COACHING CURRICULUM

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## 1. SUMMARY

- The **LFC values** guide our actions and underpin all of our coaching activities
- Prominent LFC players should be used as **role models** to help inspire players and demonstrate aspects of the game you are working on
- The LFC International Academy programme is split in to 4 phases:
  - **Pre-Academy (up to U8)**
  - **Foundation Phase (U9-U11)**
  - **Youth Development Phase (U12-U16)**
  - **Professional Development Phase (U17+)**
- In each phase we consider the **LFC development model**, focusing on 5 key areas (technical, tactical, physical, mental and social) and keeping the player at the centre at all times
- We have example structures and **coach considerations** for sessions within each of the phases
- Examples for each block of the **session structures** can be found in specific phase libraries on SSP
- Within the pre-academy phase we do not set a specific cycle, and this can be tailored to the needs of your players and programme type (5 weeks, 10 weeks etc.)
- Within the foundation and youth development phases we work to a set 5-week programme cycle
- **Player reviews** should be completed in all phases every 10 weeks, using LFC IA templates
- We provide guidance on **position specificity** which is relevant for each phase
- The resources within the **eAcademy** allow players to be continuously developing their all-round performance



## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to guide and provide you with an understanding of the Liverpool FC International Academy coaching philosophy.

**All coaches at LFC International Academies around the world are expected to fully understand this document, and deliver a programme of coaching that follows the principles and details outlined.**

The delivery or inclusion of third-party coaching companies or programmes not specifically outlined is not permitted at official LFC International Academies under any circumstance.

This curriculum is your template for planning and delivering a year-round LFC International Academy coaching programme. For specific details on short courses please see the schedules on the Boot Room Resource Hub.

All our coaching programmes are based upon the current coaching curriculum that is delivered to our players at our Academy in Liverpool.

Our International Academies exist to provide the best coaching programme and experience for all our fans and young players allowing them to develop and reach their full potential.

We aim to be the market-leading premium youth coaching product in every operational market. The work that LFC International Academies do in all these countries is key for the Club. It influences how we are seen, how we are thought of, and how accessible we are to our fans.

**“Around the world our LFC International Academies provide young players with an opportunity to develop, learning new techniques and skills, all under the guidance of our coaching staff.**

**We offer something different and something unique by developing players both on and off the pitch, educating them through experiences that will shape their progression into young adults and giving them skills that can be used throughout their lives.**

**Our overall aims are to bring LFC to our young fans around the world and to demonstrate just how special our football club is.**

**Wherever you are lucky enough to attend a LFC coaching programme we hope you have fun and enjoy learning how to play The Liverpool Way.”**

– Jürgen Klopp



### 3. PLAYING THE LIVERPOOL WAY

The process of teaching a child how to play The Liverpool Way is hugely powerful and likely to be an important aspect of their childhood.

With this comes huge responsibility. As coaches you have an opportunity to make a significant difference to young people's lives.

Your coaching programmes may be the only physical interaction that a young fan overseas has with LFC.

They may never visit England, let alone Anfield, so the LFC International Academies play a key role in taking the club to the people and providing them with an authentic and overwhelmingly positive experience.



**“People say Liverpool are good at this or at that, but I always say the main thing we are good at is that we are always together.”**

Pep Lijnders, LFC Assistant Manager

**“We are so incredibly close with each other and with our fans. It’s a pure joy to be part of this club.”**

Jürgen Klopp



#### 4. OUR GLOBAL OBJECTIVE

“To establish the most authentic club coaching operation”



**“As one big LFC family we have a responsibility to provide young players around the world with access to the best environment and coaching possible, that’s what we aim to achieve with our International Academies.**

**By following the same curriculum that we deliver to our players at the LFC Academy we can ensure that all participants get the very best football education from our coaching staff. I believe it’s very important to develop a players’ skills both on and off the pitch and our International Academies do just that.”**

**Ian Rush, LFC Legend & International Academy Ambassador**

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## 5. OUR VISION

**“To be the world leader in the development of children through football”**

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

**“To be authentic in every aspect of our youth coaching operation”**



**“By being together at all times we will be stronger, better and our successes sweeter.”**

Jürgen Klopp



## 6. CLUB VALUES

As a LFC International Academy coach you are expected to understand these values and positively implement them on your coaching programmes.

You are responsible for challenging your players to frequently demonstrate these values when they are representing LFC.

Use value certificates on the Boot Room Resource Hub to reward the players who showcase our values in sessions.

### CORE VALUES



<b>Ambition</b> Know that dreams are to be achieved.	<b>Commitment</b> Put your heart and soul into everything.	<b>Dignity</b> Earn respect through honesty and integrity.	<b>Unity</b> Work to bring out the best in each other.
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**“For us, it’s important that we show all the time how much it means to us to play for this club, to play for these colours and being the right team to represent the values of this club. That’s a big part of us, we really want to make sure that everybody can see that.”**

Jürgen Klopp

**“It’s just a brilliant bond and I just love this club: I love what it stands for, I love the city. It’s just brilliant.”**

Matt Beard, LFC Womens Manager

## 7. ROLE MODELS

Role models are vital to making our sessions authentic. Players can use them as a visual learning tool to help understand certain aspects of each session. The sessions are aligned with our player development model and help recreate moments made famous by our LFC players.

At LFC we have world class players in all positions of the pitch, so it is a fantastic opportunity to introduce these to your players, so they feel part of our Club. Be creative with your themed coaching sessions and make the LFC role models central to design and delivery.

The role models are linked to our LFC values and they are used to inspire players both on and off the pitch.

Help your players get to know our role models better by utilising the player workshops and the LFC TV player videos on the [Boot Room Resource Hub](#).



[Here](#) you can hear the technical team discussing the importance of utilising role models throughout your sessions.



**“There is no better education than good role models.”**

Pep Lijnders, LFC Assistant Manager

**“To see the first team again win another trophy can only inspire us as an academy and it’s something we look up to”**

Marc Bridge-Wilkinson, LFC U18 Coach



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## 8. NON-NEGOTIABLES

In every single session there are minimum requirements at the LFC International Academy. We call these the non-negotiables.

- The safeguarding of our players is our number one priority
- The LFC values (ambition, commitment, dignity and unity) must always be promoted
- The curriculum must be followed
- All sessions are logged on SSP
- All coaches must be accredited
- Link sessions to our role models
- 100% effort and application
- Respect decisions of staff and officials
- Positive body language
- Always remember you are representing LFC

Players and staff must agree with the non-negotiables and ensure that the group adhere to them throughout the season.



**“It’s what I always say, it’s the hard work, commitment and sacrifice of the player that gets him to that level.”**

Barry Lewtas, LFC U23 Coach

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## 9. OUR FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR YOUNG PLAYERS

### 1. Passion for the game

You must be passionate about the game, maintain your enjoyment and remember why you started to play football in the first place.

**LFC Elite Development Coach Vitor Matos: 'You should be passionate about what you want to do. This will help you in the way you approach and enjoy the game. Especially if you are in the youngest ages of your development you should play day and night and enjoy the game as much as you can.'**

### 2. Desire to compete

Be competitive but not to the detriment of your development, mistakes are a great learning opportunity.

**Vitor Matos: 'This desire to compete, to improve, to win is what will help you make the next step in your development. It's what will help you in the moments when you get a challenge that is very difficult for you. It will help you to create a target and a goal that can help you in all the areas where you really want to improve.'**

### 3. Challenge yourself

See every training session and match as an opportunity to improve.

**Vitor Matos: 'The idea is that you always need to create the challenge for your next step. In football there are a lot of ups and downs, so the only thing you should keep in your thought processes is to find the next challenge, challenge yourself and keep trying to achieve that.'**

## 4. Learn the game

To make the most of your talent you're going to have to be committed to working hard.

**Vitor Matos:** 'Talent is important, but also, the way you work during all of your youth career is really, really important. So, the way you work hard, the way you go into a training session, the way you approach a game is really, really important. Also, the lifestyle. The lifestyle is about you being as professional as you can. You always need to be ready to play, so you need to be fresh and prepared in your whole career as a football player. So, lifestyle is really important, work hard, really important and talent. The combination of these things will help you achieve your final goal.'

## 5. Talent is not enough

Become a student of the game, listen to your coach and ask questions. Watch and study players who play in a similar position to you.

**Vitor Matos:** 'Learn the game in a way that you can understand how to use your talent and how to use your skills. This will help you to make the next step, especially when you are in a really, really high-level environment when you need to compete with the best players. So, the way you learn the game and start understanding how to use your skills is really important. For example, you need sometimes to understand that it's not only about you moving to receive the ball, but sometimes also about you moving to open a space for someone else to receive the ball.'

## THESE PRINCIPLES ARE ALSO REFLECTED IN THE 'TEAM' MESSAGING AT ANFIELD



**"Talent can get you to 16, but I believe it's character that gets you to 35."**

Alex Inglethorpe, LFC Academy Manager

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## 10. OUR VISION OF PLAYING EXCELLENCE

- Respect the LFC values in everything we do

**Ambition**

**Commitment**

**Dignity**

**Unity**

- Attacking football that is played with individual expression, linked to excellent decision making
- Dominating your opponent in 1v1 situations
- Outplaying your opponent in a variety of different ways
- Dominating possession of the ball aided by clever movement
- Scoring goals via individual excellence or combining with teammates
- A commitment to be positive at all times
- A dedication for improvement
- An outstanding work ethic
- Individual application
- Collective organisation
- Winning mentality
- Taking ownership of self-improvement
- Excellent communication

**“Obviously at the Academy we’re trying to develop players who can attack and dominate the ball and handle that part of the game. And that’s my role as well; so in terms of me, I’m really keen for us to play a particular style of football that I think will prepare the boys for the next level.”**

Barry Lewtas, LFC U23 Coach

## 11. LFC DEVELOPMENT MODEL

We must develop all players at the LFC International Academy in 5 key areas, with the player at the centre of this model.



### TECHNICAL

- Core techniques/skills include receiving skills (to control, to create space, to turn and to protect), moving skills (dribbling and RWTB) and releasing skills (passing, shooting, ball striking)
- Sessions that allow the players opportunity to practice core techniques/skills to develop their “hard drive”
- High repetition of these core techniques/skills is key to improvement
- Opposed and unopposed practices

### TACTICAL

- Attacking principles of play
- Defending principles of play
- In transition - counter attack and counter defend
- Sessions that allow specific decision-making opportunities and the ability to adapt and combat different pressures and systems of play with and without the ball
- Players should gain an understanding of the five Ws (Who, What, Where, When and Why)

### PHYSICAL

- Agility, balance, stability, co-ordination, reactions, strength, endurance, power and speed should all be considered in your planning

- Sessions in which players carry out fundamental movements as well as more game related movements

### SOCIAL

- Challenged appropriately
- Sessions to encourage players to interact with each other, problem solve, compete and work as a team
- Supported where necessary - visually, orally or practically

### MENTAL

- Preparation, brave with and without the ball, accepting pressure, freedom of expression and positive body language
- Does your session promote a winning mentality?
- Include competition within your session

**“You can have the best technical ability but if you aren’t ready to show it then you can’t make the best of it. It’s no different in football than it is in normal life. The first step to achieve anything is to think you can do it. You want to do it, you want to achieve it then you have to find a way to go there. How important is the mental side in football? It’s everything.”**

Jürgen Klopp



## 12. DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

It is important to link “learning” in each phase and game format. Creating a link from 5v5 all the way through to 11v11.

The aim of our technical programme is to make the game easier for the players as they grow. This should also be the same for the tactical information that we give players at each stage.

This can be achieved in several ways:

- Organisation used on the pitch
- Key communication used through the age groups
- Linking a technique and tactical idea
- Key mentality that is desired in LFC players/teams
- Teach the game step by step
- Increase speed of action and decision making

Inspire  
through:

The environment  
Your personality  
Your session  
The LFC style of play



**“Everyone is working hard to see one player from the Academy in the first team, like Trent. The process with Trent was unbelievable because he started here as a young player and finished in the first team, so this is the kind of project that we need to find. A perfect project.”**

Vitor Matos, LFC Elite Development Coach



## 13. KEY PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

### COACH ALL THE GAME... ALL THE TIME

It is important that as coaches we are proactively coaching within games and training sessions. Do not ignore obvious coaching points that arise.

#### IN POSSESSION

- Position – We are always looking for height/width/depth from our teams. Can we play between the lines?
- Overloads – Back/middle/sides. Can we help the back players? Can we drive through the middle of the pitch? 2v1's on sides?
- Movement – Be prepared to run without the ball, it can take as many as 7 runs before you receive the ball (7:1's)
- Receive to play forwards – Be positive as much as possible

#### OUT OF POSSESSION

- Move with the position of the ball
- Protect the middle of the pitch (press out)
- Do not get outplayed 1v1
- Light switch transition – Win the ball back

**MENTALITY  
PERSONALITY  
& CHARACTER**

**PRINCIPLES  
OR RULES  
IDENTITY**

## WHERE TO ATTACK? THROUGH, AROUND OR BEHIND THE OPPONENTS

In possession, we focus attacking on three areas:

- **Through** the middle of the opponent
- **Around** the sides of the opponent
- **Behind** the opponent

The space to attack will be determined by the organisation of the opponent's players. The space is never SET, it will always change during the game.

### 1. Through

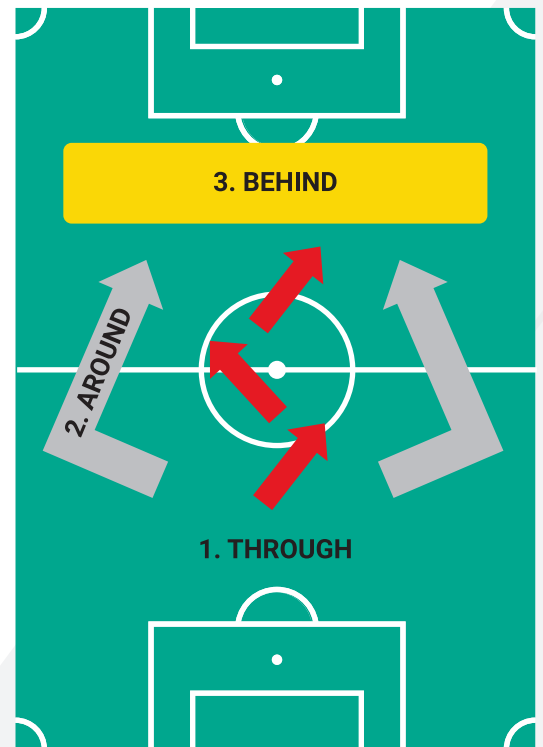
The first option should be to go through the opponents and head straight to goal.

### 2. Around

If the middle is blocked, we should attack using the space on the sides of the pitch.

### 3. Behind

At all times, we should be looking for the space behind the opponents in order to pass over the defence or into the spaces between defenders. When the ball is played accurately behind the defence, the chances to score are increased greatly.



**“I think if you were to come and see our Academy sides play, there is a similar dynamic, a similar representation as what you'd see in the first team and I like that.”**

Alex Inglethorpe, LFC Academy Manager

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## 14. AIR MODEL OF PLAYER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



A

**ADAPTABILITY:** you will have different managers and coaches, playing in different systems of play. There is also a natural evolution of the game meaning you will need to adapt.



I

**INDEPENDENCE:** knowing who to ask for help and when. You need to be capable of making good decisions under pressure and sound judgments. These are key aspects of becoming independent.



R

**RESILIENCE:** you need physical and mental robustness. You will face worries, loss of form, lack of confidence, injury, not being selected and transitioning in and out of different teams. You need to develop resilience.

**“Improve a little each day. Champions don’t complain, they are too busy getting better.”**

Pep Linders, LFC Assistant Manager

## 15. SESSION CONSTRAINTS

### PLAY/PRACTICE

Consider the implications of straying too far away from the game. Sessions must always relate to the game.

### RULES

# **REWARD** **RESTRICT** **RELATE**

Utilising the sessions on SSP you can add in your own reward-restrict-relate constraints to challenge your players and keep sessions linked to the game.

### REWARD

Using incentives for the players that will bring out the desired behaviours and outcomes that you want from your session.

### RESTRICT

Limit one thing as to bring out the outcomes that you want

### RELATE

Make sure your sessions and desired outcomes link to the game.

Here are some examples that were delivered at our UK convention 2023



**“Don’t make football more complicated than it is; the game has enough demands for the players that we don’t need a manager who asks more questions”**

Jürgen Klopp, LFC Manager

**“Football is a simple game based on the giving and taking of passes, of controlling the ball and of making yourself available to receive a pass. It is terribly simple.”**

Bill Shankly, LFC Legend (710 LFC Games as Manager, 7 Trophies)

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## 16. INTENSITY IN TRAINING AND GAMES

### “OUR IDENTITY IS INTENSITY”

**“Our identity is intensity. It’s our idea, a vision, a future, it’s our guide, it comes back in each exercise. Everyone thinks intensity is running harder and more, but for me it is the intensity of concentration. A high level of demand of pressing and counter-pressing, a team that is playing always with a maximum concentration. Always!”**

**Pep Lijnders, LFC Assistant Manager**

As coaches we have the responsibility to teach the whole game, preparing the players to train and play matches is all part of their development. If you’ve spent the week helping players practice their individual skillsets, don’t let the thrill of success, or fear of failure on a match day, throw you or the players off.

Match day should feel like training and vice versa... therefore a match day intensity needs to be created in training by you as the coach. Create competitive situations, fast paced transitions both with the ball and without, reference the moments in the game and the LFC role models to inspire the players.

Match day is an opportunity for your players to have fun, build stronger relationships and continue their learning. To take advantage of this, set players challenges that support what you’ve been doing in training. You could also engage parents in the focus of the game.

**Training sessions should mirror match days as much as possible when coaching the whole game.**

- Area size realistic to game format.
- Players familiar with match rules, throw in’s, whistles and corner flags. This may not be possible for everyone given the environment you’re coaching in but if you can replicate a match day within your games then do so. This could be as simple as acting like a ref with a whistle in the middle of the pitch, using proper throw in’s, goal kicks etc or even to the level of using corner flags within sessions.
- Players learn to uphold match officials’ decisions, we might not always agree with decisions but upholding an official’s decision is part of being a good role model for your team.

**“We always train with maximum intensity and that helps them to perform at their level!”**

**Vitor Matos, LFC Elite Development Coach**

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## 15. A 'PLAYER CENTRED' APPROACH

Long term player development (LTPD) and players enjoying their football are at the core of our playing and coaching philosophy.

We feel an attacking style of play based on effective possession of the ball is the best style to improve learning and development.

To develop creative players with comfortable midfield attributes, freedom of expression is vital in an environment that promotes individual decision making.

Players need to be encouraged to express themselves without the fear of failure. Young players should never be discouraged from trying new things or criticised if they make a mistake. Coaches should always praise effort and application.

### **“Mistakes are a great opportunity for learning and improvement”**

We always prioritise what is best for the player, keeping them at the centre of our development model.

To help support LTPD we have a four phase progression structure.

1. Pre-Academy (up to U8)

2. Foundation Phase (U9-U11)

3. Youth Development Phase (U12-U16)

4. Professional Development Phase (U17+)

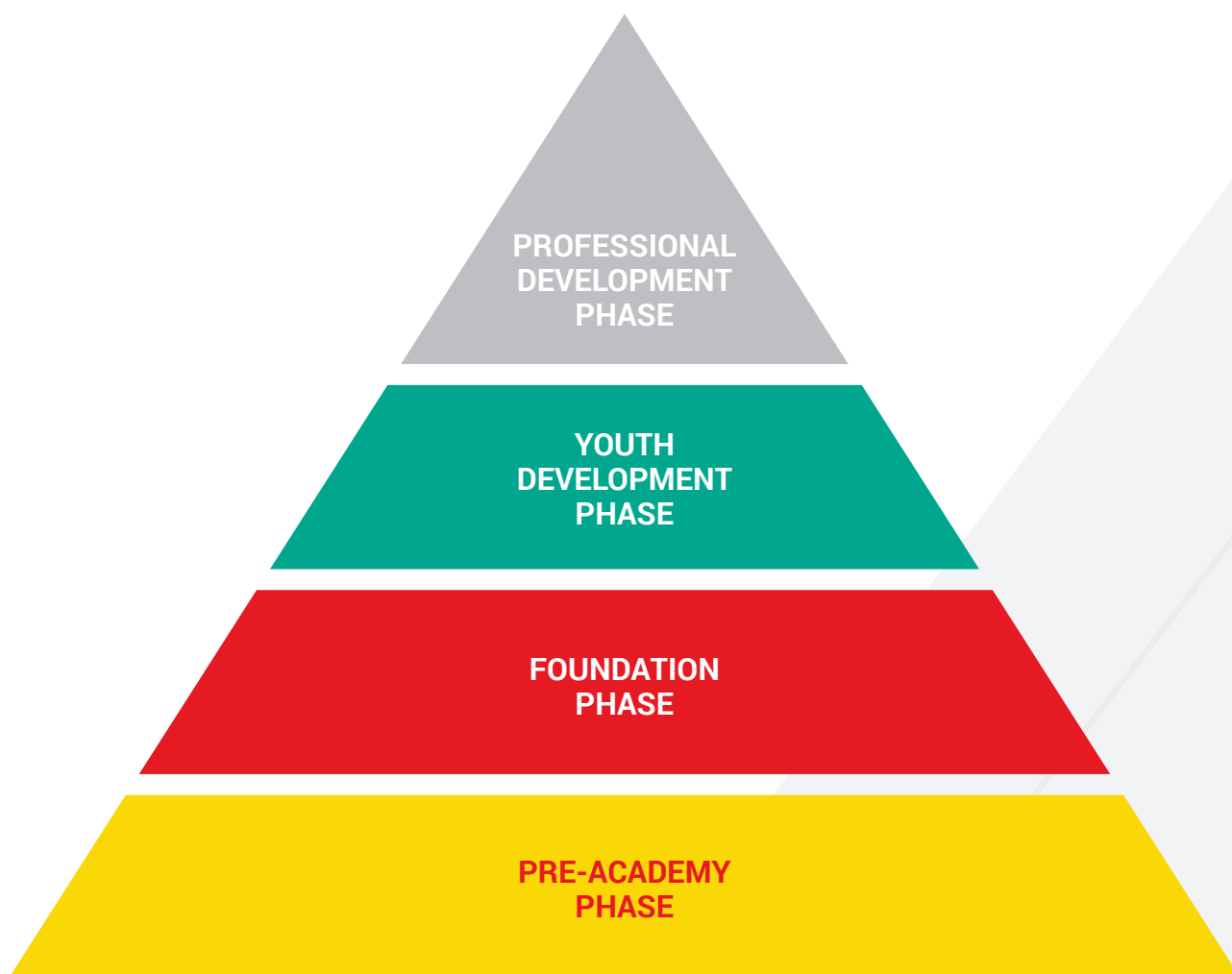


**“I thought about playing for Liverpool every day. I knew that if I worked hard and listened to my coaches, listened to my parents and the people around me then it would be possible.”**

Trent Alexander-Arnold



## 16. PERFORMANCE PATHWAY



**“I’m a local boy and my dream when I was young was always just to play one game for Liverpool.”**

Steven Gerrard, LFC Legend, 710 LFC appearances, 9 Major Trophies

**“It still feels like yesterday I was in the U11s and I’ve taken it all day by day and just enjoyed each moment playing with a Liverpool shirt on.”**

Missy-Bo Kearns, LFC Women’s player

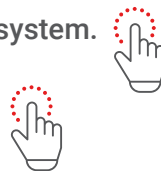
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## 17. SSP

Sports Session Planner (SSP) is our online session planning platform for all our International Academy coaches to use when delivering LFC sessions.

Here is the '**SSP tutorial video**' explaining how to use the system.

**'Setting up your global account'** shows you how to set up your account so you can locate all our LFC IA curriculum sessions and the breakdown of each phase.



**'How to build sessions'** shows you how to create your weekly sessions using the libraries and sessions provided by LFC.



As an LFC IA coach you should use our curriculum library within SSP for all your coaching sessions. All sessions should ALWAYS be saved as **club** under the sharing tab.

Every month we assess all SSP sessions from our IA's, we then select the best session to be awarded global session of the month with the winner receiving an award.

In order for a session to be a candidate for global session of the month it must be built from our blocks in SSP in the correct curriculum structure for the phase.

**"To get the best from your players, a coach needs to be organised and prepare properly for every session."**

Marc Bridge-Wilkinson, LFC U18 Coach

## 18. PRE-ACADEMY PHASE

### UP TO U8 – INSPIRE & ENGAGE

To work with children at these age groups requires a special sort of coach.

There is a huge responsibility on coaches within the Pre-Academy as you are the first experience the players will have of someone formally teaching them the game of football. You should be aware that you could be the one who switches the players love of the game off before its even begun.

Your primary concern is ensuring that the players are enjoying their time with LFC.

Please come to each session prepared to give energy, enthusiasm, commitment and care.

In equal measures it will be the toughest yet most rewarding coaching part of your career irrespective of which age players you go on to work with.

### “Their love of football and LFC begins in our Pre-Academy”



**Here the technical team discuss the main considerations when coaching in this phase**

#### OVERVIEW

- One or two sessions per week (plus games programme)
- 1 to 1.5 hour sessions
- Coach to player ratio 1:16 max (plus assistant)
- No set programme cycle
- Game formats: U5, U6 & U7 5v5 max, U8 6v6/7v7 max or follow local governing body regulations

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR COACHES

- Use prominent LFC players to help inspire and explain techniques/skills
- 70% ball rolling time as a guide
- Emphasis on fun and building a love for the game
- Young players cannot sit and listen for long periods of time
- They have a short span of attention and are easily distracted
- Use short, clear and simple instructions; children want to move and participate in action
- Children are generally leader-oriented – love to be led!
- Coaches should adopt a “follow me” or “follow the leader” approach and ensure that all activities are fun and well planned
- Children do not learn the skills correctly just by trial and error
- Coaches must be able to provide a correct demonstration of the basic skills required at this level
- Experimentation and creativity should be encouraged
- Encourage involvement from the children
- All children should be given equal playing time

At these age groups (up to U8) the players should be free to explore the pitch without having fixed positions.

### Phrases like...

“We need a defender” to help create depth  
or

“Where is our forward” to create height  
should be used to help the players think and recognise the situations for themselves.

## SESSION FOCUS

- Fun and enjoyment (let them play!)
- LFC role models
- LFC values
- Technical development
- Ball mastery – turns, RWTB, dribbling, forward and side moves
- Ball striking
- Unopposed/semi opposed and opposed
- Outplaying opponent (1v1, 2v1, 2v2, 1v2)
- Physical development
- Football agility
- Agility, balance and coordination (ABC)
- Competition
- Scoring goals (as many as possible)
- 1000 touches per session
- Street soccer
- Always include a game

## POSITION SPECIFICITY

### PRE-ACADEMY

#### POSITION SPECIFIC = FOOTBALLER

At this phase players should be exposed to playing in all areas of the field. No positions should be set as the format is generally 5v5 and we want to guide the players to make decisions and think for themselves asking questions like “where is my defender/midfielder/winger/forward?”

U7 and U8 players who play different formats of the game (6v6/7v7) should experience throughout the course of the season playing in all areas of the field (defence, midfield and attack), across the left, middle and right. This helps the players come out of their comfort zones and develops their game awareness as well as supporting their growth in the 5 key areas outlined in the development model.

**“They [Pre-Academy years] were probably the most enjoyable days when there was no pressure on results. You could just go out and perform and be happy and just enjoy playing football with your mates.”**

Trent Alexander-Arnold

## EXAMPLE SESSION STRUCTURE

As stated in the overview, sessions at Pre-Academy can be 1 to 1.5 hours so below is an example session structure for both time frames.

PRE-ACADEMY 1.5 HOURS					
<b>TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>STREET SOCCER</b>	<b>1v1 DOMINATION/ OUTPLAYING WORK</b>	<b>STREET SOCCER</b>	<b>FUN FINISH</b>
<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>20 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>

PRE-ACADEMY 1 HOUR				
<b>TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>STREET SOCCER</b>	<b>1v1 DOMINATION/ OUTPLAYING WORK</b>	<b>FUN FINISH</b>
<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>

See Sports Session Planner, 'Curriculum Library' for specific sessions and also to create your own examples in the set structure as outlined above.

PRE-ACADEMY\_TECHNIQUE  
PRE-ACADEMY\_ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT  
PRE-ACADEMY\_STREET SOCCER  
PRE-ACADEMY\_1V1



Here you can view some example sessions from this phase.





## International Academy





## 19. FOUNDATION PHASE

### U9, U10 & U11 – BUILD THE “HARD DRIVE” & “OUTPLAYING” QUALITIES

The first responsibility of coaches within the foundation phase is to nurture the players transition from the pre academy into this more structured phase. The number one priority remains that the players are having fun and enjoying their time with LFC, however elements of outplaying skills, ball mastery, individual technical work and competition will increase within the sessions as the players move through this phase.

Players are like sponges in the foundation phase, it is important to build a positive learning environment by encouraging the players to ask questions of you and themselves, allow them to feedback and reflect. Mistakes must be seen as opportunities for learning. Feedback should always be positive and heavily linked to our values and role models.

You are preparing the players for the transition into the youth development phase where more tactical elements will start to be introduced to the sessions.



**Here the technical team discuss the main considerations when coaching in this phase**

#### OVERVIEW

- 1 to 3 sessions per week (plus games programme)
- 1 to 1.5 hour sessions
- Coach to player ratio 1:16 max
- 5 week programme cycle
- Game formats: 6v6/7v7/8v8/9v9 or local governing body regulations

#### CONSIDERATIONS FOR COACHES

- Players are highly motivated and enthusiastic
- Are sensitive to criticism and failure (mistakes)
- Pre-pubescent players are generally well balanced and coordinated
- Coaches need to encourage reflective time with lots of support
- Experimentation and creativity should be encouraged
- Use short, clear and simple instructions
- Let them play! Re-create that street football environment with fun football related practices
- All children should be given equal playing time at training and on match-day wherever and whenever possible
- Players start to understand that they have to work together as a team to be successful
- Preference for a certain position may start to show, although players should still be given the opportunity to play all positions regularly
- You can start to work on some basic team tasks – how to defend and how to attack
- An awareness of individual roles in relation to teamwork is developing as well as an understanding of playing without the ball both when we are in and out of possession

## PROGRAMME

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5
TACTICAL CYCLE	IN POSSESSION		TRANSITION	OUT OF POSSESSION	REVIEW OF THE WHOLE GAME

### SESSION FOCUS

- LFC role models
- LFC values
- To demonstrate a desire to want to win in both training and in games
- To be brave in wanting to have the ball
- Competitive elements to training
- Positive feedback when players have the ball
- Develop physical competency around agility, balance, coordination and speed
- Ball mastery – twist and turn – changes of direction with the ball
- To develop the technical “hard drive” required to dominate your opponent in all 1v1 situations
- Receiving techniques/skills
- Moving techniques/skills – RWTB and dribbling
- Releasing techniques/skills – passing and shooting
- Basic competency of ball striking and receiving in all forms
- To try to develop an understanding of occupying key areas

- To develop an understanding of playing “through”, “around” or “behind”
- Tactical instruction within training and games
- Framing training and games with tactical presentations
- Week 5 focus can include group development areas, recaps, skills challenges, player reviews or eAcademy skills and technique development areas

### POSITION SPECIFICITY

#### FOUNDATION

#### POSITION SPECIFIC = FOOTBALLER & DEFENSIVE HALF / ATTACKING HALF

Foundation phase age groups follow the same principles as Pre-Academy Phase U7 and U8 where they are exposed to playing throughout all three units (defence, midfield and attack) and across the left, middle and right throughout the season.

At U11 players may start to show certain attributes that would suggest they will either play in the attacking half of the pitch or the defensive half. The players here will still play in left, middle and right areas but in a specific half of the field.

**“I played everywhere! At 10 I was a winger for Liverpool. In Sunday League football I was a central midfielder – running round everywhere, taking people on, scoring goals, trying to defend. I was probably 12 or 13 at Liverpool when I went from playing as a winger to centre-back for a bit. I played there until I was about 14 or 15. I played as a No 6 for a year or two. Then I made the decision to move to right-back and that’s where I’ve been since.”**

Trent Alexander-Arnold

## EXAMPLE SESSION STRUCTURE

As stated in the overview, sessions in the Foundation Phase can be 1 to 1.5 hours so below is an example session structure for both time frames.

FOUNDATION 1.5 HOURS				
<b>TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>STREET SOCCER</b>	<b>TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>THE GAME</b>
<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>20 MINUTES</b>	<b>20 MINUTES</b>	<b>30 MINUTES</b>

FOUNDATION 1 HOUR			
<b>TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>STREET SOCCER</b>	<b>THE GAME</b>
<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>30 MINUTES</b>

TECHNICAL STATIONS DETAIL	
<b>IN POSSESSION</b>	Ball mastery, skill sets – side and forward moves, RWTB, shooting, passing and receiving, 1v1 domination
<b>OUT OF POSSESSION</b>	Body shape, pressing, sliding and screening, tackling, intercepting and blocking
<b>REVIEW OF THE GAME</b>	Opportunity to recap, work towards tournaments, set plays, deliver skills challenges or work on specific development areas

See Sports Session Planner, 'Curriculum Library' for specific sessions and also to create your own examples in the set structure as outlined above.

FOUNDATION\_TECHNIQUE  
 FOUNDATION\_ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT  
 FOUNDATION\_STREET SOCCER  
 FOUNDATION\_TECHNICAL CIRCUIT



Here you can view some example sessions from this phase.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Tactical Phase	IN POSSESSION		TRANSITION	OUT OF POSSESSION	CONSOLIDATION
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
	Defensive 1/2	Attacking 1/2	Counter Attacking	Defending	
Techniques and areas to develop	Specific passing	Receiving back to goal	Regaining possession to counter	1v1 defending	eAcademy skills and technique development areas, competitions, recaps, skills challenges, player reviews, group development areas, focus on upcoming events (e.g. tournaments)
	Receiving back foot	RWTB	RWTB/dribbling	Defending organised (2v2,3v3)	
	Turning/Side Moves	Dribbling 1v1 domination	1v1 domination	Defending outnumbered	
	Receiving under pressure	Combination play	Exploiting overloads	Defending technique	
	Switching play	Crossing and finishing	Specific passing	Communication	
	Playing out from the back	Shooting (from different angles)	Finishing	Counter defending	

## 20. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE

### U12 - U16 - LEARNING TO COMPETE

When coaching in the youth development phase you will encounter a wide range of physical, social and mental maturities within your age groups. The skill of a great YDP coach is understanding your players individual needs and challenges, you will need to be adaptable and empathetic as their coach.

This phase is where players are using the skills they have learnt previously and starting to learn how to compete and win. It is critical that the fun environment and the individual technical development from the PA and FND continues throughout the YDP, they should always enjoy their football and players never stop learning.

The players are mature enough now to work on more tactical elements within sessions, formal and informal feedback should increase along with player ownership in training and development aims. Players begin to work on more unit and team tasks, defending and attacking as a group with more emphasis on organisation and communication as they play 11v11.



**Here the technical team discuss the main considerations when coaching in this phase**

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR COACHES

- Players are mature enough for more tactical elements within sessions
- Coaches need to encourage self-reflection and evaluation
- Experimentation and creativity should be encouraged
- Use short, clear and simple instructions
- Players start to have more of an input into sessions and tactics
- Include opposed 1v1 elements in each session to keep the focus on individual technical development
- Players should have more feedback via LFC feedback forms
- Preference for a certain position will start to show, although players should still be given the opportunity to play in different positions regularly
- Players should be working on team tasks – how to defend and how to attack as a team
- Players in the YDP may suffer with fatigue as the amount of sports they play increases
- Set tasks around match analysis of LFC first team and individual role models

### OVERVIEW

- 3+ sessions per week (plus games programme)
- 1.5 to 2 hour sessions
- Coach to player ratio 1:16 max
- 5 week program cycle
- Game formats: 9v9 & 11v11 or local governing body stipulations

**“The goal is that we create, or continue the creation of, a new generation of players that will allow the club to move forward while also keeping its high standards.”**

**Vitor Matos, LFC Elite Development Coach**

## EXAMPLE SESSION STRUCTURE

As stated in the overview, sessions at youth development phase can be 1 to 1.5 hours so below is an example session structure for the different time frames.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE 1 HOUR			
<b>EARLY ARRIVALS</b>	<b>INTEGRATED WARM UP</b>	<b>SLICE OF THE GAME/UNIT WORK</b>	<b>GAME</b>
<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>20 MINUTES</b>	<b>20 MINUTES</b>

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE 1.5 HOURS				
<b>EARLY ARRIVALS</b>	<b>INTEGRATED WARM UP</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL/ TECHNICAL WORK</b>	<b>SLICE OF THE GAME/UNIT WORK</b>	<b>GAME</b>
<b>10 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>15 MINUTES</b>	<b>20 MINUTES</b>	<b>30 MINUTES</b>

See Sports Session Planner, 'Curriculum Library' for specific sessions and also to create your own examples in the set structure as outlined above.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT\_EARLY ARRIVALS  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT\_INTEGRATED WARM UP  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT\_TECHNICAL WORK  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT\_SLICE OF THE GAME/UNIT WORK



Here you can view some example sessions from this phase.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Tactical Phase	IN POSSESSION		TRANSITION	OUT OF POSSESSION	CONSOLIDATION
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
	Defensive 1/2	Attacking 1/2	Counter Attacking	Defending	
Techniques and areas to develop	Specific passing	Receiving back to goal	Regaining possession to counter	1v1 defending	eAcademy skills and technique development areas, technical circuit, competitions, recaps, skills challenges, player reviews, group development areas, focus on upcoming events (e.g. tournaments)
	Receiving back foot	RWTB	RWTB/dribbling	Defending organised (2v2,3v3)	
	Turning/Side Moves	Dribbling 1v1 domination	1v1 domination	Defending outnumbered	
	Receiving to step into midfield	Combination play	Exploiting overloads	Defending as a unit (age specific)	
	Switching play	Crossing and finishing	Specific passing	Heading	
	Playing out from the back	Shooting (from different angles)	Finishing	Counter defending	

## TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL THEMES

### TACTICAL THEMES

#### WEEK 1 – DEFENSIVE 1/2

- Playing out from the back (against different systems and blocks)
- Centre back stepping in
- Full backs building the attack
- Playing through deep lying midfielder
- Midfield rotations
- Playing through, around or behind
- Full back and wide player relationships

#### WEEK 2 – ATTACKING 1/2

- Wide triangle rotations
- Switching the play
- Supporting the attack from midfield
- Movement and rotation in final 1/3
- Combination play in and around the penalty box
- Crossing and finishing
- Overlaps and underlaps
- Line breaking runs

#### WEEK 3 – TRANSITIONS

- Counter attacking (see rules of counter attacking)
- Exploiting overloads

#### RULES OF COUNTER ATTACKING

- Anticipate the opportunity
- Regain possession - interceptions - clearances
- Quick forward passes - sprint with the ball
- Support flooding forwards
- Disguise intention (zig zag)

- Final pass
- Finish the attack

#### WEEK 4 – OUT OF POSSESSION

- 1v1 defending
- Defending in units
- Defending organised (as a team)
- Defending outnumbered
- Defending crosses
- Counter defending
- Pressing
- Defending deep
- Defending direct play
- Defending in and around the penalty area

#### WEEK 5 – CONSOLIDATION

Opportunity to recap, work towards tournaments, set plays, deliver skills challenges or work on specific eAcademy skills and technique development areas.

### POSITION SPECIFICITY

#### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

#### POSITION SPECIFIC = DEFENSIVE HALF / ATTACKING HALF

At U12-U14 players will display attributes that would suggest they will either play in attacking or defensive roles. The players here will still play in left, middle and right areas but in more specific parts of the pitch.

When the players get to U15 and U16 you may be able to start to narrow this down further to a player showing particular attributes to play in two or three positions.

**“At Liverpool we never accept second best.”**

**Sir Kenny Dalglish, LFC Legend [Player 1977-1990, Manager 1985-1991, 2011-2012]**



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## 21. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

### U17+

If you are operating in the professional development phase please contact us for advice and guidance on the content.

#### POSITION SPECIFICITY

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

U17+ (PLAYERS WILL TRAIN AND PLAY TO DEVELOP IN THEIR SPECIFIC POSITION)

**“The Liverpool philosophy is simple and is based on total belief. Maybe that has been key to Liverpool’s consistency. We were taught to go out there, play our own game and fear no one.”**

Phil Neal, [650 LFC appearances, 23 major trophies]

**“To be a Liverpool player and seeing that badge on your chest just gives me extra motivation every time I’m on the pitch.”**

Niamh Fahey, LFC Women’s Captain



## 22. 1V1 DOMINATION

### PLAYERS WHO UNLOCK THE GAME

We are an Academy that believes in individual expression and the development of players who dominate 1v1 situations.

The term outplaying is used to describe how a player is able to beat a direct opponent either alone or in combination with a team mate.

Each player will do this in a unique way that fits their playing style/personality.



#### Alone

- We must give the players experience of playing:
- Against different types of opponents.  
(big, small, fast, slow, strong, weak)
- In different 1v1 situations.  
(facing, behind, on shoulder, on angle, line restricted, random 360° pressure)

#### In Combination

- The option of using a second player is only added once we have players comfortable in playing 1v1 alone.
- The second player is used to problem solve and challenge.
- 1v1 [Game Scenarios](#) can be found on [Boot Room Resource Hub](#).



**“Being good in 1v1 situations is something we want from all our academy players no matter their age.”**

**Marc Bridge-Wilkinson, LFC U18 Coach**

## 23. MATCHDAY ORGANISATION

The balance of the team and the planning of playing time is a very important task in your role as a coach.

Please visit the Boot Room Resource Hub to find match day planning templates that you can use to help you organise your players playing time. There are different **templates** for varying formations and squad size on the [Boot Room Resource Hub](#).



**“My view is that in order to learn to play the game, you need to play the game – a lot.”**

Martin Diggle, LFC Head of Coach Development



## 24. eACADEMY

LFC eAcademy is an award-winning digital product that helps players improve their football skills and stay active by learning to play The Liverpool Way. It is a great opportunity for your players to benefit from the leading academy expertise of one of the world's most successful clubs and has been endorsed by Reds manager Jürgen Klopp.

Jürgen said: *“eAcademy gives you a unique insight into the skills we value the most at LFC.”*

The eAcademy features all the skills and technique videos which have been identified by LFC coaches as the most important for all players to learn. They are split into the following nine categories: (passing, shooting, dribbling, ball mastery, agility, turning, receiving, crossing, athletic development). It includes LFC match footage for aspirational elements within each technical video, demonstrating to players how to execute a lofted pass like Virgil van Dijk, dribble like Diaz or shoot like Mo Salah.



Each skill is rated with a difficulty level, allowing your players to train at their own pace and at a level they feel comfortable. There's plenty of content for beginners through to advance-level players. In each video there's detailed demonstrations from LFC coaches and clips of LFC first team players performing the very same skills in match situations. eAcademy will inspire youngsters to train, improve their skills and keep fit. What's more, they can train on their own or alongside friends and family when circumstances allow.

The resources within the eAcademy will help you to provide players with material which enables them to continue to work on the fundamental skills and techniques prioritised at LFC.



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This will guide programmes outside of structured sessions and means that players can engage with LFC and benefit from being part of the LFC International Academy even when it may not be possible or appropriate to train as a team.

The videos should be watched repeatedly, and the skills will need to be performed many times with both feet for your players to see the benefits. Even the most technically proficient players within the first team at LFC will dedicate significant time to developing their individual technique. The eAcademy helps your players develop the most important skills and there are many ways the eAcademy can be used across your coaching program.

Here are some examples:

- **ADDITIONAL, INDIVIDUAL, SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Set bespoke programs for your players that are tailored to their individual development needs. This can work alongside your current coaching program and regular sessions

- **CONTINUOUS 'HOMEWORK' PROGRAMS**

If your upcoming sessions are focussing on dribbling, ask the players to watch or practice a dribbling skill from the eAcademy in advance of your session

- **OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

Once you understand a player's individual attributes and development areas (from observations in training/matches) you can assign specific techniques from the eAcademy for them to work on and improve

- **PRE-SEASON**

Utilize the athletic development and agility sections to get your players ready for the upcoming season

- **OFF-SEASON**

This is a great opportunity to give the players ownership of their development. They can watch and practice skills that they have selected to keep them engaged and active outside of the regular season

- **CANCELLED SESSIONS**

Session cancelled doesn't have to mean no session! Set your players skills to work on regardless

- **COACH DEMONSTRATIONS WITHIN SESSIONS**

Use the eAcademy to show your players the perfect, expert demonstration. It's important for visual learners to see each technique and these video examples will really help. Providing inspiring practical demonstrations can be memorable and impactful for the players

A comprehensive coaches user guide can be found on the [Boot Room Resource Hub](#)



This guide outlines the ways to implement the eAcademy, improving your programs/players, as well as helping LFC IA coaches with roll-out.

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## POSITION SPECIFIC PLAYER PLANS

If your players want to be a flying full-back like Trent Alexander-Arnold or a midfield maestro like Alexis Mac Allister, a skilful forward like Luis Diaz or a commanding centre back like Virgil Van Dijk, LFC eAcademy can help with a pathway to learn the fundamental skills to play in those positions. The LFC Player Training Plans provide the guidance required so they can simply focus on the key areas.

### eAcademy Player Plans

[Click here to see Player Plans](#)



**“The eAcademy is a fantastic platform to show young players how to play the Liverpool Way.”**

Trent Alexander-Arnold



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## 25. PLAYER REVIEWS

Players should be given a review every 10 weeks via an LFC IA feedback form (see 2 options below). They should be given constructive feedback and future targets should also be agreed within the process. Skills challenge scores should be logged, and progress assessed. Specific skills and techniques to practice from the eAcademy should also be highlighted on player feedback forms, and guidance notes can be found on the [Boot Room Resource Hub](#). Only these forms are permitted for use on LFC International Academies.



[View short and long-term feedback forms](#)



**“It’s great when you sit back at the end of a day and you see that a player has taken on board a piece of information.”**

Marc Bridge-Wilkinson, LFC U18 Coach

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## 26. COACHING TERMINOLOGY

At LFC we are consistent with the terminology we use with our players. The aim is to keep things simple so that all players clearly understand the instructions we are giving.

### PRE-ACADEMY SPECIFIC

**GAKPO:** The ability to wriggle out of pressure when its coming from behind you

**SALAH:** The ability to go past or play past an opponent when the pressure is in front of you

**PINCH THE BALL:** Try to take the ball without fouling the opponent

**PROTECT THE BALL – BODY WORK:** The way in which a player protects the ball using their body as a shield

**HAVE WE GOT A FORWARD/DEFENDER?**  
Expression used to get the players to scan to help with team balance

**EYES UP/SNEAK A LOOK:** Encourage players to scan the pitch to help the next decision

**ENJOY/STAY ON THE BALL:** Reinforcing the importance of keeping the ball both individually and as a team

**SHOULDERS:** Encourage players to scan the pitch to know what's around them

**OUTPLAY:** To go past an opponent either with or without the ball in a style that suits you

**DON'T GET OUTPLAYED:** To not let your opponent play or run past you with the ball

**FIND A WAY:** To play your way out of, or through pressure with the ball

**DIAZ:** Receive the ball to change direction using various parts of the foot

**3 SECONDS:** Encourage players to react quickly and win the ball back after losing possession

### RELEVANT FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

**STRONG PASS:** When a player makes a pass that gets the ball to its destination quickly and accurately

**BATTLE OF THE ARMS AND THIGHS:** When you get your arms or thighs across your opponent to gain an advantage

**BODY SHAPE:** When a player opens his body to receive the ball or view the game enabling them to see three sides of the pitch

**CHECK YOUR SHOULDERS:** Encouraging players to scan the pitch before receiving the ball

**TWO TOUCHES:** When a player receiving a pass recognises, they have no time and space and then takes a touch to allow them to read the game

**BREAK THE LINE:** When a player receives a pass and breaks the line of the defender with their touch

**SAFE SIDE:** Encourage players to pass to the safe side away from defending players

**BE POSITIVE/GET BEHIND:** Reinforce players to finish behind defenders when beating from the front

**BE AGGRESSIVE:** Encouraging players to be positive when dribbling

**FIND THE LINE:** This is an indication for a player to find space to enable the player on the ball to have a clear line of pass for them to receive

**PASS OR DRIBBLE:** Aiming to simplify a player's decision

**LIGHT SWITCH TRANSITIONS:** As soon as we win or lose the ball we react quickly to either counter attack or counter defend (win ball back as quick as possible)

**FLOOD THE PITCH:** Support play in numbers, how and where? Can we move up the pitch together?

**CAP OUT:** If the path to goal is blocked by defenders can we 'cap out' and start again?

**CIRCULATE THE BALL:** Keep possession of the ball by quick passing looking for opportunities to penetrate forward

**SET:** When a receiving player plays the ball back 1st time, when they are marked or cannot turn

**SWITCH:** When a player or a team need to move the ball from one side of the pitch to the other

## 27. KEY CONTACTS



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# International Academy