

# NATIONAL ACADEMY PROGRAMME

## TIER 1



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL



ELITE  
TALENT  
DEVELOPMENT  
ENVIRONMENT



### SWF

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## VISION

The National Academy Programme (NAP) is designed to nurture new footballing talent within participating clubs that are striving to create excellent sporting environments for girls to play and flourish. Clubs have agreed to attain set criteria that has been developed to not only enable girls to play structured football within a competitive league, but to also be coached and trained to a high level along with being supported with appropriate athletic development. In addition to performances on the pitch, clubs are encouraged to help support the holistic needs of girls playing football within this performance setting. This is to recognise that the growth of the whole individual is important for sporting excellence.

The reason for supporting emerging sporting talent in this way is to ensure that players can participate in leagues that are competitive and stretching and that in the future we have strong and competitive clubs and domestic leagues along with a successful national team, that can compete on the global stage.

This programme will evolve and grow and be adaptable to the needs of players, coaches and teams.

The women's game is at a critical juncture – it's unique and as it grows we want our young players to exist within an approach that has excellent values:

- a) Fair – our game is fair with flourishing clubs and competitive leagues
- b) Equitable – resources help to grow the game in a sustainable and holistic way
- c) Ambitious – recognises the unlimited potential of women's football and to strive to ensure Scotland is viewed as a beacon of good practice respected domestically and internationally
- d) Agile – that our structures are responsive and adaptive to capitalise on opportunities and help cope with challenge
- e) People led – players, family, clubs, volunteers and leagues are respected and valued for what they contribute to the game
- f) Transparent – structures are robust and clear, decision making is understandable and fair, and communication is excellent
- g) Outward looking – thriving on being part of a broader sporting landscape that brings the best knowledge and experience to drive positive change
- h) Values driven – is ethical, responsible and a force for positive change on the pitch and in society

## CLUBS & CRITERIA

Clubs have been invited to take part in the NAP and to demonstrate how they will attain a set of ambitious criteria that have been developed in consultation with clubs and performance advisors from the Scottish FA.

## APPROACH

The NAP operates leagues across three different age groups – 14s, 16s and 18s

Teams to compete in a national league against the very best clubs across the country. With the ability for movement between teams, clubs are entrusted and empowered to do what's right to support these future football stars.

The NAP leagues work collaboratively with our partners in the Scottish Women's Premier League to enable player movement, where appropriate, to give young players a flavour of top-flight football and to enable young players the chance to play alongside some of Scotland's top players. All age groups, also have exciting League Cups and Scottish Cups to take part in.



## COACHES

For coaches, the NAP seeks to bring teams together to offer support and learning opportunities using the assets found across the wider footballing family. With regular meetings throughout the year, the NAP aims to learn from the experiences of our coaches to adapt approaches where appropriate and necessary for the good of the players. Importantly, fostering a sense of solidarity across clubs – though we recognise the friendly rivalries that will exist during games! - the NAP aims to inspire a sense of togetherness for the good of the growth of women's and girls' football and for the benefit of the country.

## GOVERNANCE

The NAP is administered by Scottish Women's Football. The NAP utilises the knowledge and experience of the SFA Performance Manager and the High Performance Commission to ensure the aims and objectives of the programme meet the expanding demands of performance football. The League Administrator governs the league utilising the knowledge of a NAP Committee as and when required. The Committee will have representation from all tiers of the programme and a representative from the HPC.

## PARTNERS

Clubs are critical partners for the NAP with the individual and collective knowledge and expertise found across them all an invaluable resources. They are entrusted and empowered to do what is best for the young talent and have proactively sought to signal that commitment by being active participants in the NAP. That commitment is recognised, appreciated and demonstrated through the attainment of, or striving towards, stretching criteria.

The Scottish FA provide support through the advice from national team staff to ensure a steely focus on the performance needs of the young athletes and to ensure a collaborative approach to help develop players for the national team.

Parents and carers are also critical for the good administration of the leagues. Families and carers entrust their young players with the clubs and within a system that should be safe, nurturing and respectful.

## Entry Criteria

In the first instance Clubs must have a TDE Pathway from U14 to Senior SWPL 1 or 2. Clubs must also engage with the Annual Stakeholder Feedback Process.

### 1. Personnel

#### a. **Academy Leader**

An academy leader must be in place where they have a minimum of 18 hours dedicated to the role. This person can have a non-sporting qualification, must be approved by SWF/SFA.

#### b. **Coach/Manager (Full Time Role)**

Each team shall have an individual in place.

This individual shall be qualified for the role. The minimum mandatory requirement is as follows:

Must have a 'B' Licence Qualification or be working towards in current season.

\* Clubs must have a minimum of 2 qualified coaches at each age- group on matchday.

#### c. **Assistant Coach**

Must have a 'C' Licence Qualification or be working towards in current season.



\* Clubs must have a minimum of 2 qualified coaches at each age- group on matchday.

**d. Goalkeeping**

In addition, teams must have:

A Goalkeeping Coach with Coaching Award or be working towards in current season.

**e. Players**

A maximum of 60 players across the Performance pathway (excluded professional contracts and regional players)

**f. Recruitment**

Clubs must adhere to an approach window of June 1<sup>st</sup> -June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

**2. Medical**

Must have access to a Club Doctor

Teams will have a sports therapist at every game (Home team or Cat 1 Team).

One Physio Clinic provided per week as required by appointment.

Medical Equipment at matches to include necessary emergency kit.

Academies must engage with Athlete Benchmark Testing Programme supplied by SFA.

PHV & PMV Monitoring Programme to support LTAD.

**3. Child Wellbeing & Protection Officer**

Each club shall have an individual in place. This individual must attend a minimum of 3 SWF webinars over the season and have completed the following in accordance with SWF's Child Wellbeing & Protection Policy:

- Children's Wellbeing in Scottish Football Workshop or the sportscoach UK Safeguarding & Protecting Children Workso
- Managing Children's Wellbeing in Scottish Football workshop or **sportscotland's** Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport training

In addition, they must have completed the following and returned to SWF in accordance with SWF's Child Wellbeing & Protection Policy:

- PVG scheme record/update through SWF in past 3 years
- Self-Declaration form
- Fair Processing Notice form
- Official Declaration form
- 2 references approving their suitability to conduct regulated work.
- SWF's code of conduct for safeguarding children's wellbeing

**4. Club Secretary**

Each club shall have a named Club Secretary. This individual should be named during the affiliation process and be in possession of an up-to-date job description outlining their duties.



## **5. Sports Scientist**

Each academy programme shall have suitably qualified Strength & Conditioning and Sports Scientist practitioners in place qualified to a minimum of Bachelor with honours degree in a S&C, Sports Science or related field or a suitable external partnership to provide this support.

## **6. Performance Analyst/Video Analyst**

Match Coverage - All home matches for age groups 14 – 18, inclusive, shall be covered. To maximise resources, home academies are responsible for filming the matches. The footage will then be shared with the opposing academy via an online system.

Each venue must have an appropriate infrastructure for filming such as a fixed/mobile platform or extendable tripod, which provides adequate height. This should be a minimum of 3 metres.

Tagging Protocol - The Academy should implement a consistent post-match tagging protocol. This should be standardised across the Academy for age groups 14 – Under 18, inclusive.

Evidence Based Practice - Academies are required to produce data on both team and individual performance for each match. The data should be aligned to the Academy's philosophy. All matches and data should be stored in an electronic database. Implementation of such protocols will be a pre-cursor to proposed data sharing with the Scottish FA in subsequent years.

Match & Performance Analysis - Academies shall provide regular, video-based feedback sessions to players on a team and individual basis. This can be undertaken in a way that is pertinent for the Academy. Online Platform Sharing - All matches will be stored within an online platform. The home Academy is responsible for uploading the footage.

Academies will only be able to access matches in which they were involved. All matches will be available to the Scottish FA.

## **7. Training**

### **a. Frequency**

Must have a minimum of 3 pitch-based football training sessions per week of minimum 90 minutes.

Must have a minimum of 2 Specialist Goalkeeping training sessions per week provided to players of all age-groups (Minimum of 45mins per session).

U14s Must have a minimum of 2 Non-Football Athlete Development Session per week.

U16s-U18s Must have a minimum of 2 Non-Football Athlete Development Sessions.

S1-S4 should not be training beyond 9:30pm.

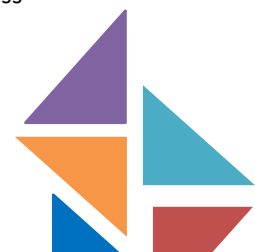
### **b. Facility**

Teams must have access to ½ pitch at least 1 session per week.

## **8. The Ground**

### **a. Registered Ground**

Teams shall have a designated home ground for the duration of each season for all matches unless unforeseen circumstances occur. As per competition rules, in this scenario clubs must seek permission from the League Administrator to use another venue.



Mandatory perimeter pitch protection system shall surround the playing area separating it from spectators and employed as directed by the match officials on the day. At least 3m from touchline. Any surrounding equipment/goals etc must be removed from surrounding pitch area or at least 3m from touchline and protected away from player collision.

*Pitch Perimeter Barrier: refers to barrier or rail that separates spectators from playing area.*

**b. The Field of Play**

The field shall be following the Laws of the Game.

**c. Natural Grass Surfaces**

Any natural grass surface may be subject to tests, at intervals to be decided by the SWF, to ensure compliance to performance standards determined by the SWF or others approved by SWF. The field shall be in good condition and playable throughout the playing season.

**d. Artificial Surfaces**

Standard to be approved by the SWF upon written application from the club.

**e. Health & Safety Regulations**

The ground must comply with prevailing Health and Safety regulations, and, where applicable, have relevant certification issued by the local authority when required.

**f. Access**

Both clubs must have access to a suitable warm up space for a minimum of 30 minutes before kick-off, and warm down space for a minimum of 15 minutes after full time.

15 minutes of warm up time must be on the pitch that the match is due to take place.

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**9. Facilities**

**a. Teams**

The following rooms and facilities, of an equivalent level for both teams, are a minimum requirement:

- i. 1 dressing room for each club (home and visiting team) with facilities to safely secure valuables and/or lock the dressing room. Dressing rooms must be made available no later than 60 minutes prior to kick off.
- ii. Seating facilities for at least 16 persons.
- iii. Shower facility.
- iv. 1 fully functioning toilet.

This should not be a communal changing area i.e., public changing room with public access.

**b. Match Officials**

The match official's dressing room must be separate from the team dressing rooms but close by and has facility to safely secure valuables.

**c. Technical Areas**



Clubs shall provide a clearly marked technical area for up to 13 people next to the field, large enough for the technical team and substitutes.

**d. Medical Room**

Clubs shall provide a designated Medical Room with a physio table.

**e. Match Appurtenances**

Clubs shall ensure goalposts, crossbars, nets, corner flags and other appurtenances are provided.

**f. Match Arrangements Information Pack**

Clubs shall ensure that, no later than 5 days before the scheduled match, an electronic match arrangements information pack is shared with the opposition club and the SWF Administrator including:

- Kick off time.
- Venue (including travel directions)
- Team changing information.
- Team kit colours
- Access to pitch
- Access to parking
- Spectator arrangements
- Nearest hospital (+ directions)
- Defibrillator arrangements
- coaches, officials, and all spectators
- All clubs must educate parents and spectators regarding side-line behaviour towards, players, officials, and coaches.

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**10. Quality of Performance**

In order to ensure the optimal environment for players, clubs must evidence:

**(1) Player: Individual Player Development Plans**

U14-U18s all players must have Individual development plans linked to all academy curriculums.  
16s and 18s must have Dual Career Education and Awareness

**(2) Game: Playing Learning**

Playing:

- the way in which the Academy sets out to play football on the pitch.
- the playing principles adopted by the Academy.
- Learning:
- the learning objectives for the different age groups
- technical, tactical, mental and / or physical topics

**(3) Environment: Academy Development Plans**

- NAP Elite Academy Development Plans linked to Club Development plans to support.
- sustainable growth and development across all areas of the programme.
- Dual Career pathway introduced from 16s age group onwards incorporated in development plan.

**Notes for Applicant Clubs:**

*Clubs attaining these criteria are eligible to apply, however are not guaranteed a place. The nature of the National Academy Programme is to create a place for the best players in the country and such applications made will be assessed by SWF and the SFA to create and sustain this environment. The National Academy Programme Tier 2 has separate criteria.*

