



***ELITE FOOTBALL COACHING***  
**COACHES HANDBOOK**

u11-u16



**ACCREDITED  
CLUB ★★★**  
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL



## **Elite FC Coaching Philosophy (U11-U16)**

As players transition from the foundation phase (U7-U10) to the youth development phase (U11-U16), the Elite Football Coaching philosophy evolves to balance individual development with team play and tactical understanding.

This phase is critical for preparing players to thrive in competitive match environments, where the emphasis shifts towards collective performance, game intelligence, and tactical discipline without losing sight of the importance of individual technical mastery.

# Key Changes from U7–U10 to U11–U16 Coaching Philosophy

## Game Format Transition

- From small-sided games (5v5/7v7) to larger formats (9v9/11v11).
- Focus on spatial awareness, positioning, and understanding team roles.

## Increased Focus on Team Play

- Introduce pressing, defensive structure, and coordinated attacking strategies.
- Integrate tactical understanding into match scenarios.

## Match-Based Scenarios

- Emphasize game-relevant practices such as build-up play, transitions, and set pieces.

## Physical Development

- Incorporate age-appropriate fitness, strength, and conditioning elements.

## Mental Resilience and Game Intelligence

- Develop decision-making under pressure and the ability to adapt to game situations.

## Introduction of Competitive Focus

- Prepare players for league competition while maintaining a developmental mindset.

# Key Principles of Elite FC's U11-U16 Coaching Philosophy

## 1. Out of Possession

- **Team Pressing:**
  - Players press together as a unit to regain possession quickly.
  - Defensive principles include compactness, cutting passing lanes, and triggering the press based on cues (e.g., poor opposition touch, back pass).
- **Defensive Transitions:**
  - Immediate recovery and high-intensity pressing when the ball is lost.
  - Positivity in winning the ball back strongly and quickly.

## 2. In Possession

- **Quick Decision-Making:**
  - Players are encouraged to assess options quickly and attack at pace when opportunities arise.
  - Focus on creating overloads and exploiting spaces in transition.
- **Attacking Tempo:**
  - Players aim to play forward quickly and decisively when possible.
  - Build-up play with emphasis on movement, creating passing options, and progressing through the thirds.
- **Individual Development:**
  - Maintain a strong focus on individual skills such as ball mastery, 1v1 confidence, and composure under pressure.
  - Encourage players to express creativity and take calculated risks in attacking scenarios.
- **Tactical Understanding:**
  - Develop awareness of roles within the team structure, including positional play, off-ball movement, and defensive responsibilities.
  - Teach players to recognize and adapt to game scenarios (e.g., managing a lead, breaking down a low block).

# Elite FC U11-U16 Coaching Session Structure

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## Session Timings (U11-U16)

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| <b>MINUTES</b><br><b>0-10</b><br><b>WARM UP</b><br><b>ACTIVITIES</b> | <b>MINUTES</b><br><b>11-35</b><br><b>TECHNICAL</b><br><b>PRACTICE</b> | <b>MINUTES</b><br><b>36-55</b><br><b>MATCH SCENARIO</b><br><b>PRACTICE</b> |
|--|---|--|

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### Warm-Up (10 mins)

- **Objective:** Prepare players physically and mentally for the session while incorporating ball work.
  - **Activities:**
    - Rondos or small possession drills (e.g., 6v2 or 4v1).
    - Dynamic stretches combined with agility and coordination drills.
    - Match play (5v5 / 6v6 dependant on numbers)
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### Technical Development (25 mins)

- **Objective:** Focus on improving an individual technical skill relevant to the session's theme.
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### Match Scenario (20 mins)

- **Objective:** Apply the session's focus in a realistic game context.
  - **Activities:**
    - Small-sided game (6v6 or 7v7 depending on numbers).
    - Assign team-specific tasks: one team focuses on pressing, the other on attacking tempo.
    - Coach provides live feedback to reinforce pressing, quick transitions, and decision-making.
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