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## ***The Player Journey***

Stalybridge Celtic Juniors is an FA Charter Standard football club run by qualified and experienced volunteers. The grassroots club formed in 1975 offers quality coaching for players of all abilities.

The purpose of *The Player Journey* is to give parents a clear understanding of how players can develop at the club's Soccer School, join teams and grow with the club from reception to under 16s.

### **The Soccer School**

Based at the Soccer Centre on Mossley Road, the Soccer School is the hub of the whole club. Up to 120 players of all abilities play every Saturday morning. Groups are age appropriate and coached by experienced volunteers, all with FA qualifications, are first aid trained and are CRC checked. Sessions are skills-based and focus on fun, with a balance of practice and game time.

### **Forming Teams**

**Mini Soccer.** Football for primary school aged children, starting with 5v5 for under 7s. Children in the year one group at Soccer School are brought together to form under 7s teams which begin playing in non-competitive leagues later in the year. Stalybridge Celtic Juniors is a completely volunteer-run club, every team needs a volunteer coach and someone to help with the team's admin. Volunteers most often come from parents in that age group and the sooner they decide to help out the longer they can work alongside FA level 2 qualified coaches with years of experience to develop their coaching skills. New volunteers will also complete FA level 1. It is always the club's intention to create enough teams for every child to join a team at under 7s but this is reliant on there being enough parent volunteers.

**Teams.** Teams are chosen based on player ability. There are multiple leagues and divisions to ensure every player, whatever their ability, is challenged and games are evenly balanced. This means players will have as much time on the ball as possible and be playing against players of a similar ability to themselves. Min-Soccer is non-competitive and results are not recorded or shared.

### **Joining Teams at an Older Age**

The majority of teams after under 7s are already established, have existing squads and are already playing in leagues. For primary school age children the Soccer School is where team managers will look to find new players when spaces arise, either when a player leaves or the team move from 5v5 to 7v7 and so on as they get older. It is also worth contacting the team manager direct for your age group to see if there are any spaces available or if they are currently looking for players. This is also the case for players of secondary school age looking to join the club.





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### **Could my Child be 'Scouted'?**

The primary goal of Stalybridge Celtic Juniors is to provide fun and enjoyable football to as many children as possible. The club has strong ties with Manchester United, Manchester City and other professional football clubs in the North West. Many players play with professional clubs whilst still playing for their Stalybridge Celtic Juniors team and teams are regularly invited to attend training sessions and tournaments at both Manchester clubs. Our coaches are invited to attend 'Coaching the Coaches' events held by Manchester United which take place every few months. Arsenal defender Rob Holding began playing for Stalybridge Celtic Juniors before signing for Bolton and then moving to Arsenal.

*Only 180 of the 1.5 million players who are playing organised youth football in England at any one time will make it as a Premier League pro, that's a success rate of just 0.012%.*

### **What Happens after Under 16s?**

For those players still with the club at under 16s, teams can continue to represent Stalybridge Celtic Juniors above this age in amateur leagues. There is also the opportunity to join Stalybridge Celtic FC in their academy programme which offers team training and games in the youth academy system alongside a sports education programme.

### **How are Teams Managed?**

All team managers are volunteers who give their time, effort and commitment for nothing. The club believes in freedom of choice. The foundations of FA coach education along with continuous development such as Coaching the Coaches events and working alongside more experienced coaches mean all managers are competent and are free to develop their own playing style for their team. The club will always support managers however possible and the wider network of volunteers at the club provides a broad spectrum of support.

### **How are Teams Funded?**

Each team is responsible for its own funding. This includes all kit and training equipment, venue hire for training, league, tournament and referee fees, player registration fees and other costs. Funding is usually sourced from a combination of player monthly direct debits (subs) and sponsors. Each team is encouraged to find their own sponsors and sponsor logos can be printed on that team's kit.

