Criteria for running an FA Girls' Regional Talent Club Tier 3 2017-18

FA Rule C4 (b) applies to all players within The Football Association Girls' Talent Development Programme.

1. Purpose

The purpose of The Football Association Girls' Regional Talent Club Programme is to identify and support the development of elite female players within a technical and educational programme to enable them to fulfil their sporting potential.

2. Scope

Any club or organisation may not designate any technical or educational programme as a Regional Talent Club unless that Regional Talent Club is licensed by The Football Association under these regulations.

3. Quality Control

3.1 Requirements to authorise the award of Tier 3 Licences:

3.1.1 Licence Application:
Licences were awarded for a maximum of three years starting from 2016-17 season, subject to FA and external funding, and meeting the licence criteria. The Club's licence renewal application for the 2017-18 season is to be made available for review at the request of The Football Association Women's Football Board.

3.1.2 Monitoring:
The Football Association will institute a programme of visits to monitor the regulations.

3.1.3 Reports:
Each visit to a Regional Talent Club by a Member of The Football Association Women's Football Committee will be reported upon.

3.1.4 Financial Funding and Monitoring:
Each Regional Talent Club (Tier 3) must commit a monetary contribution of £6,000 towards the running and management of the Club. Evidence of the spend will be submitted in a FA cash flow document along with copies of invoices, twice yearly to The Football Association. Failure to do so by the required date will result in non-payment of the grant.

3.1.5 The Football Association Women's Football Board has the right to refuse / withdraw a club's licence with immediate effect.

3.2. Registration:

3.2.1 The Football Association will be responsible for providing registration forms for the registration of all players at a Regional Talent Club.

3.2.2 Age year bands will operate from 1st September to 31st August of the following year.

3.3 Regional Talent Club (Tier 3) Fixtures:

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The following fixture programme will be expected for each age group:

- U16s: To play in a Regional Tier 2 and 3 Talent Club league and The FA Girls' U16 Youth Cup, with the programme of fixtures provided by The Football Association. Otherwise U16s in a Regional Talent Club are only permitted to play against other Regional Talent Clubs, Charter Standard Boys teams and Boys EPPP Academies.

- U14s: To play in a Regional Tier 2 and 3 Talent Club fixture programme provided by The Football Association. Otherwise U14s in a Regional Talent Club are only permitted to play against other Regional Talent Clubs, Charter Standard Boys teams and Boys EPPP Academies.

- U12s: To enter and participate as a team in a local Charter Standard boys league. Any different arrangements must be approved by the Football Association.

- U10s (if applicable): To enter and participate as a team in a local Charter Standard boys league. Any different arrangements must be approved by the Football Association.

3.4 Fees:

Registration fees and Licence fees to be at the discretion of The Football Association. Any fees required to enter a boys league will be the responsibility of the Regional Talent Club.

3.5 Learning Programme and Support Service:

Regional Talent Clubs are expected to support their staff's involvement in the FA Girls' Professional Development Programme and attend any compulsory training events provided by The Football Association.

3.6 Quality Audit:

The Football Association will evaluate the performance of Regional Talent Clubs based on objective criteria, and Clubs are expected to fully support any audits carried out.

4. Safeguarding Children

4.1 All Regional Talent Clubs are required to comply in full with The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and Regulations. It is essential that all Regional Talent Clubs have a Safeguarding Children Policy in place and procedures for dealing with concerns about the welfare of a young person. This must be available to all staff and volunteers, parents/carers and players.

4.2 All staff and volunteers involved at a Regional Talent Club must be registered with the Club and meet the staff criteria qualifications and requisitions. The register must be kept up to date and any person who is not registered shall have no involvement with the Regional Talent Club. This requirement shall apply to all persons involved at the Regional Talent Club, including technical, administration, performance services, welfare and ancillary staff and volunteers etc.

4.3 The register may be liable to inspection and verification at any time by The Football Association as appropriate.

4.4 The recruitment process for all staff and volunteers must comply with The FA guidance as set out in the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and Regulations. This includes the taking up of at least two references, interviewing and completion of the requisite Criminal Records Checks.

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4.5 All persons who work in regulated activity with children and young people at a Regional Talent Club must complete a DBS Enhanced Criminal Records Check (CRC) with Children's Barred List via The FA CRB when the offer of the post is made, or when they are required to renew their CRC in line with FA Policy, every 3 years.

4.6 All people in a role at a Regional Talent Club shall be required to be trained in safeguarding children issues at least to include satisfactory completion of The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Workshop and to renew this training every three years.

4.7 The Welfare lead at each Regional Talent Club (Tier 3) shall be designated as having responsibility for safeguarding children issues as part of the promotion of the welfare of children attending the Regional Talent Club and issuing identification to all club staff members. All parents / carers and players must be made aware as to whom this person is and how to contact them. The Welfare lead must be trained in safeguarding children issues at least to include satisfactory completion of The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Workshop, as well as attend safeguarding professional development training at least every three years and have the requisite Criminal Records Check.

5. Criteria to Operate a Regional Talent Club (Tier 3)

Regional Talent Club Licences will be awarded by The Football Association in accordance with regulations laid down by The Football Association, and renewed annually.

5.1 An organisation may only operate one Regional Talent Club.

5.2 Public liability insurance is required with a minimum of £10m indemnity. A copy of this cover must be submitted to The Football Association in your licence renewal application by 1st June. Player to player liability is recommended but is not mandatory. The Football Association does not provide Personal Accident Insurance, therefore it is recommended that Clubs address this independently through other agencies.

5.3 Regional Talent Clubs (Tier 3) must operate at Under 16, Under 14, Under 12 age groups (Under 10s are optional). The Club must register the following number of players per age group:

Under 16: 15 min – 18 max players per year band
Under 14: 15 min – 18 max players per year band
Under 12: 12 min – 15 max players per year band (or max of 24 players if entering two teams)
Under 10 (optional): 10 min – 15 max players per year band (or max of 20 players if entering two teams)

If the Regional Talent Club wants to enter two teams at U12 and/or U10 in a local Charter Standard boys league then they must get approval from The Football Association.

5.4 The Club is to run for a minimum of 30 weeks, ideally 36 weeks, between the months of July and May. The major trial period is to be held in the month of June.

If the Club needs to close for any period of time it has to first seek permission from The Football Association.

All players registered at a club between the 1st – 30th May must be told in writing whether they:

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1. Will receive a player agreement to re-sign for their current club for the next season if they choose to accept it.

2. Will need to trial to re-secure a place at their current club for the next season.

3. Will be released by their current club and not be asked to trial for next season.

Players can decide to accept the offer and therefore may or may not decide to trial at another club. If they accept the offer, after 1st July they will be registered for the next season with their existing club.

Players that want to trial at another club will be available to do so from the 1st June.

Where any team plays an unregistered or otherwise ineligible player or players, The FA Girls' Talent Development Sub-Committee may impose any punishment or order it considers appropriate, including (but not limited to) deducting any points won in any league match affected, awarding league points to the opposing team, expelling the team from a cup competition if any match affected was played in that cup competition, allowing the opposing team to progress to the next round of that cup competition, ordering any match to be replayed, and / or imposing a fine.

5.5 Player Transfers

The Football Association will provide clubs with a 'player agreement' template for all registered Regional Talent Club players.

Player Agreement:

(a) Every Regional Talent Club player is to be given a minimum of a 1 year agreement or a maximum of a 2 year agreement, subject to FA and external funding and the Regional Talent Club meeting the required criteria.

(b) A player may de-register at any time if returning to grassroots football (ie any club outside of the talent pathway) or advancing to senior football. If the player has left and wishes to re-join the same Regional Talent Club at a later date in the same season they may do so during the December or June transfer window.

(c) A player wishing to move to another Regional Talent Club is allowed to during the June transfer window. Only if both Regional Talent Clubs and the player are in agreement can the player move during the December transfer window.

(d) If a player wishes to leave the Club and join another Regional Talent Club outside of the transfer windows, then they can make an appeal to The Football Association

Guidelines regarding player compensation should be followed as per the Women's Football Pyramid Regulations.

5.6 A club must not approach, directly or indirectly, any player registered with another Regional Talent Club from 1st July until 31st May.

5.7 An U16 (Year 2) registered Regional Talent Club player may trial for an Academic course which is part of an Academy for a maximum of 1 week. The trials should take place between 1st February and the end of March. The registered player must not take part in any other Regional Talent Club fixtures.

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5.8 Regional Talent Clubs (Tier 3) must provide the following training programmes a week:

- U16 and U14 registered players must receive a minimum of four hours practical training per week.
- U12 and U10 registered players must receive a minimum of three hours practical training per week.
- Physical Performance must be considered in session plans and delivery.
- Goalkeeping coaches must provide a minimum of 1 hour Goalkeeping specific coaching sessions per week per age band.

5.9 Clubs must adhere to a maximum 90-minutes travelling time from home to the training ground for all age groups.

5.10 A player is not entitled to be coached by a Regional Talent Club or to participate in games, tours or tournaments, unless the player is registered with that Club or is on trial.

5.11 All players registered at the Regional Talent Club must be potentially eligible to play for England.

6. Facilities

6.1 The following minimum facilities are required for all weekly practical training sessions in the playing season:

- Adequate washing facilities and toilets
- Separate treatment room
- Rapid access to qualified medical expertise
- A recognised parent/visitor area for those observing the session or waiting is desirable
- An Emergency Aid Plan documented and clearly displayed
- An accessible defibrillator is recommended

The appropriate size of coaching area per age band must be provided:

U16s and U14s to train for all technical sessions on a minimum of one half of a full size 3G Football Turf/Grass pitch for each age group.

U12s and U10s to train for all technical sessions on a minimum of one third of a full size 3G Football Turf/Grass pitch for each age group. If the maximum squad size is exceeded to enter two teams into a Charter Standard boys league in accordance with Regulation 5.3 then each age group must train on one half of a full size 3G Football Turf/Grass pitch.

If applicable it is good practice for the U10s train indoors but not mandatory.

6.2 All other coaching activities, i.e. gym work, must meet the minimum facility requirements and take place in an appropriate size area dependant on the activity.

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6.3 The following minimum facilities are required for FA Organised match day fixtures for U16s and U14s:

- Adequate washing facilities and toilets
- Separate treatment room
- Rapid access to qualified medical expertise
- All 3G football turf pitches must be FA approved
- An Emergency Aid Plan documented and clearly displayed
- An accessible defibrillator is recommended

U16s to play 11v11 on a maximum pitch size of 100 yards x 60 yards (91m x 56m), using a size 5 ball

U14s to play 11 v 11 on a pitch size 80 yards x 50 yards (75m x 45m), using a size 4 ball and 9 v 9 goalposts.

6.4 U12s and U10s age groups will be required to meet the minimum facility requirements and play in the format stated in the rules and regulations of the local Charter Standard boys league entered.

6.5 Risk assessments must be carried out for all facilities. This process must include an annual check assessment. Proof of this check is to be made available if requested by The Football Association.

7. Staff

7.1 General Requirements:

In addition to meeting any applicable requirements set out in Regulation 4 regarding Safeguarding Children, all coaches registered and FA licensed to coach in Regional Talent Clubs (Tier 3) must by the 1st June 2017 hold the appropriate qualification to coach at that level, as outlined in the regulations, and have a FA Emergency Aid qualification and be a Licenced Coaches Club member.

The FA Girls' Talent Development Sub-Committee have the authority to sanction monthly deductions of up to 15% from the first grant instalment of any Regional Talent Club who does not have a fully approved workforce, until The FA can confirm that all staff have been validated.

7.2 Technical Staff

All technical staff (excluding volunteer coaches) must hold one of the following:

(a) FA Youth Award Modules 1 and 2;

(b) Blocks 1 and 2 of the 'new' FA Level 2 in Coaching Football, or be booked onto these specific blocks within six months of being appointed within the Regional Talent Club;

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(c) The 'new' UEFA B licence from 2017/18. Coaches who have completed the existing FA Level 3 (UEFA B) in Coaching Football must fulfil one of the above requirements, or have completed Block 1 of the 'new' FA Level 3 or be booked on this block within six months of being appointed within the Regional Talent Club.

- One Technical Director – to hold a minimum of UEFA B Licence for at least three years. The Technical Director must be present at all training sessions unless they are split over two sites, and attend one fixture each weekend. They must not be Head or Assistant Coach for an age group.

- U16s and U14s Head Coaches – both to hold UEFA B Licence.

- U16s Assistant Coach - to hold a minimum of FA Level 2 Certificate in Coaching.

- U14s Assistant Coach - to hold a minimum of FA Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football. No assistant coach is required unless player registrations for this age group exceed 16.

- U12s and U10s Head Coaches – both to hold a minimum of FA Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football.

- U12s and U10s Assistant Coaches – both to hold a minimum of FA Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football. No assistant coach is required unless player registrations exceed 16.

- One Goalkeeping coach – to hold a minimum of FA Level 2 in Goalkeeping Award. If the Goalkeeping coach holds UEFA B Licence and the FA Goalkeeping B licence then only in this instance would the coach not need to meet the youth award module requirements stated above due to the course content they have already covered.

7.3 Administrative Staff

- One Club Manager – to take responsibility of all administration and organisation duties. The Club Manager must be present for the start of all training sessions and attend one fixture each weekend. It is desirable for them to hold FA Emergency Aid qualification. The Club Manager must not be the same person as the Technical Director.

- One Financial Lead – to take responsibility of the finances and cash flow for the Regional Talent Club, and be the main point of contact for financial discussions with The Football Association.

7.4 Performance Services Staff

- One HCPC Registered Physiotherapists or Sports Therapist. A Sports Therapist must hold a degree in sports therapy, have full membership of the Society of Sports Therapy and have adequate indemnity insurance. They must hold a minimum of the FA Basic First Aid for Sport (BFAS) qualification and should undertake an annual review of clinical governance.

  They must attend all training sessions and matches (home & away). They must deliver prehab and rehab programmes and keep comprehensive player medical records.

- One Physical Performance Coach is desirable. They must be working towards or have completed a relevant degree programme in Sports Science or a Sport Science related discipline

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and hold FA Emergency Aid qualification. They should provide documented strategies for match day physical performance support with demonstrable evidence of its application.

The Regional Talent Club (Tier 3) should have established links/partnerships with Higher Education Institutions for physical performance related support to help establish the club's physical performance strategy.

7.5 Additional Staff

- One Welfare lead – must have clear welfare reporting lines. Desirable to hold FA Emergency Aid qualification.

7.6 Other Staff Requirements

It is best practice to have 2 appropriately qualified coaches with all age group at all times.

It is best practice to have female coaches with each age group. This will support FA Regional Talent Clubs with meeting the requirements of the FA Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures - Travel, Trips and Tournaments.

7.7 Female Coach Development

The Football Association is committed to mentoring and developing female coaches, where they can be nurtured and supported. Talented female coaches at the Regional Talent Club (Tier 3) must be encouraged to access the The FA Girls' England Talent Pathway Professional Development Programme.

The support of female Level 1 coaches is encouraged but only as volunteers at the Club and they must not coach at any training session until they have the Level 2 award and FA Youth Award Modules 1 and 2. To volunteer they must have a DBS Enhanced CRC via The FA CRB, have completed The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Workshop, and be a Licenced Coaches Club Member.

7.8 Staff Review and Development

Regional Talent Clubs (Tier 3) must have personal development plans in place for all technical staff working at the Club. A minimum of two staff performance reviews must be held per season by the Technical Director, and the Club must identify a programme of training and CPD opportunities to offer their workforce.

7.9 Support to Grassroots Clubs and Coaches

Regional Talent Clubs (Tier 3) must host one open evening in conjunction with their County FA for grassroots clubs and coaches to attend and learn about what the Club delivers. In addition one guest session must be delivered at grassroots club/s by Regional Talent Club staff.

8. Player Development

All players at the Regional Talent Club (Tier 3) must receive two player reviews and feedback sessions per season. Reviews must be available at the request of The Football Association.

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All players and parents must complete an annual induction programme.

9. FA Girls' England Talent Pathway Football

9.1 Player Eligibility

Players are licensed in 4 categories as outlined below:

A International Football and FA Regional Excellence Camps
B The FA Girls' Regional Talent Club Programme
C All Schools Football
D Local Youth Leagues including County Representative Matches

9.1.1 International Football
Players in The FA Girls' Regional Talent Club Programme selected for any England Women U15, U16 and U17 squads are not permitted to play in English Schools FA camps or fixtures unless permission in given in writing by the England Women U15, U16, U17 Head Coach.

Players shall be released to play in County FA and County Schools Under 14 and Under 16 representative competitions, provided the fixtures fall on an open weekend.

9.1.2 Regional Excellence Camps – U16s and U14s
Players will be identified and selected by FA Talent Technical Coaches for a Regional Excellence Camp. Players eligible will be those registered at Regional Talent Clubs as well as those playing in Advanced Coaching Centres, Grassroots football, Boys football and County Schools football.

9.1.3 Regional Talent Clubs
Players registered with a Regional Talent Club cannot be signed to any other club.

U12 and U10 players will participate through their Regional Talent Club in an appropriately identified local Charter Standard Boys League fixtures programme. This would be organised by the Regional Talent Club who must follow entry procedures.

9.2 Recommended Number of Games
The recommended number of games for a player per season is up to 40. This figure has been worked out based on these principles:

The average:

1. number of league, cup, friendly and international fixtures
2. length of the season
3. of one game per week

The conclusion and recommendation is to prevent overuse, especially in young players, burn out and encourage longevity and greater practice to match ratios.

Regional Talent Club players must not play more than 1 game in any given weekend.

It will be the responsibility of the Technical Director of the Regional Talent Club to monitor the number of games in which the player takes part.

9.3 Avoidance of Conflict of Fixtures

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It is hoped that conflict will be avoided between Schools, Counties and FA Regional Talent Clubs football.

A national programme of fixtures for U16s and U14s will be provided by The Football Association and each club is asked to provide this information to their County Schools and County FA representatives. This programme will include a number of Open Weekends where priority will be given on those dates to County FA and County Schools Under 14 and Under 16 representative matches.

County Football Associations, The English Schools Football Association and the Independent Schools Football Association will advise, in writing, the dates of their matches to a Regional Talent Club with which the player is registered, no less than 14 days prior to the match. Except in the case of postponed matches where the rearranged date shall be agreed by mutual consent and preferably during mid-week. This mid-week rearranged date will take priority over a club training evening.

9.4 Regional Talent Club Trialists

Once a player has been identified by a Regional Talent Club member of staff as having potential to be in the Club, then the member of staff must inform the Regional Talent Club Manager.

9.4.1 The Regional Talent Club must give seven clear days' notice of approach in writing to the registered youth team with which the trialist plays as per Football Association Rule C2 (a). Notice of approach should be provided to the appropriate Club Manager / Administrator prior to any invite to trial or approach to the player.

9.4.2 Players, including registered players and trialists, must only play 1 game in any given weekend. Clubs may include no more than two players from one junior team and no more than four in total on a trial basis in any one match. The normal trial period shall be regarded as four matches after which players must either become signed to the Club or released. Clubs can apply to The Football Association for a longer trial period for goalkeepers.

9.5 At all FA Regional Talent Club fixtures, team sheets must be available, detailing each player's name, date of birth and appropriate shirt number.

9.6 Matches for Under 16s:

- To be organised as coached games and can be played as per FA Regulations for the 11 a-side game
- The host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials, including assistant referees.
- A HCPC Physiotherapist or qualified Sports Therapist as per rule 7.4 from the Regional Talent Club to be in attendance at all matches
- Matches to be 80 minutes (2 x 40 minutes unless otherwise agreed by both parties for non-league fixtures. In this instance players should play no longer than 80 minutes).
- To have return substitutions
- To have footballs and pitches of appropriate size as per rule 6.3

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- To play in a Tier 2 and 3 Regional Talent Club league
- To compete in the FA Girls' U16 Youth Cup
- To arrange fixtures against Charter Standard boys teams, Academy boys teams or additional Regional Talent Club friendlies

9.7 Matches for Under 14s:

- To be organised as coached games
- The host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials, including assistant referees.
- A HCPC Physiotherapist or qualified Sports Therapist as per rule 7.4 from the Regional Talent Club to be in attendance at all matches
- Matches to be 75 minutes (3 x 25 minutes unless otherwise agreed by both parties. In this instance players should play no longer than 75 minutes).
- To have return substitutions
- To have footballs and pitches of appropriate size as per rule 6.3
- To play in a Tier 2 and 3 Regional Talent Club fixture programme
- To arrange fixtures against Charter Standard boys teams, Academy boys teams or additional Regional Talent Club friendlies

9.8 Matches for Under 12 and Under 10 (if U10s are applicable):

- To follow the Charter Standard Boys League rules and regulations they are playing in
- To have a qualified BFAS coach present at all matches
- The FA must be informed of all scheduled matches, and records kept of all fixtures

9.9 Matches for 16 Year Olds:

16 year old players that are registered with a Regional Talent Club and want to play senior football can only play one fixture per weekend whilst still registered at the Club. Club fixtures take priority over senior fixtures unless written permission is given by The Football Association.

9.10 Respect

To adopt all 'Respect League' processes at each age group at every game.

9.11 Players playing up and down

Only GKs are able to seek permission from The Football Association to play down one age group.

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Clubs wishing to play a player up an age group must seek permission by The Football Association to do so, where analysis and observation will be undertaken on the player by the Talent Technical Coach before a decision is made. This must be used to further enhance the development of the player long term.

9.12 Information to be kept by each club:

- Details of each match played
- Date
- Venue
- Names of all participating players

9.13 Players who are cautioned or dismissed from the field of play will be reported directly to appropriate County Football Association and the English Schools Football Association.

10. Grievance Procedures

In the event of a player or parent /carer having a grievance against a Regional Talent Club or employee of that Club which is FA licensed, the following procedure is to be followed:

- The grievance should be made in writing to the Club Manager in the first instance and be sent in an envelope marked confidential, stating the nature of the grievance and the player's full name.
- In the event of the grievance being against the Club Manager, the outline of grievance should be sent to the employing body.
- The grievance shall be investigated by the Club Manager or employing body and following the investigation the findings shall be reported to the person lodging the grievance in writing within 7-days of the investigation.
- If the person lodging the grievance is not satisfied with the outcome of the procedure then it is possible to refer the matter to The Football Association to review the process undertaken and make any suggestions it deems appropriate with a view to resolving the grievance.

11. Referring Safeguarding Concerns

Any concern about the welfare of a young player will be managed in line with The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. It is essential that staff recognise it is not their responsibility to decide if abuse is happening but to refer the concern on for the professionals to manage. If any staff member has concern about the way a concern is being managed they may make use of the FAs Whistle Blowing Policy which is stated below.

"Whistle-blowing"

Whistle-blowing is an early warning system. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation or within an independent structure associated with it.

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Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can also use whistle-blowing by contacting The FA Safeguarding Case Team on 0800 169 183 Ex.6300. Alternatively you can go direct to the Police or Children's Social Care and report your concerns there.

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