



# YOUTH FOOTBALL

FRAMEWORK

ROADMAP



Let them play.

## Foundation-First Approach

Introducing new practices, policies and/or formats with the youngest age groups first.

## Key Considerations

- Not pull anyone back a format
- Ensure adequate lead in time
- Time to transition naturally
- On-going monitoring and assessment
- Priority = Education (coach & parent)
- Increasing Youth Football Investment

## Youth Football Framework Purpose

Guarantee an active game that generates maximum enjoyment and technical development for every child.

## Framework Pillars

**GAME**

**EDUCATION**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**GOVERNANCE**

**5 Years**

## Key Priority:

**2024/2025**

Youth Framework Workshops

**2025/2026**

Youth League Accreditation

**2026/2027**

National Coaching Certificate

**2027/2028**

Environment Implementation

**2028/2029**

UEFA C Diploma

# GAME





# GAME 2025/26

Age	6	7	8	9
Key Stage	Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2	
Sport NI	Physical Literacy			
Learning Environment	FUNdamentals			Learning the Game
3v3	✓	✓	✓	✓
5v5			✓	✓
7v7				
9v9				
11v11				





# GAME 2026/27

Age	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19+
Key Stage	Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2			Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Further Education		
Sport NI	Physical Literacy				Community Based Sport & Physical Activity					Support for Sporting Excellence				
Learning Environment	FUNdamentals			Learning the Game			Talent Development			Elite Player Development				
3v3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5v5			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7v7					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9v9							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11v11									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓





# EDUCATION



# YOUTH FOOTBALL CHARTER

2025/26



**Philosophy of Youth Football**

**Nine Children's Rights**

**Parents – Players – Coaches**



# EDUCATION

## 2025/26

### OUTFIELD

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	Irish FA Introduction to Grassroots Football
	7	3 v 3	Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC)

### GOALKEEPER

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	
	7	3 v 3	



# EDUCATION

## 2026/27

### OUTFIELD

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	Irish FA Introduction to Grassroots Football
	7	3 v 3	Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC)
	8	5 v 5	
	9	5 v 5	
	10	7 v 7	
	11	7 v 7	
	12		
UEFA B Youth Diploma	13		
	14		
	15		
	16		
	17		

### GOALKEEPER

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	
	7	3 v 3	
	8	5 v 5	Irish FA Grassroots Introduction to Goalkeeping
	9	5 v 5	
	10	7 v 7	
	11	7 v 7	
	12		
Irish FA Goalkeeping C Diploma	13		
	14		
	15		
	16		
	17		



# EDUCATION

## 2027/28

### OUTFIELD

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	Irish FA Introduction to Grassroots Football
	7	3 v 3	Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC)
	8	5 v 5	
	9	5 v 5	
	10	7 v 7	
	11	7 v 7	
	12	9 v 9	UEFA C Diploma
UEFA B Youth Diploma	13		
	14		
	15		
	16		
	17		
UEFA A Diploma	18		

### GOALKEEPER

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	
	7	3 v 3	
	8	5 v 5	Irish FA Grassroots Introduction to Goalkeeping
	9	5 v 5	
	10	7 v 7	
	11	7 v 7	
	12	9 v 9	Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC) - Goalkeeping
Irish FA Goalkeeping C Diploma	13		
	14		
	15		
	16		
	17		
UEFA Goalkeeping B Diploma	18		



# EDUCATION

# 2028/29

## OUTFIELD

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	Irish FA Introduction to Grassroots Football
	7	3 v 3	Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC)
	8	5 v 5	
	9	5 v 5	
	10	7 v 7	
	11	7 v 7	
	12	9 v 9	UEFA C Diploma
UEFA B Youth Diploma	13	9 v 9	
	14	11 v 11	
	15	11 v 11	
	16	11 v 11	
	17	11 v 11	
UEFA A Diploma	18	11 v 11	

## GOALKEEPER

NIFL Academy	Age	Format	Youth Football
	6	3 v 3	
	7	3 v 3	
	8	5 v 5	
	9	5 v 5	Irish FA Grassroots Introduction to Goalkeeping
	10	7 v 7	
	11	7 v 7	
Irish FA Goalkeeping C Diploma	12	9 v 9	Irish FA National Coaching Certificate (NCC) - Goalkeeping
	13	9 v 9	
	14	11 v 11	
	15	11 v 11	
	16	11 v 11	
UEFA Goalkeeping B Diploma	17	11 v 11	
	18	11 v 11	



# ENVIRONMENT

2025/2026



**Scores /  
League Tables**  
U12 - U18



**Safeguarding /  
Welfare**  
Mandatory Policies



**Spectators**  
Respect Barrier



# ENVIRONMENT

2025/2026



**Scores /  
League Tables**  
U12 - U18



**Safeguarding /  
Welfare**  
Mandatory Policies



**Spectators**  
Respect Barrier

2026/2027: U9 and below



**Coaches**  
On the same side



**Playing Time**  
50% Minimum



**Tournaments / Festivals**  
Child Centred



**Referees**  
U10 - U18



**Seasonal Break**  
Rest / Reflection



**Playing Out of Age**  
Learning Environment

# ENVIRONMENT

2025/2026



**Scores /  
League Tables**  
U12 - U18



**Safeguarding /  
Welfare**  
Mandatory Policies



**Spectators**  
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**Referees**  
U10 - U18



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**Playing Out of Age**  
Learning Environment

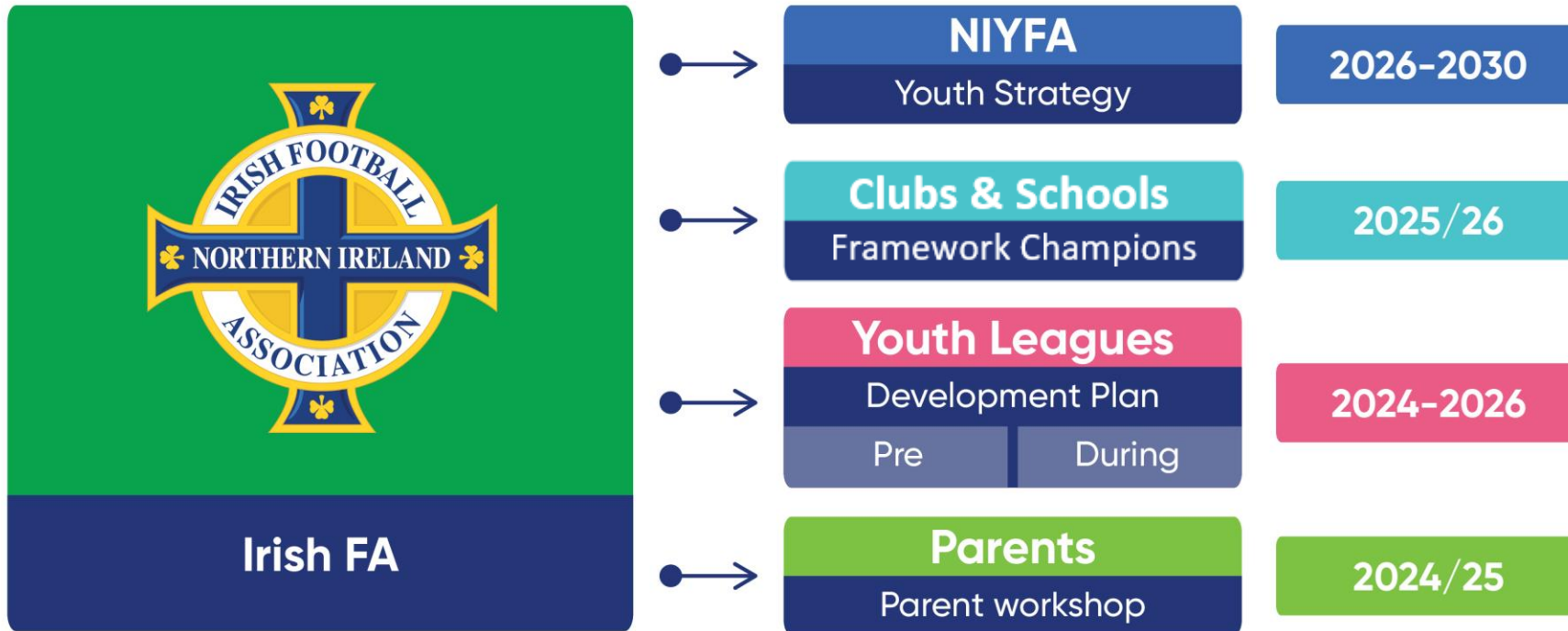
2027/2028: U10 - U18



# GOVERNANCE



# GOVERNANCE



# GOVERNANCE



## Player Registration

**Comet**  
25/26 = U9 +  
26/27 = U6 +

## NIFL Academy

**2025/26**  
NIFL Academy  
Criteria Developed  
U13+

# GOVERNANCE



## Discipline

**2026/27**  
Enhanced Education  
Interventions

## Youth League Accreditation

**2025/26**  
Co-Designed and  
Developed

**2026/27**  
Implemented