



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, EDUCATION AND PROTECTION OF YOUNG PLAYERS

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INTRODUCTION

The Association of European Professional Football Leagues (the “EPFL”) is a non profit association established by leading European Professional Football Leagues (the “Members” and “Associate Members”) to promote and/or enhance co-operation amongst such Leagues in order to develop their own activities and to work together whilst further promoting Professional Football in accordance with its constitution, mission and vision;

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members believe that the training and education of young players is essential to ensure football’s long term interests and future development;

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members are committed to take a positive and proactive stance to ensure the protection of children and young people in football, enabling them to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment;

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members are committed to promote best practices with regard to the recruitment, training and education of children and young people in Football and to promote ethics and high standards throughout football;

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members condemn all kinds of malpractices related to international transfers of young players in football, and consider that, in addition to other sport bodies and public institutions, Members and Associate Members and their affiliated clubs (the “Clubs”) have similar responsibilities to prevent and combat this issue;





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In this regard, the EPFL also acknowledges the efforts thus far carried out by Members and Associate Members and Clubs as well as by UEFA and FIFA at the international level with regard to youth development and protection of minors, which have contributed to the improvement of competitions and the training and participation of local young players;

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members have agreed to set out in these General Recommendations on the Recruitment, Training, Education and Protection of Young Players common concerns (the “Common Concerns”) in relation to these topics.

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members are willing to cooperating with FIFA, UEFA, ECA and FIFPro, as well as other non-sport organisations, who share common concerns in these matters, such as the “Foundation Culture Foot-Solidaire”;

The general recommendations contained herein are suggested by the EPFL to its Members and Associate Members on a non-mandatory and voluntary basis as best practice with regard to the recruitment, training, education and protection of young players. It is recognised that the timing and extent of implementation may vary from Member to Member, having regard to national law and regulations and the financial resources available to football in each nation, as well as the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players and the resolutions of the UEFA Professional Football Strategy Council in this respect.



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A. COMMON CONCERNS

- (1) The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members consider that all young players should train and play in a safe and supportive environment;
- (2) The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members believe that the welfare, social and lifestyle needs of young players should be addressed as they progress through the football youth system;
- (3) The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members note that Clubs (as well as the Leagues, national associations and other entities with responsibilities in this field) need to ensure that staff who recruit and work with young players are appropriately screened, in accordance with relevant regulatory framework, and trained to deal with issues relating to the development and safeguarding of young players, including those recruited across borders;
- (4) The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members are concerned with the recruitment of children in football and suggest that all national and international football authorities must work together to better regulate it;
- (5) The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members consider that young people and their families must be protected from potential abuses which may arise from the international movement of young players contrary to the applicable regulations and legislation.



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B. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of these General Recommendations are:

- (1) To identify best practices in terms of the recruitment, training and education of young players, as well as the prevention of irregular transfers of young footballers, and, as appropriate, to promote the adoption of apposite measures and forms of co-operation with the relevant sports bodies.
- (2) To foster co-operation between the EPFL, its Members and Associate Members, the Clubs and all relevant football organisations and public institutions as appropriate, such as FIFA, UEFA, FIFPro and ECA, in respect of youth development and the protection of minors;
- (3) To promote the establishment of appropriate recruitment and training criteria in each Member's and Associate Member's regulations where applicable;
- (4) To promote the increase of locally trained talents in professional football;
- (5) To propose a harmonious system amongst Members and Associate Members of registration of all young players, including an agreed protocol and evidence base;
- (6) To establish a European wide 'communication policy' in order to promote existing rules where they are considered best practice and to eradicate trafficking of young players;
- (7) To ensure that all staff, including 'foreign recruitment officers', working in European youth football have been screened as to their suitability to work with young players, in accordance with the relevant national and international regulatory framework, and have attended awareness training.





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C. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROMOTE THE TRAINING, EDUCATION AND RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG PLAYERS, AS WELL AS TO PREVENT AND ERADICATE TRAFFICKING OF MINORS IN FOOTBALL

The EPFL and its Members and Associate Members agree to promote and work towards the implementation of the following measures to further improve the recruitment, training, education and protection of young players in football by the Members and Associated Members and their affiliated clubs.

1. RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG PLAYERS

Youth Development Programme

- 1.1.** All Clubs participating in competitions organised by EPFL Members and Associate Members should have a written Youth Development Programme, establishing, inter alia, the respective recruitment, training and education policy.
- 1.2.** The above cited Youth Development Programmes may be submitted to the relevant licensor body within the scope of each national club licensing system.

Trials

- 1.3.** National governing bodies should establish rules with regard to trial procedures, including the definition of a maximum trial period, adequate conditions to be offered to the trialists and registration of young players during and after the trial period.

Training Contracts

- 1.4.** With due observance to the existing national and international legal and regulatory framework, Clubs should be encouraged to institute a proper registration system for youth players, and conclude Training Contracts (Apprentice Contracts or any other kind of non-professional contract, such as Youth Development and Scholarship Contracts) with youth players, valid and/or renewable until the signature of their first Professional Contract or their mutually agreed departure (whichever comes first).
- 1.5.** The Training Contracts should clearly describe all rights and obligations of each party, including the benefits and conditions that the Clubs will provide to the young players, such as accommodation (when applicable), alimentation, training material and equipment, etc.



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Completion of Training Period

- 1.6. The Members and Associate Members agree to take all necessary steps to incentivise young players to complete their training period with the training Clubs, as well as to sign their first professional contract with the respective training Club.

2. TRAINING OF YOUNG PLAYERS

Youth Training Infrastructures

- 2.1. Clubs should be encouraged to create and/or develop suitable training infrastructure, with appropriate human resources dedicated to the youth development sector, in accordance with the definitions and criteria set forth by the competent body.
- 2.2. The training centres should be subject to a licence, issued by the competent authority, in accordance with the specifications established in the relevant legislation and/or football regulations.
- 2.3. The training activities performed by training centres operated by Clubs should be monitored by the competent football authority to ensure compliance with all applicable rules. In addition, the competent football authorities should provide feedback to those training centres to evaluate the results and achievements obtained by the ongoing Youth Development Programme, as well as to establish, as appropriate, the goals for the following seasons.

Facilities, Accommodation and Technical Equipment

- 2.4. Members and Associate Members and/or the competent governing body should establish minimum criteria on training and match facilities, accommodation and technical equipment for Clubs' training infrastructures. Depending on the status of the youth development system in each country, such criteria may be established on a progressive basis, with a view of reaching harmoniously high standards across Europe.
- 2.5. If the Club, the player and the player's parents or legal representatives freely agree that the player shall reside at the Club's facilities, the Club should enact and make available the applicable internal rules regarding the daily routine to be fulfilled by the player.

Training Staff

- 2.6. The credentials of the staff responsible for the supervision, care and training of young players, including, but not limited to, technical, medical and administrative personnel, should be assessed by the relevant football governing body as to their suitability to work with young players. In this respect, all members of staff employed by the Clubs should undertake, on a yearly basis, a minimum number of hours continuing professional development training provided by the respective Club.



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Medical Care

- 2.7. Young players should receive adequate medical support and social assistance from Clubs. This medical support should include preventive medical checks to verify their capacity to properly train and play.

- 2.8. Young players should also follow an adequate nutrition programmes, taking into account their age and stage of physical development.

Games Programme

- 2.9. The affiliated Clubs should ensure that young players participate in official matches/ youth competitions promoted by the competent governing body.

Ethical conduct

- 2.10. Young players should be incentivised to observe appropriate ethical conduct and strongly encouraged to abstain from activities not compatible with sport ethical principles and fair play, such as but not limited to alcohol consumption or use of illegal drugs, substances or methods.

3. EDUCATION OF YOUNG PLAYERS

Mandatory and Complementary Education

- 3.1. The Members and Associate Members agree that their affiliated Clubs should ensure that all training players attend a mandatory programme of education, in accordance with the respective national legislation, and are not prevented from continuing their non-football education (complementary school education or profession).

Clubs' Own Schools

- 3.2. In cases where young players have their education in a part time period in the Clubs' own schools, Clubs should take the appropriate measures to supervise the studies of the players.

“Dual Training” Programmes

- 3.3. Members and Associate Members agree to promote the development of ‘Dual Training’ programmes, to be put in place for young players.

- 3.4. Within these programmes, each Club should provide appropriate and adequate educational support for its young players at primary, secondary and tertiary level, so that, in the event that players do not attain the required footballing standards, the player is able to adapt to life outside of football and obtain a job in another industry.



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Football Education

- 3.5. The Clubs should be encouraged to promote learning programmes for young players encompassing technical training (including about the “Laws of the Game”) and educational development. The programme should also identify objectives and the extent to which they are achieved and should be based on the advice given from time to time by the competent governing body.
- 3.6. The above mentioned learning programmes should further encompass sports fundamental principles and values, such as fair play, integrity of competition, respect to colleagues of the Club and of other Clubs, doping matters, illegal betting and match fixing, among others.

Approach with Families

- 3.7. Members and Associate Members agree that young players and their parents are entitled to receive information and advice in an appropriate manner regarding the players’ technical, educational, academic and social welfare.
- 3.8. Clubs should inform the parents or the legal representatives about any relevant information with regard to the young players, such as illness, injury, absence, or about any other fact that may require their intervention.

4. PROTECTION OF MINORS

International Transfer of Minors

- 4.1. The international transfers of minors are regulated by the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. The enforcement of these Regulations should be strengthened in order to effectively prevent any unlawful practices and ensure the desired protection of minors.
- 4.2. All young players registered by a Club or submitted to trials should have their respective situation duly legalised before the relevant immigration authorities.
- 4.3. As a relevant part of the respective training and education programme, Clubs should make their best efforts to adjust all foreign young players to the local culture, by carrying out language courses and other relevant social activities.

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Agents

- 4.4. The Members and Associate Members agree to promote the enforcement of FIFA's Regulations on Players' Agents to prevent and eradicate abuses by agents in relation with the transfer of minors.
- 4.5. The football governing body of each country should also promote and develop specific training and special licensing requirements, as appropriate, for agents to deal with minors.

Monitoring Committee

- 4.6. In order to effectively ensure the enforcement of FIFA Regulations in respect of the international transfer of minors, the EPFL and its Members and Associate Members agree that a monitoring committee should be set up to operate under the auspices of FIFA.
- 4.7. The composition of this monitoring committee should have a mixed nature, involving representatives of the national associations, leagues, clubs and players.

Preventive and Dissuasive Measures

- 4.8. An adequate and proportionate catalogue of sanctions should be implemented by the competent bodies at the national and international level to further prevent and dissuade the trafficking of young players.

Finance Programmes

- 4.9. Programmes should be developed to promote the principle of solidarity and the establishment of funding, of private and/or public nature, for training and education of youth programmes such as building and modernising the relevant infrastructure.



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D. IMPLEMENTATION

- (1) Members and Associate Members undertake to promote and work towards the implementation of these General Recommendations on Recruitment, Training, Education and Protection of Minors, without prejudice to the regulatory competences of the national and international federations.
- (2) It is recognised that the individual circumstances pertaining to each Member and Associate Member differ from country to country. These circumstances include national law and regulation and the financial resources available to Members, Associate Members and Clubs. Accordingly, and in line with the well-established principle of subsidiarity, it is acknowledged that these recommendations shall be implemented to the extent and in the time frame that each Member and Associate Member considers most appropriate given its particular circumstances.
- (3) The EPFL and the Members and Associate Members shall consult and co-operate with other national and international football bodies, namely FIFA, UEFA, FIFPRO and ECA, as well as national associations, clubs and players' unions and other relevant institutions at the European and national level as appropriate when implementing and/or reviewing the principles and recommendations herein contained.







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