



FOOTBALL PHILOSOPHY 2021-2025



FOREWORD



I have been involved with Northland FC for five years, three as Chairman. During that time we have undergone great changes- from a three team senior only club with six member clubs to a full talent pathway and over half of the clubs in the region with an official affiliation. As a regional club focused on individual player development, we aim to develop the player with a view to them achieving beyond our level, whether this is overseas, at another club while at university, or onto the national team setup at youth and senior level.

I am delighted to be able to endorse this philosophy as the way we will play football and develop players to create teams over the next five years. This document is a reference for how Northland FC teams play football and details how we can create the best possible environment for individual player development. By our nature, we attract high quality coaches to our staff- in addition to our talent development pathway, we also have a duty to our member community clubs, using this expertise to support coach development at the grassroots level and help people reach their potential, while fostering a lifelong love of the game.

A development program such as this comes at a cost, and we could not do this without the support of Oxford Sports Trust, the numerous local businesses who generously sponsor our teams and of course our management team and coaches. To everyone involved with Northland FC, we see this document as a roadmap for future success on the field; read it, embrace it and live it when you are in our colours at training and games and we will go Onward, Upward, Together.

Trevor Griffiths,
Chairman
Northland Football Club Incorporated





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NZ FOOTBALL ALIGNMENT

Northland FC are committed to adhering to all NZ Football standards and licencing criteria to ensure that best practice is adopted within our organisation and at the region's community clubs in terms of player and coach development.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to act as a guide for football development at Northland Football Club and encompasses all programs administered by the club- community, junior, youth and senior, male and female.

Through our philosophy, we aim to ensure an aligned approach to enhance the quality of football delivery across the Northland region from first kicks at our community clubs to first teams representing Northland FC at the highest possible levels. The intent is to provide a clear direction on all key aspects of our football programs, partnered with secondary documents that provide more specific insights.

We want this document to guide us through the 2021 season and beyond as we embark on a new chapter, and it will be publically available for all stakeholders who have a hand in player and coach development- players, coaches, volunteers, parents, officials, staff and club members.

It is our responsibility to adhere to this philosophy to assist the club with the development of football in Northland as a whole, creating a safe and positive experience for all involved.



SPORT IN THE NORTHLAND REGION



The Northland Region is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's 16 local government regions. The main population centre is Whangarei, and the largest town is Kerikeri. The region covers roughly five percent of the country's total landmass and has a population of just under 200,000.

The three District Councils for the region (Whangarei, Far North & Kaipara) are invested in an "Active Recreation & Sport Strategy Alignment", which looks at three main areas:

- Increasing participation - more people, more active, more often
- Improving the quality of the experience of the participant so they so they are more likely to continue participating
- Improving the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the facility network

Sport Northland is the Regional Sports Trust, which serves 46 separate regional sports organisations and over 600 sport and recreation clubs. The region has a rich history in representative rugby union, hockey and cricket, with football and rugby league both emerging over the last decade. A significant part of the Sport Northland success story in recent years has been through improving governance of the sport and recreation sector through organisations such as the Northland Sports Coalition.

In 2021, Northland Football Club will partner with Northern Region Football (NRF) as the voice for football in these forums. We are currently engaged in a long term development project at Tikipunga Sports Park, which will provide our game with a vital training hub and see football play a part in realising the wider strategic sport and recreation goals of the region.

FOOTBALL IN NORTHLAND



**ONWARD
UPWARD
TOGETHER**

MEMBER CLUBS

Bream Bay Utd	Kerikeri FC
Central Brown FC	Madhatters FC
FC Whangarei	Marist Whangarei
Kaikohe AFC	Ngunguru FC
Kaitaia Utd	Northern Wairoa
Kaeo-Inter	Onerahi
Kamo	Tikipunga AFC

Football is thriving in the Northland region, with approximately 3,000 registered players in 2020. Most of our players (1,992) are based in Whangarei District, with 820 in the Far North District and 206 in the Kaipara District

Northland FC sit atop a cluster of 25 community clubs, with 14 of those clubs holding full or associate membership to our organisation.

In 2021, in partnership with Northern Region Football (NRF), we will be responsible for all player and coach development in our region, working to improve the quality of football delivery within both the community and talent space.

By nature, we attract the best players and coaches in the region, and see it as our duty to pass this expertise onto Northland community clubs through coach education and appropriate player development programs.





HISTORY

Northland Football Club was formed in 2004 as North Force AFC. Originally owned 50/50 by Tikipunga AFC and Kamo FC, the club changed it's name and ownership model in 2016 to better reflect the region it represents. At the time of writing, we count fourteen member clubs from Kaitia United in the north to Mangawhai FC in the south.

We are proud to represent our region and are committed to being the best possible version of ourselves while doing so. We also recognise that we stand on the shoulders of our member clubs and schools, so it is imperative that we work with the NRF to develop the game at a community level for people of all ages, genders and ethnicities. The successful implementation of this philosophy will enable us to move Northland football as a whole onward, upward, together.

VISION

Establish the Northland region as a footballing destination in Aotearoa New Zealand.

MISSION

Provide high quality football programs to inspire, connect and create opportunities for the Northland region.

OUR VALUES

ONWARD

Aspirational player & coach pathways

Creative, innovative thinking

Set & achieve clearly defined goals

UPWARD

Ambition is critical to success

Embrace expectations & dreams

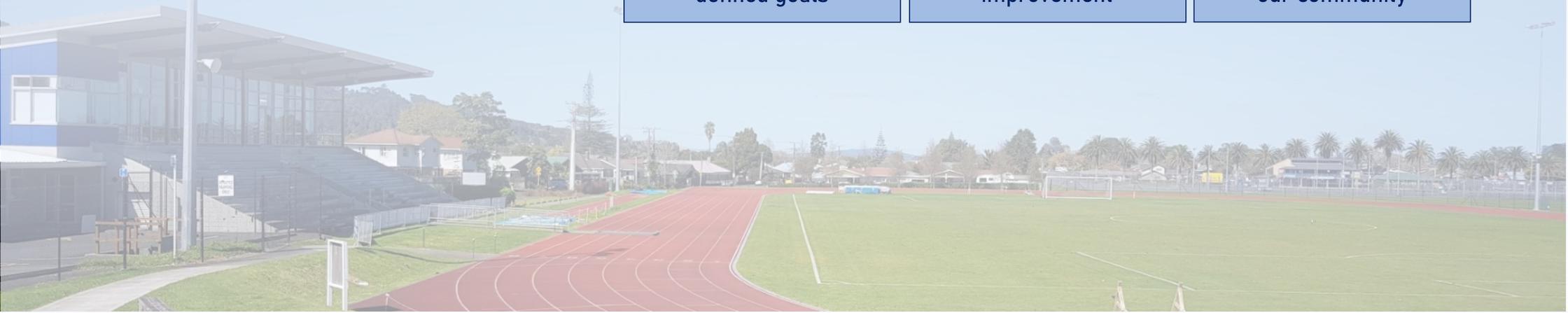
Strive for continuous improvement

TOGETHER

Strength through unity & collaboration

Inclusive & welcoming organisation

Active & engaged within our community





PLAYING STYLE STATEMENT

A forward thinking style of attacking with the intent to penetrate opposition lines of defence, by using our principles of positional play to find and quickly exploit space for the creation of goalscoring opportunities.

We employ a disciplined, front-footed defensive approach that involves aggressive, intelligent pressing to gain possession, directing our opponents toward target areas and preventing them from advancing with the ball.

The unique identity of our teams is demonstrated through our commitment to the cause, adaptability to different scenarios and a relentless work ethic that is borne of pride in representing Northland.

NORTHLAND F.C. FIRST TEAMS

Our first teams represent the club at the highest possible level and are at the summit of our player and coach pathways. They have the responsibility of achieving results for the club alongside acting as standard bearers, embodying our values and holding aspirational roles for younger players and developing coaches.

We are beginning to see the effects of continuity flow through from our youth teams, and our location dictates a strong need for developing players from within the Northland region. We aim to forge a link between a player in the discovery phase at a community club in our region, to stepping out onto the field in our colours to compete in the Lotto NRFL.



“THE FOUR MOMENTS” OF FOOTBALL

Our game model aims to inform player and team development throughout our club which leads to a manifestation of our playing style at first team level. The ‘four moments’ of football - attacking transition, attacking, defensive transition and defending consist of principles and sub principles that, when executed successfully, demonstrate our playing style statement on the pitch. Throughout the club, and at our member clubs, these principles and sub principles serve to guide coaches through each stage of a player’s development.

FORWARD THINKING POSSESSION		FRONT FOOT DEFENDING	
ATTACKING TRANSITION Counterattacking Maintain Possession	ATTACKING Control The Zone Penetrate Manipulate Create & Finish	DEFENSIVE TRANSITION Pressing & Counterpressing Defensive Reorganisation	DEFENDING Prepare The Press Press & Hit Control & Direct Prevent Finishing



ATTACKING TRANSITION

OVERVIEW

In football, turnover of possession is a key moment in the game. Upon retrieving the ball, our players and teams will look first to strike quickly, taking advantage of when our opposition is in the defensive transition moment. Counterattacking is spontaneous and fast, but in order to be effective we must understand roles on the field as individuals and in units. Timing, direction and spatial/positional awareness are paramount, as is playing forwards. If the counterattack option is not possible, our players and teams must recognise this and seek to maintain possession. These principles of attacking transition are related to our overarching theory of 'Forward Thinking Possession'.





OVERVIEW

It is our belief that possession should always be with intent, and 'forward thinking possession' should be top of mind for any coach or player at our club. Our style of forward thinking possession means having the ball with the intent to penetrate through opposition defensive lines, taking the forward option whenever possible. Our principles of positional play are designed to create space, which we quickly exploit to create goalscoring opportunities. We want to create teams that are adaptable to the situation around them and encourage novel solutions in order to reach the goal, but we also want to create players who are creative themselves, think about the game and are effective decision makers in possession.

PRINCIPLES OF FORWARD THINKING FOOTBALL





PRINCIPLES & SUB PRINCIPLES

CONTROL	MANIPULATE	PENETRATE	CREATE & FINISH
Width & Depth	Provoke & Probe	Attack the Gaps	Own the Attacking Area
Ready to Receive	Rotate	Combine to Break Lines	Cut & Cross
Support the Play	Recycle	Switch & Slice	Find the Finish

Control The Zone - We seek to create a numerical (through overloads) or positional (receiving the ball unmarked) advantages, affording us the opportunity to progress the ball forward or between the opposition.

Manipulate - When vertical penetration is not possible or too risky, there is a need to create forward passing options by moving the opposition out of shape. We do this through a combination of intelligent passing, dribbling, support play and positioning.

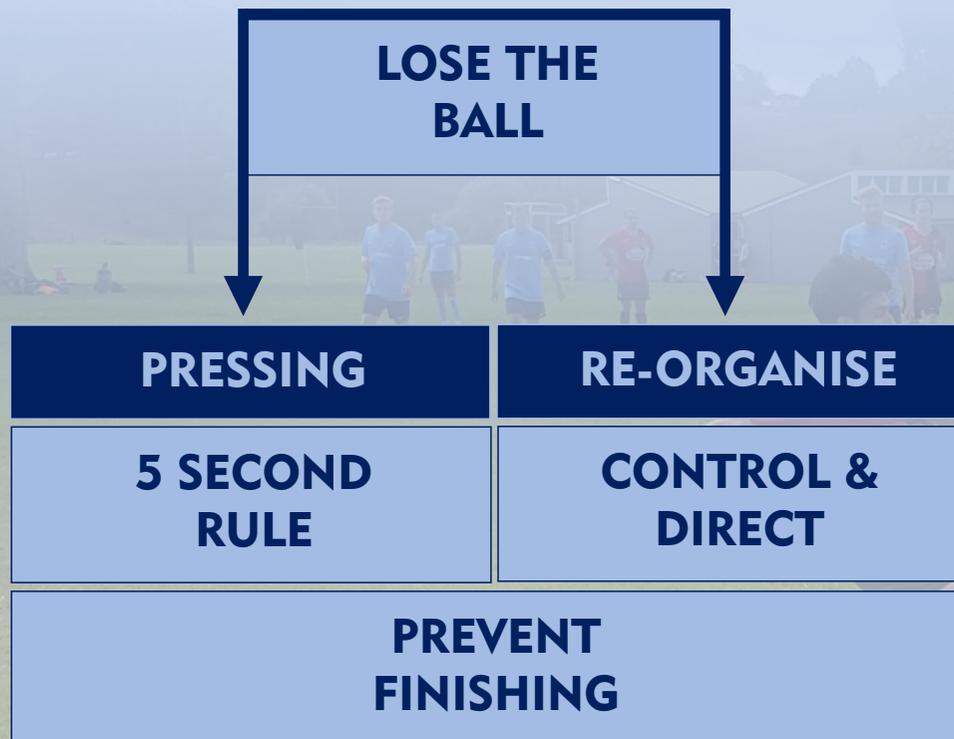
Penetrate - Penetrative play is used to eliminate opposition players from the game, by moving the ball between or beyond individuals or units into areas of the pitch in which goal scoring opportunities can be created. It is the key to our “forward thinking possession” and should be the first intent of all players and the team when gaining possession.

Create & Finish - In football, it is imperative to have teams and individuals equipped with the technical ability to create goalscoring opportunities. We achieve this through creativity and skill, combined with an understanding of the spaces to exploit so that we can execute and finish opportunities in games under pressure.

DEFENSIVE TRANSITION

OVERVIEW

Just as regaining possession can provide opportunities to counter quickly and create goalscoring opportunities, teams can be at their most vulnerable when losing the ball. Our first intent upon surrendering possession is to win it back as quickly as possible through a counterpress. By attempting to win the ball back within the first five seconds of being dispossessed, we avoid disorganisation at a crucial moment. If the immediate action fails and we cannot regain possession quickly, we look to reorganise our shape, acting to secure key spaces on the field and build a defensive block. The principles of defensive transition are related to our overarching theory of “Front Foot Defending”.





OVERVIEW

Regaining possession of the ball should be carried out as high up the field as possible. This is for two reasons: the ball is closer to the opponents goal when you win it, and the risk of conceding is lower because you are further from your own goal. “Front Foot Defending” utilises aggressive, intelligent defending to regain possession, prevent forward play and direct the opposition to target areas. These principles allied with our discipline and determination will enable us to defend effectively as individuals and as a team wherever our block is formed on the field.

PRINCIPLES OF FRONT FOOT DEFENDING





PRINCIPLES & SUB PRINCIPLES

PREPARE	PRESS & HIT	DIRECT	PREVENT
Defensive Structure	Recognise & React	Delay	Low Block
Compactness	Hit	Deny	Protect the Box
Make Play Predictable	Persistent Pressing	Direct the Play	Defensive Set Pieces

Prepare the Press - We quickly form our defensive shape around the zone of the field the ball is in. Our system and preparation provides our players with the tactical understanding, narrowing decision making and allowing us to take faster actions while defending.

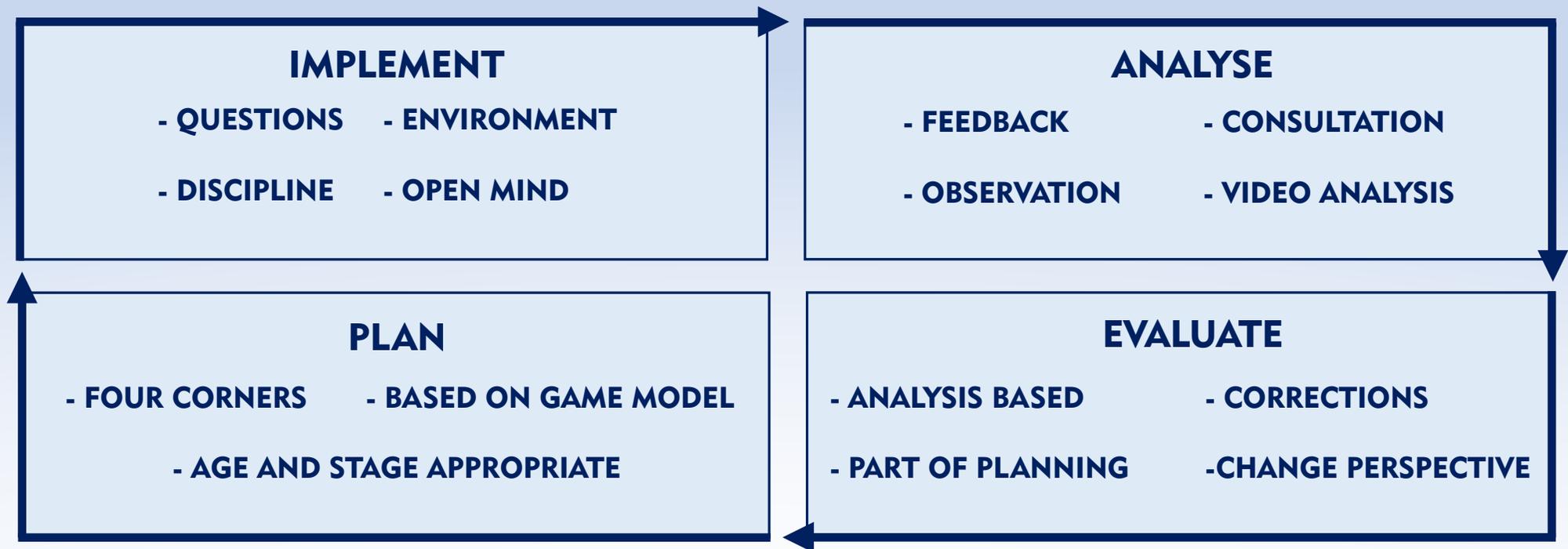
Press & Hit - When pressing and hitting the opposition we do so in a strategic and controlled manner, reading triggers and reacting pre-emptively. This allows us to press with purpose and intelligence. It is important to press as high up the field as possible as it reduces the distance to the goal when we regain possession.

Direct & Control - If a pressure cannot be applied through the press we delay the attack, deny time and space and direct our opposition when they have the ball while awaiting a trigger to re-engage with the press. Through disciplined positioning and teamwork we will control the space around the ball player.

Prevent Finishing - Our goal is at it's most vulnerable when the opposition has broken our lines of defence and we are forced into a low block. The goalkeeper has the ultimate responsibility to protect our goal, but outfield players can block shots, crosses and forward passes - reaction to second balls and making effective clearances is also key.

OVERVIEW

The tactical game model identifies our principles within the four moments of the game and demonstrates our approach. Our training model outlines how we plan, implement, analyse and evaluate training sessions to best articulate our game model principles alongside ensuring consistency all the way through our programs. The training model has two main components, centred around the individual and the team. The team component focuses on match preparation, team objectives and unit objectives, while the individual component involves a focus on individual objectives within a squad session, small group work, one to one meetings and encouraging players to become students of the game in their own time.





STEPS AND PROCESS

Our training model outlines four steps to create a constant process that strives for continuous improvement within our programs. By aligning our training model to our tactical game model we are ensuring consistent delivery throughout the club that has player development it's the core.

PLANNING

Our sessions are structured to align with NZ Football, and are based around the four corner development model: Tactical (Game Model), Technical (Core Technical Skill Program), Psychological (Player Profile) and Physical (Physical Development Model) have all been created to assist our coaches in the planning of age and stage appropriate sessions.

IMPLEMENTATION

When delivering a session, coaches should set up the training area to allow for quick progressions and transitions through the session plan. Explanations should be clear, with observations, questions and active listening for answers key to a productive learning environment that maximises player development.

ANALYSIS

A coach can analyse a session by observing what is taking place in front of them. Post training, head coaches can consult with the assistant coach and players to seek feedback, or review any recordings of the session. It is vital that the plans and any reflections are recorded in this analysis as it will help shape future sessions.

EVALUATION

Before planning for the next session can begin, a coach must evaluate their performance based on the feedback and analysis available. It could be that the part of the next session is spent revisiting the previous one, or a correction could be made in the training process that helps achieve the desired outcome.

SESSION STRUCTURE

The structure of our training sessions is consistent with what you would expect to see at an NZ Football Advanced Coach Education course. Junior, youth and senior training schedules differ in content, volume and intensity dependant on the age of the playing group. The table below details the structure of our sessions in the Skill Centre and Talent Development Program.

NORTHLAND FC SKILL CENTRE

SKILL ARRIVAL	SKILL INTRO	SKILL TRAINING	SKILL GAME
Create an environment for players that allows them to play, be creative and try new things in an informal setting.	Outcome focused games that allow players to execute skills relative to the session topic with high repetition that is progressive in difficulty.	A game related and directional practice with constraints or conditions that incorporates task based learning for the individual.	Linked with principles and tasks applicable to the session that allows coaches to observe the level of understanding within the squad.

NORTHLAND FC TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

WARM UP	TECHNICAL PRACTICE	POSITIONING GAME	GAME TRAINING	TRAINING GAME
Use of the FIFA 11+ injury prevention aligned with our physical program to ensure age and stage appropriate warm ups.	A repetitive, technical practice based on the session topic that starts with limited or no opposition and increases in difficulty.	Problem solving via an opposed, conditioned game, usually with a numerical advantage and progressions to increase the difficulty.	A small sided game in a varying number of formats, conditions and constraints with a design based on the session topic.	Linked with principles and tasks applicable to the session that allows coaches to observe the level of understanding within the squad.



INDIVIDUAL VS TEAM FOCUS

While difficult to define and accurately measure as a percentage, the table below serves as a guide for our coaching staff when they plan and deliver sessions. During the skill acquisition phase of player development we focus heavily on individual player development with an emphasis on the core skills. As players enter youth football tactics become more prominent with a crossover from the individual to the team occurring in the 15th grade. Our first teams, where we are looking to achieve results in competition, the focus is overwhelmingly toward the team.

AGE GROUP	INDIVIDUAL	TEAM
9TH & 10TH GRADE	90%	10%
11TH GRADE	80%	20%
12TH GRADE	70%	30%
13TH & 14TH GRADE	60%	40%
15TH - 17TH GRADE	40%	60%
SENIOR UNDER 23	20%	80%
SENIOR FIRST TEAMS	10%	90%

PARENTAL INFLUENCE & WHY CHILDREN PLAY SPORT

Parents have the largest impact on the development of players and the level that they enjoy sport. Programs such as Good Sports have started to provide education on the essential role parents play, but as a club, it is our responsibility to ensure that everyone involved with the development of the player is aware of their influence in nurturing a lifelong love of sport, which in turn helps to allow the child realise their potential.

In order to understand how to provide the best support for a child's development, we must understand why they have chosen to play sport, in this instance, football. "To have fun" is widely acknowledged as the main reason, but what makes sport fun for children? Visek et al. (2019) identifies eleven 'fun factors' to establish what children (both boys and girls) prioritise when they are enjoying themselves.

Source: Visek, A., Mannix, H. et. al., 2019. "Toward Understanding Young Athletes' Fun Priorities: An Investigation of Sex, Age and Levels of Play" Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal





HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT PLAYER DEVELOPMENT?

Knowing why children play sport enables parents to identify motivations and aspirations which will guide the level and type of support they give. Given that we operate a program on an eight year cycle, these motivations and aspirations are subject to change, so it is important that parents stay active in their involvement and adapt accordingly to changing needs.

KEEP IT FUN & ENJOYABLE

Players learn and improve more effectively in enjoyable environments. Parents can support this by enjoying the game themselves and not applying additional pressure.

POSITIVE SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT

Realising potential involves challenges, success, setbacks and disappointment. Provide unconditional support as a parent to help your child overcome setbacks and take opportunities.

FOCUS ON EFFORT & IMPROVEMENT

Help to create a growth mindset by focusing praise on effort and learning, not winning, losing and results. Mistakes are inevitable, but play a vital role in learning and player development.

TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT

Parents are role models for their children. It is therefore vital that parents treat players, officials and the opposition with respect to provide a positive example for their child to follow.

SUPPORT THE CLUB COACHES

Parental support of the coach helps to create a positive environment. If clarity on any matters are required, this should be discussed respectfully with the coach at an appropriate time.

EFFECTIVE SIDELINE SUPPORT

We want parents of our players to feel free in giving support from the sidelines. In game instruction should be avoided, allowing the 'coach to coach'. Support of match officials is also encouraged.

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

Encourage independence and personal responsibility by allowing players to solve problems and make their own decisions. Listen effectively and ask questions as opposed to providing solutions.

USE 'MILC' TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Memory - Favourite memory of the game?
Improved - What aspect did you improve today?
Learn - What did you learn?
Courage - Where were you brave?

PARENTS AS VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of grassroots sports. Northland FC are extremely grateful and appreciative of the time given by our volunteers, a group of people at the club where parents of players hold the majority. From group communications or squad logistics through to collecting the kit or running the line as an Assistant Referee (AR), volunteers fulfil a diverse number of roles but they all allow the coach and players to focus on the football. Here are some of the key roles volunteers play at our club.

SQUAD MANAGER

Logistics based, assisting the head coach with the day to day running of a Northland FC squad.



MATCH OFFICIAL

Northland FC will support any club volunteer who wishes to obtain refereeing qualifications.



DRIVER

Responsible for safe travel to training and games, often over hundreds of kilometres.



POST GAME MEAL

As well as hospitality for guests of our region, shared aftermatch food is a sporting tradition.





OVERVIEW

The successful implementation of our philosophy relies heavily on the expertise of our coaches. A coach has the responsibility of developing players technically and tactically, but also in a broader sense as a role model and having a positive impact on a player's life. By its nature as a regional representative club, Northland FC attracts the best coaches in the region and we feel it is our duty to pass this expertise into our community through coach education to our member clubs and schools.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

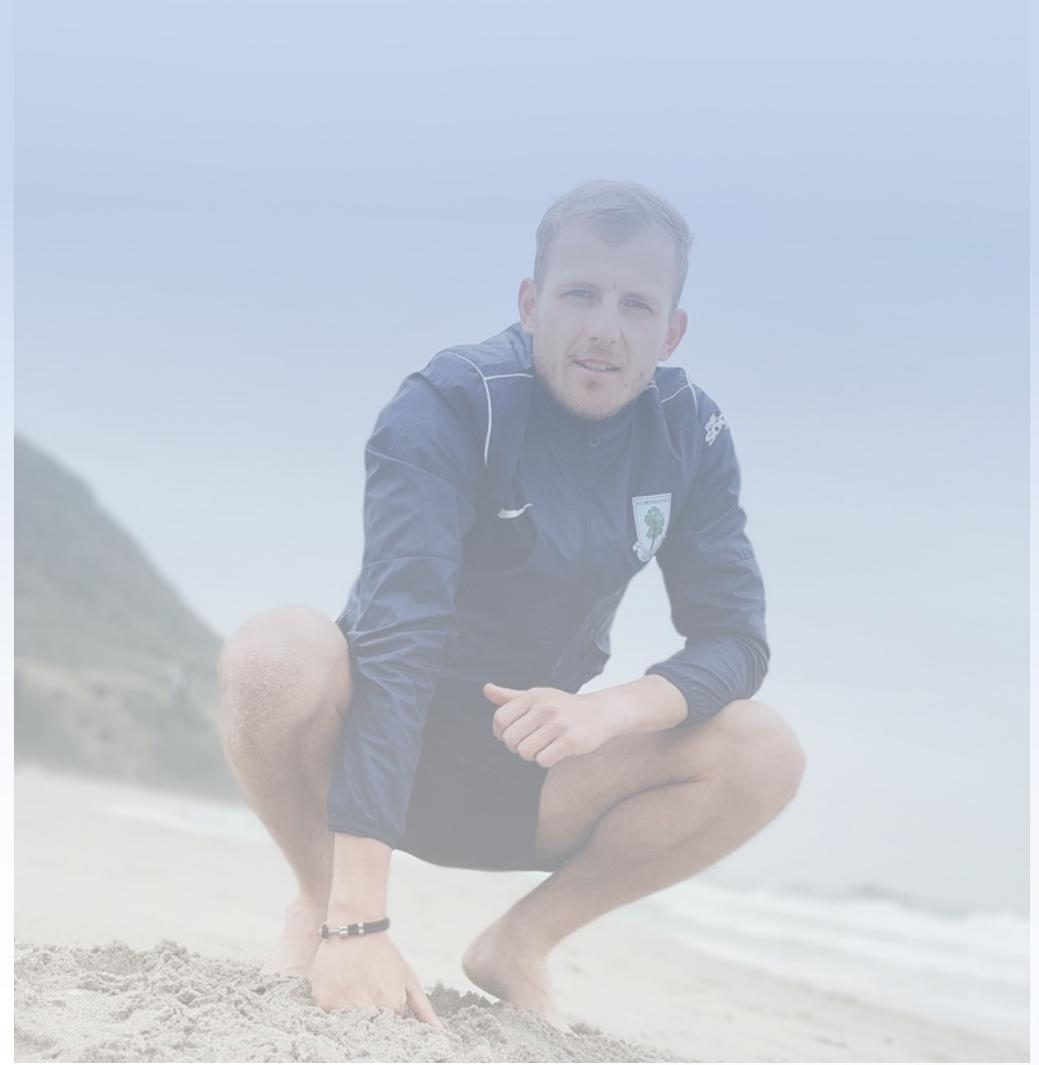
A Northland FC coach will create a positive learning environment for players that is safe and enjoyable for those taking part, helping young players fuel their passion for football.

Northland FC will also provide our member clubs with community coach education for all aspiring club coaches within the Northland football pyramid so players have access to qualified coaches in the junior, youth and senior space.

The aim of this two pronged approach is to cater to every age and stage of the player pathway, from the discovery phase and entry into the game at our member clubs, all the way to our first teams.

The focus of our coaches - both at Northland FC and our member clubs - is squarely on long term player development so that players stay in love with the game and realise their potential.

Michał Wałęsiak
Director of Football



NZ FOOTBALL COACHING PATHWAY

Northland FC are committed to providing coach development, support and resources to all coaches in the Northland region both at our club and at our member clubs. NZ Football use a structured and progressive coach education pathway to reach the whole of football and provide a pathway for coaches at all levels, age groups and abilities. Formal NZ Football coaching courses allow us to improve the level of football knowledge and understanding in the region.

For licencing purposes, our minimum qualification requirements are OFC/NZF C Licence at youth or senior level and NZF Junior Level 3 in our Skill Centre. Alongside our club coaches, who will meet this criteria at a minimum, Northland FC will be hosting community coaching courses at a number of locations around the Northland region, covering the full cost for those both at Northland FC and our member clubs. The diagram below shows the coach education pathway in New Zealand and how it is applied to football in Northland.





NORTHLAND FC COACH PROFILE

Northland FC coaches are passionate about the game and developing players in our region. They are qualified through the NZ Football coach education pathway or through another national association and are committed to staying aware of developments in world football to ensure that best practice is adopted at our club. We look to our coaches to provide the following at our club:

ROLE MODELS & INSPIRATION

Coaches need to inspire players to be the best versions of themselves. As a role model, players will look up to you and your actions are on visible to players, parents and other coaches.

ORGANISATION & DETAIL

This applies both on the field in training and games, but also in the office with administration and planning. Constructive feedback to player and parent to improve understanding is essential.

CONTROL & CONSISTENCY

Consistency of quality is key as an individual and an organisation because our programs are on a continuum. If we maintain consistency, we maintain control of our standards and progress.

ADAPTABILITY & PERSISTENCE

From the macro to the micro, football is always changing. All coaches will need to adapt their sessions, line ups, rosters and delivery style to the conditions.

RESPECT & GOOD MORALS

We are in a people industry so those working for Northland FC are the face of the club and our product. A moral compass is needed for action with integrity and to uphold our codes of conduct.



HOW DO COACHES SUPPORT PLAYER DEVELOPMENT?

While players and coaches take part in a team game, junior and youth coaches must have greater focus on individual player development than their senior counterparts. We have identified ten key aspects that go beyond football knowledge and seek to create an environment across the whole club that maximises development opportunities for players and coaches.

ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE
Encourage a growth mindset, focusing on praise and rewards for effort and improvement, not just winning. This helps foster hard work, problem solving, team work and perseverance.	Ensure that squad or group environments are age and stage appropriate to enhance enjoyment and learning. Coaches need to understand player needs and be able to communicate ideas.	Treat all players with care and as a person first, take time to find out what motivates them. Players learn and flourish most when their needs are met through appropriate challenge points.	Make training fun to help develop and foster a love of the game. Players need lots of time on the ball to stay engaged, maximise touches, and develop their skills	Youth and junior coaches must prioritise development over results and individuals over teams. This requires a long term approach, as short term goals can be a barrier to development.
SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN
Coaches play a key role in development, but are not teachers. The most effective way to learn is by playing the game. Coaches don't teach, they help players learn and develop.	Telling players 'why' they have been given a task helps improve problem solving and an understanding of team roles. Reasoning provides clarity and increases motivation.	Consistent, frequent communication with parents throughout the year helps to set a positive and collaborative approach from all involved in player development.	Training should always be football related, contain each of the four moments and resemble the game. This allows ideas on the training ground translate into effective action in games.	Independence and autonomy are two traits we are seeking to develop in our players. We want players to be inspired to become students of the game and be motivated to learn in their own time.

COACHING METHODOLOGY

Coaching involves the use of a number of methods, all designed to get the best out of a player. The art of coaching is to use the right method on the right player (or players) at the right time. There are a number of factors to consider such as age, gender, ability level and the personality of the player. For example, a seasoned senior player may benefit from being told and shown where to go in preparation for a big game, whereas a junior player’s development could be aided by a question or a challenge while training.

COACHING METHODS

These methods make up the methodology of coaching. Here we provide examples and explanations of each method utilised by coaches at Northland FC. Generally, to develop independent players, coaches will use the directive approach sparingly, instead helping players to solve the football problems themselves and become better decision makers in the process.

COMMAND (DIRECTIVE)	QUESTION & ANSWER	OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK	GUIDED DISCOVERY	TRIAL & ERROR
What is it?	What is it?	What is it?	What is it?	What is it?
The coach determines the chosen outcomes in a practice	The coach poses a question and the player offers a verbal solution	Players and coach observe and discuss feedback	Coach prompts, players offer visual demonstration of their solution	Players encouraged to find solutions with minimal coach support
Coach Intervention	Coach Intervention	Coach Intervention	Coach Intervention	Coach Intervention
Coach tells and shows the required solution	Coach leads with a question to gain response	Coach and players observe	Coach asks a question or issues a challenge	Players and/or coach decide on a challenge
Example	Example	Example	Example	Coach Intervention
“I want you to...”	“Can you tell me what you can do here?”	“Let’s watch this!”	“Can you show me?”	“Try for yourself”



SPECIALIST COACHING & TRAINING

In addition to our skill acquisition (9-12th grade), youth (13-17) and senior (17+) training programs led by qualified coaches, we have identified needs for specialist training and coaching for our players to provide a truly holistic program that produces technically proficient players in every area of the game, but also equips them with transferable skills that can be applied to other walks of life.

GOALKEEPERS

A goalkeeper occupies one of the most important positions on the pitch and it is a unique role within the team, meaning that they require specialised training.

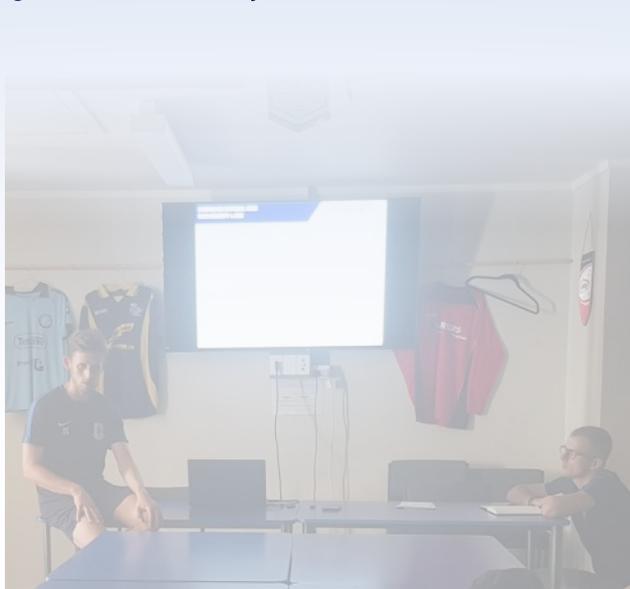
Our goalkeepers train predominantly within their squads to ensure integration and the development of outfield skills, but they also work together as a separate group with a dedicated goalkeeper coach.



PSYCHOLOGICAL

The mind works in tandem with the body and mental well being is important to life in general.

From performance enhancement through visualisation or coping with pressure all the way through to dealing with a setback like injury, we want to help people to think for themselves and are able to work toward goals in and away from football.



CONDITIONING

Alongside our periodised training program, we have consulted with a number of experts in the field of exercise to create a strength and conditioning program for our players.

Strength and conditioning is a constant process that has to be age and stage appropriate for it to be a safe and worthwhile activity for our players.





OVERVIEW

Northland is a region that is reliant on developing local players, not just to represent us but to go beyond us. Over the last five years multiple players have come through our system and gone on to play in the Lotto NRFL, Central League or Southern League with clubs while at university, while others have secured scholarships to colleges in the United States.

A player joining our club at the age of nine will take part in approximately 500 training sessions with us alongside 100 games for their parent club in the junior stage and 200 appearances in the Cambridge Blue jersey of Northland from the youth stage through to the first teams.

The absence of a university and the wanderlust of youth means that high numbers of players leave the region so it is imperative we employ a consistent approach through our playing style statement, game model and training model to bring new players through. While a player is with us, they will receive a high quality football education that will equip them for a regional playing career at a minimum.

The Northland FC player pathway is a framework to align all programs at the club, providing clear objectives and guidelines for players and coaches alongside a clear distinction between each stage as a player progresses through the club. We aim to provide a smooth transition between each stage of our pathway, which includes increased support to those with aspirations of playing at a higher level.

Our coach education program sets players on their coaching journey and provides the club with the tools to help Northland community clubs raise the standard of grassroots program delivery.





NORTHLAND FC PLAYER PATHWAY

	AGE GROUP	COMPETITION	TRAINING	ASPIRATIONS
SENIOR	First Team	Lotto NRFL	Team Training	All Whites & Football Ferns U20 All Whites & Football Ferns Professional Football
	Under 23	NRF Championship		
YOUTH	Boys 16/17th Grade		Team Training Talent Development Program	U17 All Whites & Football Ferns University Scholarships NZF Regional Identification Training Camps
	Girls 15/16th Grade	Lotto NRFL Youth		
	15th Grade	NRF Championship		
	14th Grade (Girls 13/14th Grade)	NRF Championship Division One		
	13th Grade			
JUNIOR	Mini Football 12th Grade	NRF Northland Community Competitions	NZF Skill Centre	
	Mini Football 11th Grade		Weir Rose Bowl	
	Mini Football 9th and 10th Grade		NZF Skill Centre	
	Fun Football 7th and 8th Grade	NRF Northland Festivals & In House Club Matches	NZF Whole of Football Plan	
	First Kicks 5th and 6th Grade			





PLAYER SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Across all age groups from the 13th grade up, Northland FC undertakes an open selection process in the run up to preseason. This is designed to select squads that are capable of competing in NRFL competitions. While players are trialling with us we aim to offer the highest quality football experience and provide comprehensive evaluations to all participants.

A number of factors are considered when selecting a player for our youth squads, as we operate a development program that is centred around the individual and not the team. Physical maturation, technical/tactical understanding and psychological levels determine whether or not it may be appropriate for a player to play up or down a grade. The Director of Football leads this process and makes the final decisions on all youth squad selections, with the head coaches of each first team and under 23 squads responsible for senior selections.

Our junior program focuses on skill acquisition and is completely open. Toward the end of the twelfth grade there is a selection process for the Weir Rose Bowl, which marks the beginning of the transition to youth football, but the focus on individual player development remains and outweighs that of team performance in the decision making process.



STAGED PHASES OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

We apply a logical, progressive approach to developing players effectively. NZ Football provide information on player characteristics at each stage in their 'Four Phases' model- Discovery, Skill Acquisition, Talent Development and Performance. This is guided by three key principles:

- i. Develop the individual
- ii. A stepped, logical, phased approach is required, taking into account the age of the individual
- iii. A holistic approach utilising all four corners of the development model

The diagram below outlines the stages and phases of this development model:

PERFORMANCE	STAGE 7. STABILISING BEST PERFORMANCE	20+ YEARS OLD
	STAGE 6. PERFECTING BEST PERFORMANCE	
GAME TRAINING	STAGE 5. PREPARATION FOR HIGHEST PERFORMANCE	16-19 YEARS OLD
	STAGE 4. SHAPING THE PLAYER OF THE FUTURE	13-15 YEARS OLD
SKILL ACQUISITION	STAGE 3. FOOTBALL SPECIFIC BASIC TRAINING	9-12 YEARS OLD
DISCOVERY	STAGE 2. PLAYFUL TECHNICAL TRAINING	7-8 YEARS OLD
	STAGE 1. FUNDAMENTALS	4-6 YEARS OLD



THE DISCOVERY PHASE

A player's first contact with football in Northland comes via our community clubs. It is about discovering and falling in love with the game, which places emphasis on the social/emotional corner. Activities are high energy, exciting and enjoyable. Training and games must include plenty of contact with the ball with lots of encouragement as opposed to intervening with coaching points.

Player characteristics include:

- Basic cognitive skills that are just starting to form
- Uncoordinated with and without the ball at the beginning
- Self-centred with little concept of team sports or how football is played
- Enjoy fun, high energy games in short bursts
- Can only handle small amounts of information and basic instruction





THE SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE

The Skill Acquisition Phase is important in a player's development as players are well balanced, coordinated and adaptive to learning football skills. This is the 'Golden Age' of learning. In no other phase of life will motor learning happen faster. Therefore the Skill Acquisition Phase is the optimal time to focus on developing football skills which is essential for long term participation. Training and playing should place emphasis on the learning of football skills within the context of the game.

Player characteristics include:

- Well balanced, coordinated and adapted to learning motor skills
- Becoming interested in learning and applying the relevant skills to the game
- Enjoy problem solving and being set challenges
- Very active, energetic and motivated
- Sensitive to criticism and failure
- Competitive and enjoy being challenged
- Mentally ready for a more structured approach to training





NORTHLAND FC SKILLS CENTRE

The NZ Football Skills Centre Program has been specifically designed for the 'future' football player. NZ Football designed the Skills Centre programme following a lengthy review of best practices and latest research from around the world, to accelerate the skills of the 'serious' Kiwi footballer and to fit our unique culture. The programme is under-pinned by NZ Football's 'Player-Centred' Coaching approach, which means every player will be treated as an individual and receive the best coaching available.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Northland FC recognise that we need to develop our footballers as players as well as people, and that the focus of training should cover all areas of the 4 corner model. The Technical, Tactical, Mental and Physical components are distinguishable but not separable. They are developed in an appropriate environment where age appropriate values create a culture that promotes learning and enjoyment. The following principles ensure the appropriate training environment for holistic player development in Skills Centres:

GAME RELATED TRAINING	TIME ON THE BALL	ENJOYABLE ENVIRONMENT	FULL ENGAGEMENT	EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK
Training should involve all four moments and place players in scenarios that they will face in the game. This allows players to solve relevant problems through the PDE process - a key attribute of footballers at the highest level.	This is the optimal stage for skill development. Players should be given lots of opportunity to develop their game skills and master the ball. Skills developed should be ones that players need to perform effectively during a game, where teammate support is required.	An environment of learning and development needs to be created in order to maximise player development. Whilst enjoyable, stimulating and interesting for players, coaches are to encourage players to focus on long term development over immediate outcomes.	Coaches are to maximise the opportunity of physical and mental development. Activities and questions provided to players upon arrival, when observing practice or during drinks breaks ensure that whilst a player is at practice, they are constantly challenged and learning.	Players at this stage will have accelerations and decelerations in their development. In order to support their progress, coaches must provide informed feedback that is relevant to the tasks performed and objective of the practice, with players adopting a growth mindset.



SKILLS CENTRE SESSION STRUCTURE

In each session offered at a Skill Centre, a focus is placed on a “core skill” from the moment a player arrives to when they leave. The Skill Centre’s are structured to maximise time spent with the players as well as providing appropriate challenges at the relevant time.

SKILLS CENTRE CORE SKILLS

ATTACKING

Striking the ball, Receiving the ball, 1 v 1 and Travelling with the ball

DEFENDING

Pressing, Marking and Intercepting

2 CONSTANTS

Positioning on & off the ball and Communication (verbal & non-verbal)

1. SKILL ARRIVAL - 10-15 MINS

- Activity based on the Core Skill for players when they arrive.
- Let the players play
- Keep team numbers low (4 v 4 max.)
- Rondos

COACH OBSERVES: PLAYERS PLAY

2. SKILL INTRO - 10-15 MINS

- Introduce Core Skill
- Involve the ball at all times & include interference
- Coaches encourage, enthuse and ensure participation

COACH INFLUENCES: PLAYERS PLAY

3. SKILL TRAINING - 20-25 MINS

- Conscious teaching and learning of the Core Skill
- High repetition in game realistic scenarios
- Task based coaching with effective, relevant feedback
- Use of questioning

COACH TEACHES: PLAYERS LEARN

4. SKILL GAME - 20-30 MINS

- A realistic game designed to facilitate the Core Skill
- Preferably small sided to increase number of touches
- Coaches assess whether learning has taken place

COACH ASSESSES: PLAYERS PLAY



THE GAME TRAINING PHASE

The Game Training phase focuses on taking the core skills developed during the skill acquisition phase and learning how to apply them within a team environment. This includes the specific tasks needed to play in certain positions within a team formation. During this phase, players are often in or entering puberty, a period of rapid physical and mental change. While it is imperative that attention is paid to physical changes to minimise the risk of injury, youth players are able to understand and appreciate far more complex tactical situations as well as a desire to increase their understanding of the game.

Player characteristics include:

- Growth spurts temporarily affect coordination & strength
- Prone to overuse injuries
- Accelerated intellectual development
- A greater desire to be part of a group or team
- Physically and mentally ready for more structured activities
- Prone to sudden mood swings and impulsiveness
- Greater independence and freedom





NORTHLAND FC TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (TDP)

The NZ Football Talent Development Program (TDP) is for youth players with high potential who wish to progress their football development to the next level, accessing Regional Youth Leagues and training in an environment that allows high potential players to come together as a high performing group. This program will help players accelerate their development as they are required to operate at a standard involving higher levels of performance across all four corners of player development.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Northland FC recognise that we need to develop our footballers as players as well as people, and that the focus of training should cover all areas of the 4 corner model. The Technical, Tactical, Mental and Physical components are distinguishable but not separable. They are developed in an appropriate environment where age appropriate values create a culture that promotes learning and enjoyment. The following principles ensure the appropriate training environment for holistic player development in our Youth TDP:

1. QUALIFIED COACHING

2. TRAINING THAT LOOKS LIKE THE GAME

3. RECOGNISING DEVELOPMENT AGE

4. BUILD A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

5. PERIODISED TRAINING PROGRAM

6. EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK FOR PLAYERS

7. ONE ENVIRONMENT



QUALIFIED COACHING

all youth team head coaches in the TDP program at Northland FC are qualified to a minimum OFC/NZF C Licence. As well as understanding the principles of long term player development, a Northland FC coach must stay aware of trends in world football to ensure best possible practice for our players.

TRAINING THAT LOOKS LIKE THE GAME

For a player to develop the ability to perceive, decide and execute (PDE) tasks well, they should be exposed to the random, variable, externally paced nature of football with high frequency. Training should involve all four moments of the game and put players in scenarios they would face during a match.

RECOGNISING DEVELOPMENT AGE

Maturation levels differ greatly among individuals during puberty, and differences in development age of up to four years in the same chronological age group are common. It is important that these differences are taken into consideration during the identification and development of high potential players so that late maturers are given the same opportunity as early maturers.

BUILD A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Coaches must encourage players to adopt a growth mindset and focus on long term player development. This involves players taking part in task based exercises that embraces mistakes as key learning opportunities and consistently asking players to operate at the limit of their current abilities.



PERIODISED TRAINING PROGRAM

All Northland FC training programs are split into periods, accomplishing different goals at different stages and phases of player development. Detailed periodised planning has been undertaken to meet the needs of our high potential players across all four corners. Our periodised TDP plans use our playing style statement, game model and training model as a reference point.

EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK FOR PLAYERS

Recognising accelerations and decelerations in player development during the game training phase means there is a strong need for coaches to provide informed feedback that is related to the overarching club philosophy, the task at hand and the overall objective of the practice. This helps to foster a growth mindset and places focus on the player effort as opposed to levels of success of an outcome.

ONE ENVIRONMENT

One environment to develop high potential players enables alignment of our coaching philosophy and methodologies to allow for consistent delivery and learning. Additionally, we are able to monitor physical work loads of players throughout our training programs to ensure balance is maintained. Operating at different sites across our one environment require good quality communication.

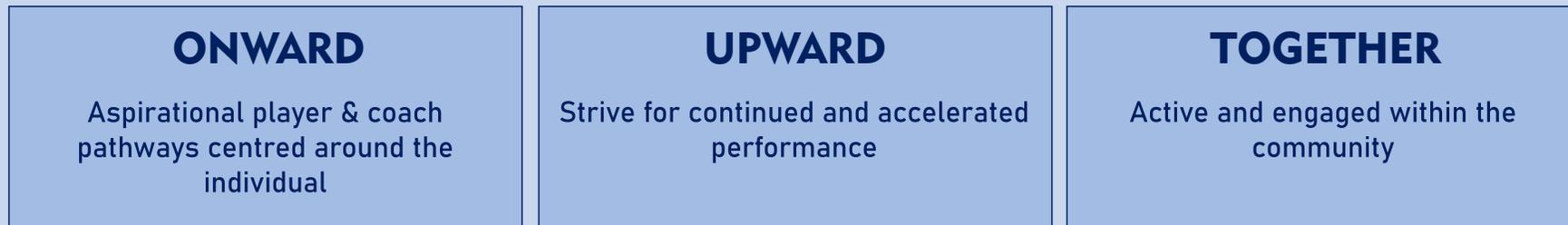
OVERCOMING RELATIVE AGE EFFECT (RAE) & THE ICEBERG EFFECT

RAE refers to players selected in an age group who are more mature due to their date of birth- there is a evident bias toward players born in the first quarter of the year and players may be required to play up or down grades to provide an appropriate challenge point relative to maturation and development across the four corners.

The Iceberg Effect relates to the 'child prodigies' who have often accumulated higher amounts of practice to their peers- this could be due to older siblings or greater access to high quality training. It is vital that we take care in focusing on player effort over talent to help foster the growth mindset that can allow players the best chances of success in relation to long term player development.

ASPIRATIONAL PLAYER PATHWAYS

Northland FC advocates for a holistic and long term player development strategy with our players, aiming to develop the person alongside the player. Our TDP identifies three strategies which align with our club values of “Onward, Upward, Together”:



ADDITIONAL TDP PLAYER BENEFITS

As part of our commitment to develop people and not just players, Northland FC seek to provide additional benefits for high potential players and coaches in the region through access to community coach and referee development opportunities, meaningful employment within the game and individual goal setting, reviews and accelerated development at our TDP camps during school holidays. To fulfil our objectives in this person centred strategy, we will seek guidance from experts in the following fields:

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING	NUTRITION GUIDANCE	INJURY PREVENTION	VIDEO ANALYSIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with external strength & conditioning coach - Athlete testing day - Northland FC gym 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational seminars on nutrition for football - Provide suggested meal plans for peak performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with external physiotherapist - Online webinars detailing aspects of injury prevention - Discounts for Northland FC members for treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilisation of existing coach experience with analysis - Filming of all Northland FC games - Individual and group video analysis sessions



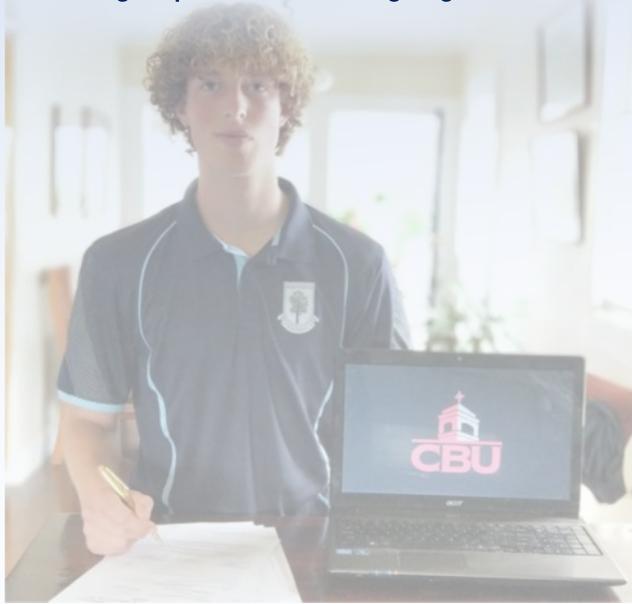
BEYOND NORTHLAND FC

We know the limitations of our football club, and gauge success on those players and coaches who go beyond the level of our club. While the first teams are our flagships at the cutting edge where results take on a greater significance, they are a stepping stone for high potential players to progress both in New Zealand to the national teams and internationally to the US collegiate system or into professional football. Northland FC have developed 'next step' pathways to assist players with high potential and the desire to push on beyond what we can offer at our club.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

- Links to US Colleges and Universities
- Links to Agents and Facilitators
- Filming capabilities for highlight reels



NZ NATIONAL TEAMS

- Recognised Talent Development pathway
- Scouting & identification opportunities
- Aligned philosophy and curriculum



WORLDWIDE OPPORTUNITIES

- Coaches with academy experience
- Targeted partnerships from 2022
- National and international tours





THE PERFORMANCE PHASE

Training in the performance phase is centred around the team and optimising performance on every occasion. It is an opportunity for players to apply their skills at the highest possible level available to them. The approach of Northland FC in this phase is guided by our philosophy, game model and training model but moves more toward a team focus, perfecting team tactics and a focus on solving football problems based on match analysis.

Our first teams focus predominantly on performance, striving to get results while our under 23 squads provide a bridge between the game training and performance phase which has a greater focus on individual player development, affording high potential players the opportunity to develop further individually if required.

Player characteristics include:

- Readiness to take ownership of tactics and implement them on the pitch
- Differences in motivation to play the game
- Additional challenges around the sport/life balance
- Physical capability to undertake conditioning training

