

SO Let Me Have FUN - Young Athletes™

Age Range - 4-12 Years

The aim of this phase is to develop FUNdamental Movement Skills (FMS) and beginning to develop FUNdamental Sport Skills (FSS). It is important during this phase that Athletes are exposed to improving their FUNdamental Movement Skills. This is important because the ability of the Athlete to reach their full potential could be compromised if FUNdamental Movement Skills are not continually developed. Athletes should be learning FUNdamental Sport Skills and continue to participate in a number of sports, which is essential for all round Athletic Development. The focus within competition should be on continuing to learn in different environments.

Note – It is recommend that a Young Athletes™ Club wishing to introduce a sport are affiliated with Special Olympics Ireland for one year and the sport must be suitable to the needs and capabilities of the Athletes involved.

Activity Level: For all of this age group - Minimum 1 hour of daily physical activity / Sports Specific - 2 times per week

Number of Sports: 2-4

Competition Level: Young Athletes™ Development Days, Leagues, Interclub Activities

<p align="center"><u>Physical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Agility, Balance, Coordination (ABC), Running, Jumping, Throwing (RJT) and Catch, Pass, Kick, Strike (CPKS) through fun games and activities • Develop endurance through fun activities • Develop linear, lateral and multi directional speed through FUN activities and games • Develop strength in joints and muscle through FUN activities 	<p align="center"><u>Tactical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial Awareness • Co-operation and sharing • Adhere to simple rules and ethics of sport • Target, Court, Field, Non and Part and Small Sided Invasion Games 	<p align="center"><u>Technical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FUNdamental movement skills (ABC), (RJT) and (CPKS) • Develop basic FUNdamental Sport Skills of sports as indicated by different National Governing Bodies of sport • Use correct equipment appropriate to age and level
<p align="center"><u>Health & Wellbeing Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a positive attitude to sport • Develop confidence in executing basic skills • Develop concentration skills • Experience a feeling of accomplishment when participating in sport • Experience enjoyment and fun through sport • Make friends through participation with Special Olympics Ireland • Create positive attitude to sport and health & wellbeing • Create an environment to increase confidence and self esteem • Encourage fair play and respect to coaches, volunteers, supporters, officials & other players • Develop team work and social skills in interacting with others 		

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SO Let Me Get Sporty - Sport For All

Age Range - 8-12 Years

The aim of this phase is to further develop FUNdamental Sport Skills (FSS) of a number of different sports while reinforcing the FUNdamental Movement Skills (FMS). It is important during this phase that Athletes are practicing the FUNdamental Movement Skills acquired during the previous phase. This is important because the ability of the Athlete to reach their full potential could be compromised if FUNdamental movement skills are not continually developed. Athletes should be learning general Sport Specific Skills (SS) and continue to participate in a number of sports, which is essential for all round Athletic Development. The focus within competition should be on continuing to learn in different environments.

Activity Level: Minimum 1 hour of daily physical activity / Sports Specific - 2 times per week

Number of Sports: 3-4

Competition Level: Young Athletes™, Leagues, Development Days and/or Area Events / Regional Events / Ireland Games

<u>Physical Capabilities</u>	<u>Tactical Capabilities</u>	<u>Technical Capabilities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop Agility, Balance, Coordination (ABC), Running, Jumping, Throwing (RJT) and Catch, Pass, Kick, Strike (CPKS) through fun games and activities • Progress development of speed, power and endurance through FUN games • Identify the benefits of a warm-up and cool down • Develop stability in joints • Identify when to warm-up and cool-down • Follow instructions on how to warm-up and cool-down • Perform basic mobility exercises • Develop Power through fun games • Move and control the body in limited space • Demonstrate repetitive actions to develop leg and arm strength • Develop endurance through fun activities • Develop linear, lateral and multi directional speed through FUN activities and games • Develop strength in joints and muscle through FUN activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in modified and small sided games • Adhere to rules for technical aspects of sports e.g. frees, starts • Learn and experience playing in a variety of events in individual sports and positions in team sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop basic sports skills as identified by different National Governing Bodies for each sport • Progressively refine the fundamental movement skills • Practice technical skills outside of scheduled training with friends and family
<p align="center"><u>Health & Wellbeing Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and awareness to help identify and understand emotions within a sporting context • Continue to show enthusiasm for sport through participation and commitment • Build confidence through using a variety of sports skills in game situations • Continue to develop concentration skills through fun games and activities • Develop decision making skills in modified games and fun activities • Interpersonal skills and learning to work in team environment • Create a supportive environment to encourage multi-sport and activity participation • Be aware of good practice habits to develop independence • Introduced to the changes that puberty will bring and its implications for training • Create a supportive environment to encourage multi-sport and activity participation • Introduced to the changes that puberty will bring and its implications for training 		

SO Let Me Be Ready - Sport For All

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Age Range - 13-15 Years

During this phase, Athletes should begin to combine Sport Specific Skills (SSS) and tactics for their chosen sport, with an emphasis is on consistent quality practice. While at organised competition, Athletes should compete to the best of their ability. At practice, the focus should be on continued learning and development. Competitive elements should be included daily within practice sessions in the form of games and activities. More experiences that are competitive enable Athletes to practice their technical and tactical skills and learn how to cope with the different challenges associated with competition. However if there is an over emphasis on competition instead of practice; Athletes could plateau at a later stage in their sporting journey.

Activity Level: Minimum 1 hour of daily physical activity / Sports Specific - 2 times per week

Number of Sports: 2-3

Competition Level: Leagues, Development Days and/or Area Events / Regional Events / Ireland Games

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Physical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop core and spine stability • Learn how to and identify when perform dynamic and static stretching • Continue to develop personal communication skills • Develop aerobic and anaerobic endurance • Discipline and personal responsibility • Understand reasons for and processes of flexibility training • Continue to develop joint and muscle strength ensuring body resistance 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Tactical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to basic tactics through fun games • Implement key game/event principles • Identify and adhere to competition rules • Begin self-analysis in training and competition • Develop decision making in competition • Identify and implement different positional skills 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Technical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform technical skills as outlined by the National Governing Body for the given sport • Execute skills at speed • Execute skills in pressurised situations • Continue to practice technical skills outside of controlled practice sessions
<p><u>Health & Wellbeing Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish personal goals over medium and short term in a structured way • Develop imagery for use in a variety of situations (motivation, self-confidence, set pieces, technique and tactics) • Develop patience and control • Continue positive re-enforcement • Learn to cope with setbacks and success • Learn to control emotions • Continue to develop confidence and concentration skills • Practice and understand the importance of controlling anxiety • Develop a motivation to succeed • Develop performance and pre performance routines • Identify the importance of rest and recovery in practice and competition and integrate it into training plans • Assist Athletes in the importance of good habits for nutrition and hydration before, during and after training/competition • Learn how to manage time for practice, work/school and family • Follow a training plan • Understand the changes that puberty is having and its implications for training 		

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SO Let Me Compete

Age Range - Late Youth to Adult

During this phase athletes who are proficient at performing basic and sport specific skills learn to perform these in competitive conditions. Athletes are specialising in one sport for training and competition excellence. Practice is now more competition specific and the focus is on peaking for a competition to maximise performance. Athletes are now aiming for personal bests in all competitions, while striving to develop technical and tactical skills and improving fitness levels within competition specific practice.

Activity Level: Minimum 1 hour of daily physical activity / Sports Specific - 3 times per week

Number of Sports: 1-2

Competition Level: While an Athlete would continue to participate in Leagues and Development Days, there could be more of a focus on Area, Regional and Ireland Games, with the potential to advance to European and/or World Games, where their focus is on achieving their best.

<p align="center"><u>Physical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake physical fitness, flexibility and as part of a team and as an individual • Maintain joint and muscle stability and strength • Maintain core strength and stability • Take appropriate rest and recovery breaks between training sessions and competitions • Undertake individual preparation to address individual strengths and weaknesses 	<p align="center"><u>Tactical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine event and position specific tactics and adapt where needed • Adapt competitive strategies to different situations • Continue self-analysis at training and competition • Adopt a specific role within the team • Model all aspects of performance in training • Comply with club and Special Olympics Ireland organisation for competitions • Undertake competitive stimulation at training • Adhere to competitive strategies • Communicate effectively to coaches, team mates and officials 	<p align="center"><u>Technical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display proficiency and continue to refine sports specific skills • Perform competition specific and training skills automatically • Demonstrate individual style of play/participation • Demonstrate consistency and control in performing sports specific skills • Participate at a high intensity in training similar to that required for competition
<p align="center"><u>Health & Wellbeing Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and refine personal goals for training and competition • Develop ability to focus and control thoughts. • Demonstrate personal responsibility and decision making • Develop confidence through improved technique, tactical understanding and competitive performance • Develop decision making skills • Refine ability to cope with anxiety and pressure • Take positive corrective advice from coaches • Refine and use pre performance and performance routines regularly • Continued personal and social development regarding overall health and wellbeing • Integration of sport, career, family and life goals • Apply injury prevention measures where applicable • Increased knowledge of hydration and nutrition • Develop and refine responsibility for preparation for practice and competition • Take frequent recovery breaks between practice sessions and competition • Participate in planning and periodisation of training • Monitor the signs of fatigue and strategies for recovery • Continue to integrate relaxation into everyday life • Train and compete ethically and fairly 		

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SO Let Me Stay Active

Lifelong Involvement

The objective of this phase is for lifelong physical activity and involvement in Special Olympics Ireland. This phase refers to the activities within their Special Olympics Ireland club and Special Olympics Ireland that an Athlete engages in when they no longer wish to compete. Athletes should be encouraged to stay active on a recreational basis to have FUN, maintain a healthy lifestyle and to socialise with friends. Athletes may decide to partake in sports related activities such as coaching, officiating, health promotion, Athlete Leadership or being a part of the club management team.

Activity Level: Minimum 1 hour of daily physical activity / Sport Specific and/or Recreational Sport

Number of Sports and/or Recreational Sport Activities: 1-5

Competition Level: The focus is on staying physically active and engaged within their club as either an Athlete, Coach, Official and/or Volunteer

<p align="center"><u>Physical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to keep physically active through sport specific and/or recreational sport participation • Continue with endurance, strength and flexibility training • Maintain physical fitness 	<p align="center"><u>Psychological Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readjustment to non-competitive environment • Practice relaxation techniques • Retain recreational involvement • Maximise tactical skills learned and apply to a new role e.g. coach, volunteer, official et al 	<p align="center"><u>Technical Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain skills and apply them in a sport specific/recreational context • Develop new sports skills as a form of recreation • Maximise skills already learned and apply to a new role e.g. coach
<p align="center"><u>Health & Wellbeing Capabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue personal and family goals more • Undertake possible engagement in club management team, coaching and the Athlete Leadership Programme • Maintain a healthy lifestyle • Undertake the Athlete Leadership Programme • Demonstrate good communication, organisational and reliability in any new role • Transfer personal skills learnt to a club management team role, as a coach or as a volunteer 		

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