

Player Review and Selection Policy

Star Soccer Academy grassroots football club, operated by Star Sports Coaching Ltd – Season 2026/27. Applies to players in the club's Saturday competitive squads. To be read with the Membership Terms, the Safeguarding Children Policy and the codes of conduct.

1. Purpose

Every player should know how they are doing, what they need to work on, and how decisions about squad places are made. This policy sets out how reviews work, the spring trial process, and what happens at the end of each season. Every decision is made on footballing grounds, using the same criteria for every player, and can be explained to the player and their parents.

2. Reviews and when they happen

Every player in a Saturday squad receives three written reviews each season, at the same points for everyone:

Review	When	Purpose
Autumn review	October	Baseline for the season: a traffic-light rating in each area and two or three development targets.
Mid-season review	December / January	Progress against the autumn targets, updated targets, and confirmation of whether the player is on track or is placed on re-trial (section 5).
End-of-season review	May, after the spring trial	Overall progress across the season and the decision on the player's squad place for the following season (section 7).

3. The traffic-light system

Every review uses the same format. Coaches rate each area using a traffic light, so players can see at a glance where they are strong and what to work on, with a short comment and examples from training and matches.

Rating	Meaning
Red – Below standard	Not yet at the standard expected for a player in this squad. The review sets a clear target and the support the club will give.
Amber – Meeting standard	At the standard expected for a player in this squad.
Green – Exceeding standard	Above the standard expected for a player in this squad.

The areas rated are the same for every player:

Area	What coaches look at
Technical	Ball control, passing, receiving, dribbling, shooting and defending technique, appropriate to position and age.
Tactical	Understanding of the game, positioning, decision-making and awareness.
Physical	Movement, speed, stamina and strength relative to the player's own development, not their growth stage.
Psychological	Concentration, confidence, resilience after mistakes, response to coaching.
Social and behavioural	Attitude, effort, teamwork, respect for others, and adherence to the Players' Code of Conduct.
Attendance and commitment	Attendance at training and matches, punctuality and preparation.

A rating is about a player's football at that point in the season, not their worth, and every Red comes with a target and the support to reach it.

4. How reviews are carried out and shared

- The lead coach completes each review and a second coach who sees the player regularly checks and countersigns it. Where they disagree, both views are recorded.
- Ratings are based on observation across the whole review period, not a single session or match.
- Reviews are about the player's football and conduct only. They never refer to the conduct of parents, or to any concern or complaint raised by or about the player or their family.
- A coach does not review their own child, or any player where their independence could reasonably be questioned. The owner does not act as sole assessor.
- Reviews are published to parents in the club app within two weeks of completion. Players and parents can add their own comments in the app.
- There is no routine meeting. Parents who would like to discuss a review may request a meeting with the lead coach, which will take place away from sessions.
- Parents who believe a review is inaccurate or unfair may write to the Club Welfare Officer within 14 days. A coach not involved in the review will look at it and reply in writing.

5. Re-trial

At the mid-season review, the lead coach and second coach will place a player on re-trial where the player is rated Red in two or more areas, or has been rated Red in the same area at both the autumn and mid-season reviews. Re-trial means the player's squad place for next season will be decided at the spring trial rather than confirmed through their reviews.

- The player and parents are told in the club app, with the reasons, the areas to improve and the support the club will give, and are offered a meeting with the lead coach.
- A player on re-trial continues to train and remains eligible for selection in the ordinary way for the rest of the season.
- Re-trial is a footballing decision based on reviews. It is not a sanction, and it is never used for reasons unconnected with the player's own football and conduct.
- If the player's ratings improve, the lead coach may lift the re-trial before the spring trial, and will confirm this in the app.

6. The spring trial

Each Saturday squad holds a spring trial in April or May. Dates are published in the club app at least four weeks in advance.

- Players on re-trial attend the spring trial. Any other registered player may also attend if they wish. External players may be invited where the squad has places available.
- Registered players who are not on re-trial and whose reviews are at Amber or Green normally have their place confirmed without needing to trial, subject to squad size and positional needs for the next season.
- The trial follows the same format for every player in the age group, and players are assessed against the same six areas and traffic-light ratings used in reviews.
- At least two coaches assess every player at the trial, including at least one coach other than the lead coach where possible. Ratings and notes are recorded for every player.

7. End-of-season decisions

Squad places for the following season are decided by the lead coach and at least one other coach, based on the player's three reviews, the spring trial where the player attended, attendance and commitment, and the squad size and positional needs for next season. The owner reviews all decisions for consistency across the club, and every decision is recorded with its reasons.

Every player and their parents are told the decision in writing in the club app by 31 May. Membership runs to 31 May each year and renewal is decided under this policy and the Membership Terms.

8. Players not offered a squad place

A player who is not offered a Saturday squad place will be offered a training-only place for the following season:

- in younger age groups, a place in the Player One programme; or
- in older age groups, where there is no Player One programme, a place training with the Saturday squad on an Academy Squad Training Only basis.

A player training with the Saturday squad on a training-only basis will be assessed at the autumn review. If they are rated at Amber or Green and a squad place is available, they will be offered a return to the squad. If not, they continue on a training-only basis and are reviewed again at mid-season.

Players who do not wish to take up a training-only place may leave the club, with membership ending on 31 May and no further commitment from 1 June. Training-only places are subject to the terms of the programme concerned.

9. Match selection during the season

Selection for matches, positions and playing time is a coaching decision made by the lead coach, reflecting current form, attitude, attendance and the needs of the team, within the age group's playing-time expectations. Selection is never used to punish a player or family for raising a concern. A player kept out of a match for a conduct reason is told, with their parents, why.

10. Fairness

A player or family who has raised a concern or complaint, or been involved in one, is reviewed, placed on re-trial, trialled and selected in exactly the same way as every other player. The Safeguarding Children Policy makes clear that raising a concern is never held against a child or family, and this policy applies that principle to every review and decision.

11. Requesting a review of a decision

Parents who believe a re-trial or end-of-season decision was not made in line with this policy may write to the Club Welfare Officer within 14 days. The owner and a coach who was not involved will consider it against the written reviews and trial records and reply within 14 days. Parents who remain dissatisfied may contact the Leicestershire & Rutland County FA.

12. Records

Reviews, re-trial notices, trial records and decisions are held in the club app, available to the player's parents, and kept for the duration of the player's registration plus two seasons. They are held separately from safeguarding records.

13. Review of this policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the owner and coaching team, issued to all coaches, and available to parents in the club app and on the club website.

Approved by Matt Finnigan, Owner, September 2026. Next review due September 2027.