

YOUTH FOOTBALL IN SCOTLAND:

the views of young footballers

We spoke to young footballers to find out more about the experience of registering with a professional football club.

WHO TOOK PART



28 TOOK PART IN THREE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

MORE BOYS TOOK PART THAN GIRLS (4)

19 TOOK PART IN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

THE RESULTS... you told us

LOVE FOOTBALL

You love playing football and you want to be as good as you can be. Some of you would like to play football professionally, but all of you know that only a small number of players make it to the top level.

You understand that there can be a lot of money involved if you become a professional and that footballers can be worth a lot to clubs.

SUCCESS

A supportive family is essential to success. Your families invest a great deal of their time and money to help you play football with a professional club.

Other things you believe help young footballers succeed:

Good attitude to health and lifestyle.
Confidence and a sense of achievement.
Being able to learn from experienced coaches.

CONTRACTS

38 of you said you signed a document when you joined.
29 of you talked about having 'a contract'.
But only 13 of you had copies of any documents.

You don't feel you have a choice about how you succeed in football.

'Originally I signed the contract as I did not think I had other options.'

You feel you must stick to the strict rules set out by the club. For example, some professional clubs say that registered young players can't play in the school football team.

MAKE CHANGES

Sometimes when young footballers are unhappy for whatever reason at a club (for example, lack of game time or would like to move on) it's difficult to leave if the club wants them to stay.

"More power to the player and not to the clubs."

BEING RELEASED

Being released by a professional football club happens often and can be difficult.

"Being dropped is hard to deal with"

"Dreams shattered"

"Affects how you play"

The youth football registration system doesn't appear to provide support or encouragement to those young players who are released from professional clubs.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Article 3:

Your best interests should always come first.

Article 29:

You have the right to an education that develops your personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.

Article 12:

You have a right to a say in the decisions that affect you.

YOUR RIGHTS MATTER

You should have choices and be given clear information when you register with a football club. You should be treated fairly and with respect.

WHAT COULD BE MADE BETTER?

Access to independent information and advice for footballers and families before registering with a club.

Professional clubs could provide more support to young players when they register with them. Young players should also be supported whilst they play with the club, and if the club releases them.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our full report on 'Improving youth football in Scotland' has been sent to MSPs at the Scottish Parliament who are looking into how to improve the system. We hope that the politicians will work with people like the Scottish FA to make changes to the youth registration process.