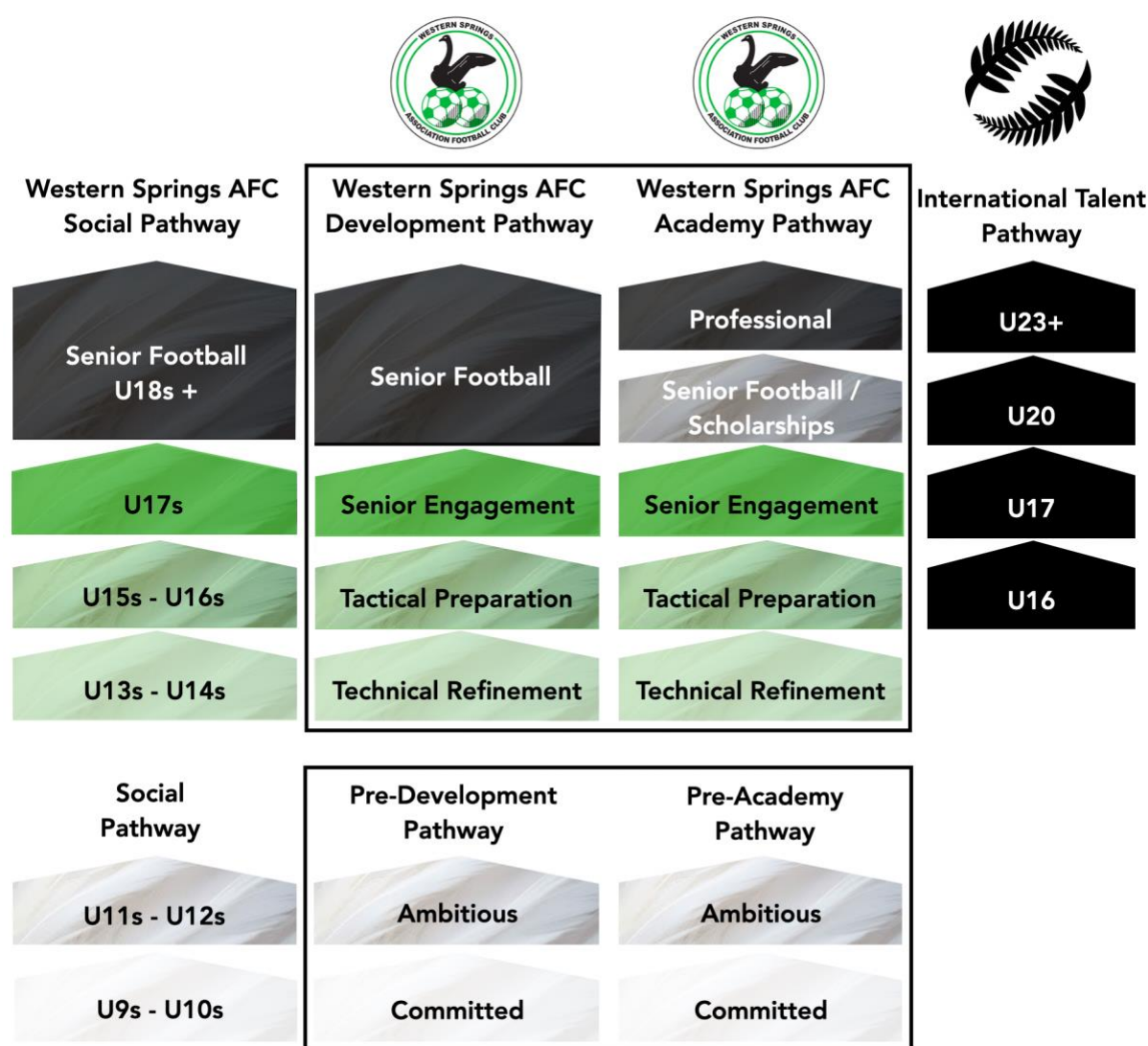


Western Springs U9-U12 Pre-Academy and U13-U17 Academy Pathway

Our **aim** at WSAFC is to create a holistic learning environment that gives players the best opportunity to represent their country at international age group level or pursue opportunities abroad.

At WSAFC we are not just looking at the Technical and Tactical arm of player development, but also the Physical, Social/ Emotional and Mental components. With the experience and leadership of Katie Duncan (Head of Women's Football) and Scott Hales (Head of Men's Football), Katie Rood (Girls Academy Manager) and Danyon Drake (Mixed Academy Manager), along with Andy Vernon (Head of Junior/Youth Football) the club continues to provide development pathways through the Western Springs Academy.

The **Pre-Development and Development** pathways are for players that are more committed and competitive minded players but aren't yet ready for the Pre-Academy or Academy teams. Players will still get access to paid coaches and the WSAFC Academy playing and teaching methodology.



U9s - U10s

Committed

- Constraint led games
- Teaching games for understanding (TGfU)
- Ball mastery
- Must be performed while under pressure / interference 1v1, 2v2, 3v3
- 4 moments of the game are present and acknowledged
- Always competitive with courage to take risks / creativity
- NO bus lines / queues

U11s - U12s

Ambitious

- Constraint led games
- Teaching games for understanding (TGfU)
- Ball mastery
- Must be performed while under pressure / interference 1v1, 2v2, 3v3
- 4 moments of the game are present and acknowledged
- Always competitive with courage to take risks / creativity
- NO bus lines / queues

U13s - U14s

Technical Refinement

- Core technical needs
- Must be performed while under pressure / interference
- Area sizes must be adapted in relation to needs / wants of core technique
- Skill acquisition – cognitive, associative, autonomous

We **must** ensure that players:

- Are included in the opportunity to process learning
- Establish connections between learning and actions relating to memory or ideas, and
- Have the opportunity to make decisions for themselves

The **most** effective way to do this is through creating a learning environment that:

- Offers challenging and realistic practices
- Promotes being opposed or with interference
- Tests players – the more decisions a player has to make, the better the players decisions become!

U15s - U16s

Tactical Preparation

- Tactical / formation flexibility
- Players must experience underload and overload concepts
- Players must adapt to what space the opposition is giving us
- Players must see the game – not just play it

U17s +

Senior Engagement

- Prepare players for the physical demands of senior football
- If you are good enough, you are old enough
- FIFA 11+ 3 parts (evidence based injury prevention)
- Conditioning games
- Introduced in a conservative way until up to speed

Player Safe Environment

- Introduction to Senior Football is NOT about size, but safety is key
- In general, senior players are physical stronger and mentally tuned into the demands of senior football – developmental progression
- How we train provides players with the ability to 'get used to' the demands of senior football
 - So always competition, always opposed/interference speeds up this process
- Player Welfare is paramount here!
- Activations – FIFA 11+, Nordics, Copenhagens
- Recovery – sleep, diet, active rest
- Tactically and technically prepared
- Physically prepared
- Socially and emotionally equipped
- Mental performance techniques incorporated into season
- Produce technically proficient players
- Introduce tactical fluidity to enhance game understanding and 'seeing' the game
- Support and extend players physically
- Provide and nurture aspirations beyond WSAFC

Player Development

Analysis

- Game Review, hone in on aspects worked through in curriculum
- It is a magnifying glass, highlights strengths and areas for development

Individual Player Development Plans (IPDP) or Player/Parent Meetings

- Pre-Academy players will have a player/parent meeting
- Academy players have IPDPs with 2x annual reviews

Our Relationships

WSAFC understand that **all players are different** and aspire to different things

There is no set way to reach your goals

Our responsibility to you is to provide trusted opportunities for you to succeed

We can help with local, national and international opportunities.

Goal Keepers

Pre-Academy and Academy Goal Keepers will be provided access to specialist GK sessions during Pre-Academy and Academy sessions at no additional cost.

Term 4

Term 4 Pre-Academy and Academy trainings serve as our identification process for Pre-Academy and Academy teams for 2026. There will be no identification sessions in Term 1 for these particular teams. Pre-Academy and Academy groups will be named prior to Christmas.

For those looking to follow the Pre-Development and Development pathway and play in one of these teams in 2026, the identification process to get into the 2026 Pre-Development and Development Teams will take place in Term 1 through identification sessions.



See a summary of the teams playing in the different pathways

U13-U17 Academy Teams play in NRFL competitions, train in the NZF Accredited Talent Development Programme, get access to qualified coaches and the WSAFC Academy playing and teaching methodology.

U13-U17 Development Teams play in NRF competitions (including Championship and conference), get access to qualified coaches (or those working towards them) and the WSAFC Academy playing and teaching methodology.

U9-U12 Pre-Academy Teams play in NRF competitions, get access to qualified coaches and the WSAFC Academy playing and teaching methodology.

U9-U12 Pre-Development Teams play in NRF competitions, get access to NZF Accredited Skills Centre Programme led by qualified coaches and the WSAFC Academy playing and teaching methodology.