



NIFL ACADEMY PLAYER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

BELFAST & DUNGANNON

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME



The NIFL Academy Player Scholarship Programme is a two-year full time football & education course for post GCSE students.

With state-of-the-art facilities and high-quality staff, the programme aims to offer talented young footballers a playing and education experience similar to a full time academy in England and Scotland.

The NIFL Academy Player Scholarship Programme will provide some of the most talented young players within the NI Football League the opportunity to develop themselves as footballers and students.

Applicants must have a proven track record at youth level with the potential to progress their playing and academic careers.



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Scholars will receive quality coaching from UEFA PRO, A Licence plus strength and conditioning coaches on a daily basis to compliment what they receive at their NIFL club.

The programme aims to accelerate the scholar's development and prepare them for senior football. They will develop the skills and attributes to have a successful career in the NI Football League or higher.

David Walsh – Linfield FC & NI Youth International

“I really enjoy the scholarship programme and believe the extra training and gym work I do during the day has helped me progress at my club (Linfield) and also within Northern Ireland squads. I hope to make a full time career in football, but if I don't I will have the academic qualifications to go on to further and higher education.”



Stephen McGuinness – Cliftonville FC

“I love the mix of training and class studies which offers a different environment to other schools and colleges. The course has helped my football as it makes me think and play quicker which I am carrying into my club career.”

SPECIALIST GOALKEEPER TRAINING

Goalkeepers on the programme receive specialist training from our goalkeeper coaches who have many years' experience working at top club and International level.

Connor Byrne – Dungannon Swifts FC

“The additional sessions on the programme supplement what I receive at club level. I feel I am improving as a player due to the high quality coaching and access to facilities. The new provision of a campus for Mid Ulster has been brilliant for my development and learning closer to home gives me the opportunity to do something I love and hope to have a career in.”



Scholars will also have playing opportunities against other schools, colleges and representative teams alongside visits to play and train at UK based Academies and a best practice visits in Europe.

PLAYER PATHWAY

The programme enhances and supports the acceleration of players from Academy level to first team;

- **Over a quarter of current scholars are actively involved in senior first team within NIFL clubs**
- **A number of scholars have signed professional contracts with NIFL clubs**
- **Majority of scholars play regularly for NIFL Premiership Under 20 teams**
- **The programme is well represented by a number of players regularly selected by Northern Ireland at Youth and School level**



George Tipton
Portadown FC

"The additional sessions on the programme supplement what I receive at my club Portadown FC. I feel I am improving as a player and the access to high quality coaching and facilities is helping me develop my footballing career in the Irish League."



Josh Archer
Linfield FC

"Its great coming in everyday as you know you are going to be out on pitch or in the gym trying to make yourself a better player. Even when you are injured there are all the facilities like the swimming pool, gym etc to help you get back to fitness."

PLAYER EDUCATION

With fulltime teaching staff and the support of our Education partners the scholars will receive a **BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN SPORT STUDIES** (3 A-Level Equivalent/168 UCAS Points). The qualification enables scholars to progress an academic career on completion of the programme.

Through the education element students can attain the necessary qualifications to gain entry to all of the major Northern Ireland and UK universities.



Max Davidson – Bangor FC – University Offer

“I have really enjoyed my time at the NIFL Scholarship Programme, both as a player and academically. The course has given me the knowledge and qualifications for me to get an offer at the University of my choice. The wide range of topics we study I feel has prepared me really well to undertake a course at Undergraduate level and hopefully achieve a good career in the Sports Industry.”

Daniel McIlroy – Carrick Rangers FC – USA Scholarship Offer

“My time at the NIFL Scholarship has been an incredible experience which has helped me develop not only as a player but as a person. What I am most satisfied about is that it has also allowed me to further my playing and academic in the United States at a top university.”



EMPLOYABILITY

The programme also offers scholars access to additional qualifications such as IFA Level 1 Coaching qualification and work experience opportunities. Specialist tutors will educate and mentor the scholars and engage them in a process of learning and work based coaching opportunities within primary schools, local clubs and commercial sports/football companies.

The scholars will therefore gain the necessary qualifications and experience to pursue a career in sports coaching. In the second year of the course all students can also avail of work experience opportunities in the USA.



ACADEMY CAMPUSES

The programme aims to recreate the learning and playing environment that a young professional footballer receives in England and Scotland. To this extent we have selected premium facilities to enhance learning and give the scholars the best opportunity to succeed.

BELFAST

Education Facility

Scholars will be educated in a state-of -the-art classroom within the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park.

Training Facilities

Scholars will have full access to the newly developed Olympia Leisure Centre . The leisure centre offers complete services including swimming pool, weights and conditioning suite.

All players will receive 'Free' membership to Olympia Leisure and all other GLL Leisure Centres in the Greater Belfast area.

**EDUCATION
PARTNER**



DUNGANNON

A satellite programme is located at Dungannon United Youth

**EDUCATION
PARTNER**



Education Facility

Scholars will be educated in a state-of -the-art classroom within the newly developed Dungannon United Youth.

Training Facilities

Within the new development at Dungannon United Youth is a high class gym facility adjacent to an indoor and outdoor 4G pitch.



ACADEMY STAFF



LEE CARROLL

PGCE; BA; UEFA 'A' Licence
Director of Coaching & Education



BARRY JOHNSTON

UEFA 'A' Licence
**Head of Player Development/
Lead Development Coach**



RODNEY MCAREE

UEFA 'PRO' LICENCE
Lead Development Coach



MICHAEL DOUGHERTY

**Specialist Goalkeeping
Coach & Head of Goalkeeper
Recruitment**



ROY CARROLL

Uefa 'B' Licence
Specialist Goalkeeping Coach

Players will be supported by a high quality staff of teachers, coaches and sports scientists.

They will receive their own laptop and receive tuition from fully qualified teachers and specialists while UEFA Pro Licence & A Licence coaches work alongside qualified sports scientists to provide scholars with further technical, tactical, strength and conditioning programmes.



MARK PATTON

BA (Hons); UEFA 'B' Licence
**Senior Course Tutor
& Coach**



MICHAEL GAULT

PGCE; BSc; UEFA 'A' Licence
Senior Course Tutor & Coach



RYAN ADAMS

PHD; MSc; BSc;
UEFA 'B' Licence
Senior Course Tutor



ALLY COOPER

**PGCE; BA; MSc (Sport Performance
Enhancement) MSc (Sport & Exercise
Nutrition) Senior Tutor/Strength &
Conditioning Coach**

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Candidates must have a minimum of 5 GCSE (Grade C or above) ideally including English & Maths.**
- 2. Demonstrable track record in youth football**
- 3. Trial matches and personal interview may also form part of the selection process**
- 4. Players may be vouched by their Head of Academy at their NIFL Club**

A combination of playing and academic ability will be used for selection purposes

Numbers are restricted at both the Belfast & Dungannon venues and applicants may be signposted to one of the other 'Full Time Football & Education' Regional Centres operated by the Football Management Company.

APPLICATION FORMS

Application forms can be downloaded at:

www.nifootballleague.com | www.footballmanagementcompany.uk



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For further information contact:

lee@footballmanagementcompany.com