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Sale Sharks Academy Landscape

The Academy is one of the 14 regionally based centers across the country which covers Cheshire and Lancashire. Each are governed by the Elite Department of the RFU in partnership with Premier Rugby and are delivered locally by the professional clubs. The program sits alongside the representative playing pathway in England, it is athlete centered, development driven and competition supported. Each regional academy is accredited with an Academy License and is assessed via an RFU/Premier Rugby annual appraisal.

Internal Governance

In order for the academy to impact, advance and influence the overall club and regional rugby landscape it is imperative that there is a management group comprising of the key decision makers at different levels of the business plan.

The Sale Sharks academy management group comprises of the following people:

- CEO (Sid Sutton)
- Chairman of the Board (Dermot Power)
- Operations Manager (Paul Smith)
- Academy Consultant (Ray Unsworth)
- Academy Manager (Fergus Mulchrone)

The group will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor and review Academy strategic direction and progress. All decisions surrounding the promotion of the academy athletes onto full-time professional contracts and other key issues will be made via this forum.

External Governance

RFU Head of Academies

Premier Rugby Limited Head of Academies

Independent verifier

In line with the strategic internal review process there will be an annual Academy Performance Review lead by the RFU in partnership with Premier rugby. This is an evidence-based assessment of the academy leading to a 'performance score'. The purpose of this is to ensure that the academy abides by the regulations set out within the academy licensing agreement.

The Academy is assessed against 7 Criteria:

- 1. Leadership and Strategic Planning**
- 2. Staffing**
- 3. Coaching**
- 4. Player Development Pathways and Programs**
- 5. Individual Athlete Support**
- 6. Lifestyle and Education**
- 7. Financial Management**

A World Leading Rugby Academy for the North West

Mission

- ❖ Maximise the player production process for Sale Sharks and England in order to support the continued business strategies of the club
- ❖ Provide the best pathway and Academy program in England to improve the transition into the professional and community game

Vision

- ❖ A holistic Player Development Model comprising of 4 key areas, skill, physical wellbeing, mental health and education.
- ❖ An Academy Coaching Model to enhance delivery throughout the pathway & to ensure the best possible Talent Development Environment.

Cultural Principles - *Challenge and support - Develop the person - Embrace opportunities - Growth Mindset*

Strategic Objectives

Short term (1 year):

1. Fully achieve the (7) audit fundamentals ratings to receive 100% of performance related Academy funding.
2. Achieve a minimum of (2) first team contracts for “Home Grown” academy players and (5) Senior Academy contracts for “Home Grown” academy players previously involved in the Junior Academy process.
3. To support all stakeholders return to rugby both safely and timely within the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic whilst minimizing the impact on player development caused through the reduced playing opportunities.

Medium term (3 years):

1. Fully achieve the (7) audit fundamentals ratings to receive 100% of performance related Academy funding.
2. Achieve a minimum of (3) players per age group in each England training squad.
3. Achieve a minimum of (6) first team contracts for “Home Grown” academy players and (15) Senior Academy contracts for “Home Grown” academy players previously involved in the junior academy process.
4. To align with MMU: 1) support MMU with their goal to playing BUCS rugby by 22/23 season 2) educational partner 3) another pathway development for players 4) increase our development pool of players.

Long term (5 years):

1. Fully achieve the (7) audit fundamentals ratings to receive 100% of performance related Academy funding.
2. Achieve a minimum of (3) players per age group in each England training squad.
3. Achieve a minimum of (10) first team contracts for “Home Grown” academy players and (25) Senior Academy contracts for “Home Grown” academy players previously involved in the junior academy process.

The North West Regional Player Pathway



Sale Sharks Player Development Pathways & Programs:

North West Developing Player Program (DPP)

The DPP is the development thread that is woven between CB, School and Club rugby and is not instead of, but alongside of and should support players in all appropriate programmes and their normal place of participation. The England Rugby Player Pathway is the name given to a single system that helps identify where a player sits in relation to the different opportunities that exist. It includes associated development programmes, England Academy Player (EAP), Academy Player Development Group (PDG) and Developing Player Program (DPP), playing opportunities in the community game at Under 16 and 18 and International playing opportunities at 18, 20, Saxons and England.

The DPP engages players aged 13 – 16 years old and is a development program that should interact with and complement the school, club and county playing programmes, providing further development opportunity without the conflict of competition. It supports the identification of players entering the professional game through Regional Academies. It is a national program managed by the RFU and delivered locally through a partnership between the RFU, Regional Academy and Constituent Bodies. Each program is established within the fourteen Regional Academy boundaries.

Clubs and schools will be invited to nominate players for inclusion in the program, the principle objective of DPP is to provide a consistent and high-quality experience which is tailored to the needs of individual players to encourage their lifelong participation in rugby. It will identify those with talent and help them find the right direction to follow, whether that is into professional rugby or long-term participation at a level appropriate to them.

An important element of the program will be to enable 'talent transfer', encouraging potential rugby union players up to the age of 16 to join the game from playing other sports.

The program will also enhance the development and quality of players who will contribute to their school/club program and will go on to be the lifeblood of community rugby clubs within the North West. This includes the development of coaches in the pathway through a CPD program designed to provide individualized coach development.

Core Purpose: To provide a first opportunity to identify those players with greatest potential to enter the pathway towards the professional game and England

Principles of the Programme

- Provide a holistic and player centered experience for all players in the program.

- Assist to retain more players within the game post-16.
- Increase the number of players moving upwards in the player pathway.
- Develop coaches both within the player pathway and community game.
- Strengthen clubs and schools by improving the standard of the players with them.
- Simplify the player pathway by consolidating Constituency Bodies and Regional Academy activities.

DPP Lead: Noel Speed (noel.speed@salesharks.com)

DPP Administration: Johnny Leota (johnny.leota@salesharks.com)

DPP Coach Development Officer: Jack Leech (jack.leech@salesharks.com)

Sharks Development Group (SDG)

The Sharks Player Development Group (SDG) is for identified young players aged 14yrs - 16yrs. The majority of SDG players are selected through the DPP, along with identified players of potential throughout the season. The SDG players train at both club sites during the playing season on a Monday evening, following a curriculum that addresses the holistic development of physical, technical, psychological, educational and life skills. The 15s prepare for specific RFU tournaments whilst the 16s main focus is the Regional Academies Festivals and the transition into the Junior Academy.

Program Lead Noel Speed (noel.speed@salesharks.com) Contact time; *the 16s train weekly from August - April whilst the 15s preparation is January - April Exclusively*

Junior Academy (U17/U18)

The Junior Academy is the next stage for the top graduates of the SDG and other identified players of potential. Sessions are split between both Academy training sites (Carrington & Myerscough) during the season. The key focus is on core, positional and situational game skills, complemented by additional physical literacy, nutritional advice, mental preparatory skills and team preparation for a small number of competitive friendlies and the Under 18 Premiership Academy League. The squad competes in the Northern conference, playing 6 fixtures and potentially a 7th fixture at finals day if they finish in the top 3.

Contact Time:

Training for the Under 18s Performance squad begins with pre-season preparation in June and finishes with the RFU regional Academies festival at the end of August. Training resumes during October half term to prepare for the Under 18s competition which starts in mid-December and continues until February/March and the culmination of the Academy playing competition.

The Under 18 Development squad runs alongside the performance group and is for identified players graduating from the SDG or nominated by school and club coaches to join the junior academy program as well as under 18 players who are developing later than their peers. This involves internal competitive fixtures as well as against other Academies in order to confirm the Under 18 squad for the preseason program. The aim is to identify and support late developing players as well as Under 17 Junior Academy players who have gained limited playing time in the Under 18 League campaign.

Program Lead (Under 18): Warren Spragg (warren.spragg@salesharks.com)

Program Lead (Under 17): Noel Speed (noel.speed@salesharks.com)

Senior Academy (18-24 years)

The Senior Academy is representative of the Sharks young professional players and consists of players that are identified from a number of sources, including Junior Academy graduates, players from senior club sides, universities, schools and through the club's scouting system. These players are fully integrated into first team training at the Sharks and receive additional individual coaching and development in addition to regular feedback and analysis from the coaching team. Most of the Senior Academy will play in our Jets team in the Premiership Shield Competition with a view to challenging for first team selection. Away from the club players will also be dual registered to continue their development at an appropriate level with clubs in National Leagues.

Program Lead: Neil Briggs (neil.briggs@salesharks.com)

Contact Time: This is a full-time program with all signed academy players adhering to the first team training schedule

Coach Development

Sale Sharks Academy Coach Development Program is designed to support the development of DPP & SDG coaches who are part of the Sale Sharks Academy Pathway. The aim is to provide excellent coaching, every time, for every player in the Academy pathway. The program allows access to 10 high – quality coach development sessions to support coaches and teachers own continuing professional development (CPD). Regular communication with pathway coaches around up-coming session themes, CPD opportunities and the use of Sharks DNA will be established to aid the depth of understanding of our coaches. This will be supported with a bank of resources available to Sharks pathway coaches and regular forums to discuss common ideas, themes or problems.

Observation DPP Centre and specific Academy training sessions will provide pathway coaches with enhanced skills, new ideas and increased knowledge on how to develop our Sharks DNA to meet the needs of players at the appropriate stage in their development. Ultimately enhancing delivery throughout the DPP & SDG pathways, and to ensure the best possible talent development environments. Sessions are designed and delivered by Academy coaches and staff. The key focus is on the pathway coaches demonstrating commitment to their personal and professional development and understand the following player centered skills; Adaptive games using conditions, constraints, consequences and rewards, identifying development through co-coaching, observation and individual feedback, feedback through freeze, huddles, prompts and questioning. Our program is integrated with England Rugby and all evenings are held at Sale Sharks High Performance Training Centre Carrington.

Core Purpose: To provide excellent coaching, every time, for every player in the academy pathway.

Principles of the Programme

- To support and develop the holistic and player centred experience for all players within the programme
- Increase the number of coaches moving forward in the coach pathway
- Develop coaches both within the coach pathway and community game
- Strengthen clubs and schools by improving the standard of the coaches
- Simplify the coach pathway by consolidating Constituency Bodies and Regional Academy activities

Program Lead: Jack Leech (jack.leech@salesharks.com) Academy Coach Development Officer

Contact Time: The programme runs from October – April each season.

Education Links

Manchester Metropolitan University (18+)

Working in partnership with Sale Sharks Academy, Manchester Metropolitan University is able to provide world class educational programmes for those players within the Academy or following their time at the Academy. The partnership allows players to continue to train and play for a partner institution that we trust and can monitor easily.

The partnership allows players leaving the Academy at 18 to continue to develop and be monitored by the Academy and the university looks to incubate this with a growing support platform for their elite student athletes. The rapid development of Rugby Union at MMU is evident in the investment, particularly in facilities and results that the university are now achieving.

MMU is also able to support flexible learning opportunities for players in the Academy post 18, including flexible degree programmes (both part time and distanced learning). MMU has also worked with the Academy to enable players in the Academy to join their Business Management Degree Apprenticeship funded by the government's Apprenticeship Levy scheme.

If you want more information on Manchester Metropolitan University then click on [MMU](#).

Myerscough College (16-18)

Sale Sharks are linked with Myerscough College as a second Academy site for the delivery and administration of programmes in the Northern area of the region, including current programmes through all stages of the Academy pathways. Sale Sharks also supports Myerscough in the delivery of a holistic rugby program to students aged 16 years to 18 years who have the opportunity to play in the RFU AASE league whilst completing a Level 3 Sport course which allows progression to many University sport courses. The competition provides a good standard of Rugby and affords the opportunity to assess and monitor academic and rugby development of all the young players involved.

Second Academy Site Lead: Warren Spragg (warren.spragg@salesharks.com)

AASE Program Lead: Steve Gough (sgough@myerscough.ac.uk)

Contact Time: This runs through college term time with days being split to accommodate academic and rugby development. A typical week includes 3 x rugby sessions, 2 x S&C sessions and fixture.

Finance and Accounting

Licence Start Date	[1 July 2016]
Licence End Date	30 June 2024
Performance Related Funding (in first four Contract Years)	Contract Year One: £320,000 Contract Year Two: £320,000 Contract Year Three: £320,000 Contract Year Four: £320,000 (subject to, and payable in accordance with, Clause 10)
Conditional Funding (in first four Contract Years)	Contract Year One: £30,000 Contract Year Two: £30,000 Contract Year Three: £30,000 Contract Year Four: £30,000 (subject to, and payable in accordance with, Clause 10)
Minimum Club Investment	£200,000 per Contract Year.

Academy Management & Staffing

