Managing Training Load in Young Players

INJURY PREVENTION & PLAYER CARE

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CHECK | SUPPORT | PROTECT

1 WHAT TRAINING LOAD MEANS

Total Load

Think beyond club training. School sport, PE, extra coaching, matches, travel and growth-related fatigue all contribute.

Individual Response

Two players can respond differently to the same session. Age, maturity, sleep, illness, stress and previous workload all matter.

2 COACH PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Plan the Week	Avoid stacking several high-intensity days when possible.	**Build Gradually**	Increase volume or intensity progressively rather than suddenly.
Vary the Load	Mix harder, moderate and lighter sessions across the week.	**Protect Recovery**	Allow recovery around games, tournaments and heavy school periods.
Talk to Players	Simple wellness conversations can reveal fatigue, soreness or stress.	**Coordinate**	Communicate when players train or compete with multiple teams.

3 SIGNS A PLAYER MAY NEED LOAD REDUCED

- ☐ Unusual or persistent fatigue
- ☐ Persistent muscle or joint soreness
- ☐ Sleep problems
- ☐ Declining performance or concentration
- ☐ Loss of enthusiasm / irritability
- ☐ Repeated minor injuries or illness

4 WEEKLY LOAD CONVERSATION

Ask the player: How hard has this week felt overall?

Weekly effort / fatigue 1 2 3 4 5

Use the answer as one piece of information - not as a medical test or a stand-alone decision rule.

IMPORTANT: Young players are not miniature adults. Growth, school, sleep and multi-sport demands should be considered alongside football workload.

General coaching guidance only. Training-load decisions should be age-appropriate and individualised. This document is not medical advice; pain, persistent fatigue, illness or injury concerns should be referred to an appropriately qualified healthcare professional.