

Taunton Youth FC Community Trust

Player Roles & Responsibilities



Player roles & responsibilities

Playing the Taunton Town way



In this pack you will find details of the Roles and Responsibilities for each position the players may be asked to occupy. This sets out the general formation each of our teams will follow from U11 up to U16.

Of course there will be some fluidity during each match but this is the ‘map’ for the pattern of play which will be synonymous with all of our youth teams. It will also enable a smooth transition if players are asked to take part in a game for the age group above them.

Whilst we don’t publicise our tactics to the world, by the same token we will not be precious about keeping our model a secret. Many experts have analysed Pep Guardiola’s style of play over the years, but knowing about it doesn’t mean it can be stopped or spoiled - and we feel much the same way about our philosophy. We firmly believe that giving our young players a set of structured guidelines to follow is the best way to accelerate their development. However, there will always be a place for fearless and innovative performance.

For the younger age groups in particular there will be a good deal of positional transit over the course of the season, but by asking the players to study each of the roles (and those of their teammates), we are confident that understanding and unity will come to the forefront during the challenges ahead.

1 Goalkeeper (GK)

Playing the Taunton Town way

In possession

A goalkeeper's main responsibility is to protect the goal, but the modern day goalkeeper is expected to do a lot more.

We want you to be 2-footed, be able to control a ball and pass under pressure.

You must be comfortable receiving the ball and be able to pick the correct pass when distributing.

Our style will focus on a good build up from the back, but if there is space or a 1v1 up front, then you can look to play it long.

We want you to recognise when to release the ball quickly and which player is the correct option for the game situation.

Out of possession

You need to be an excellent communicator and should always be giving instructions and information to the defensive unit.

We want you to be able to read how the opposition are moving and to communicate this effectively and correctly to your defenders.

Games are won and lost by small margins. You must be very specific in where you want your defenders positioned and how you want them to defend.

A GK knows how to effectively communicate for the entire match and is always in command of the 18-yard box.

It is also necessary for you to be able to come out and act as a sweeper to read dangerous situations and deal with them calmly.

2 & 3 Right and Left Full Backs (FB)

In possession

Fullbacks look great when going forward, overlapping and putting in great crosses (i.e. Kyle Walker). We want our FBs to be comfortable and confident receiving and distributing the ball. We want you to be calm when pressure is applied by the opponents. You must create width.

We want you to get high and wide when the GK is in possession, to create space for the CHs to receive the ball – but be ready for the GK to play directly to you if the passing lines are clear. Always try to be in a position to receive the ball off the CH.

The first option in this style of play is to always look and play forward as quickly as possible, either to feet or the space behind the opposition's defensive line. If there is time and space, look to travel with the ball.

The second option is play it sideways into a midfielder if they are free and showing for the ball.

The third option is to play the ball backwards so we can start the build up again through the other flank.

The fullback must possess a desire to get up and support the wide player, and also be able to overlap and provide quality crosses.

We want both FBs to attack at the same time. The space they leave is to be protected by the CDM.

Out of possession

Defend 1v1 situations aggressively.

FBs must be able to recover quickly.

Deny crosses.

If your opponents play a 4-3-3 system, then you will man mark their direct opponent on the wing.

You must provide cover and support to your CHs when play is on the opposite side of the pitch.

As the ball is passed to your opposing player, cover the ground quickly and prevent him from turning and running at you.

Try to force your opposing player inside where we are strong and compact, except when you are on the edge of your box when you should force them down the line and then try to prevent the cross.

Stay on your feet and only go to ground in the tackle if you're 100% certain you can win the ball. The seven S's are crucial in your role. What are they? If you are unsure, ask your coach.

4 & 8 Right and Left Midfielders (RM, LM, CDM)

In possession

CMs are there to link the possession between the FBs, CHs and the attacking unit. You are the middle point of the triangle, the focal point of the system, and always provide support for the central attacking players (9+10).

Your relationship with each other is pivotal to cohesive team play. Build an understanding; which foot does your partner prefer to pass from and receive with? Do they play quickly? Can they play 1 touch or do they need more touches?

You should be available at all throw-ins and provide constant support to teammates on the ball.

You must aim to capitalise on the spaces created by the attackers' runs; to set up an attempt at goal or possibly get a scoring chance for yourself.

Can you break forward and arrive in the box to score from a cross?

When one midfielder makes an advancing run, the other one must hold and tuck into a central position to keep the team's shape and balance. If possession is lost, he will become the CDM

You should always look to make yourself available for the ball, especially when the GK is in possession. What should your body shape look like at the point of contact?

Your first option will always be to look forward to the central attacking players. Retaining possession for the team is your responsibility.

When the FBs step into your 'zone', they will give you a sideways option; or maybe you can play a pass to the winger's feet or the space in behind the opposing fullbacks?

Out of possession

CMs are responsible for maintaining the shape of the triangle at all times. You do this to support the CAM and to try and block the opposition switching the field of play; something that would break down our system quickly. If you are unsure on this key responsibility, speak with your coach.

You should be approximately 15 yards apart from your fellow CM and always aware of the opponent's central options. Shift and mark them closely, but try not to damage the shape of your triangle!

DENY DELAY DEFLECT. If you are unsure of these 3 words, and what they mean in relation to defending out of possession, please ask your coach.

One of you must be between ball and goal and be able to screen the pass into the other team's CF.

Can we put pressure on the ball without losing our shape?

Do we have to try and win every ball? If the opponents should penetrate deep into the defensive third then you become a marking player inside the 18 yard box.

5 & 6 Central Defenders (CH)

In possession

We want our CHs to be comfortable and confident receiving and distributing the ball. We also want them to be calm when pressure is applied by the opponents.

You will build play from the back and can also push into midfield with or without the ball. This will give our defensive third perfect balance in the build-up.

When the goalkeeper has the ball, your positioning to start the build-up is important. You should begin at the corners of the penalty box, so you can spread the opponents' strikers who will want to close down and apply pressure.

Drop off to create depth when our team have possession, but push forward to condense and support when we move through the areas of the pitch.

Can you switch the point of our attack, and play long passes to players higher in the pitch?

You should look to make quick and effective passing choices and to minimize the risks. Do you have space to travel with the ball?

Communicate with your team at all times. This also helps you stay focused when the ball is at the opposing end of the field.

Out of possession

Do you need to win every ball?

Try to read the game and minimize the times you tackle on the floor. Are you making a slide tackle because you're out of position, covering a teammate, or chasing down a striker after they've caught us on the counter?

Prevent the CF from turning and running at you with the ball, get touch tight but not so tight that he uses you to help him turn.

As a CH, you must make sure that you are supporting your FBs when they are defending an opponent in possession. Your angle and distance of cover is crucial. Ask the coach if you are unsure!

The CHs are responsible for making sure the defence is shifting as one unit. You are the link between each of the FBs but, more importantly, you must read the opposition and communicate to the other defenders which adjustments are needed. It should look like the defensive unit is on a rope that is being guided and pulled by the two CHs.

Study emergency defending? Ask your coach to work with you in gaining understanding.

7 & 11 Right and Left Attacking Midfield (RAM, LAM)

In possession

We want our wingers to stay high and wide when we are in possession. Can you keep the opposing FB in a defensive position? Can you attack quickly if they decide to leave you?

You need to be creative and confident 1v1.

Recognise where you have created space in relation to where you want to receive the ball. Receive side-on wherever possible, to keep momentum as the ball arrives.

You must understand that when the fullback marks you tightly, the ball needs to be played to space behind them (this is where the pass will be made by your teammates). Likewise when you have space between you and the fullback, the ball must be played into your feet. How do you need to receive it? What will your body shape look like?

Look for opportunities to isolate the fullback and take them on 1 v 1 every time. If you have ten chances to take the defender on, then we want you to take all ten chances.

Can you combine with supporting central players in an attempt to exploit and beat their defenders? Can you provide an option at the far post for a long cross?

If our opposite winger is in possession of the ball move centrally to join the CF which will allow space for your FB to join the attack.

Swap sides with each other on a regular basis, to keep the opposition's defensive unit thinking constantly.

Out of possession

We want our wingers to stay high and wide when we are out of possession. But if the FB on your side has overlapped and is out of position, be aware that you might be needed to get back and cover for them.

You are responsible for defending the attacking play by the opposition full back.

Allow a space where you invite the goalkeeper to pass to one of the fullbacks. Once the goalkeeper has decided to pass, then you look to close and immediately apply pressure; the CF will work with you and drop back centrally anticipating a pass back to the goalkeeper.

The opposite side winger also comes across to eliminate space and shut down their passing options.

9 Centre Forward (CF)

In possession

You are expected to score the goals and win your team the game. A good striker can have the ball played into feet so that he can bring other players into play. How can you create space to receive to feet? Can you stay high to stretch the game creating space for the 10?

We want you to be able to hold the ball under pressure from an opponent and still be able to see supporting players. Feel with your arm to see if the defender is there, or check your shoulder for him. Can you receive side on and attack him?

You should be scanning at all times to see how the opposition are set up. Where can you hurt them most? Is there space in behind for you to run onto a penetrating pass?

Resist the temptation to check towards the ball too early, as this will close the spaces created by the midfield unit.

Build an understanding with the No 10 (read his document); which foot does he prefer to pass from? Does he play quickly? The timing of your runs in relation to which players are passing to you is vital. Know your own players and their capabilities. What sort of run do you need to make to stay onside?

Work out your shooting distance. Put an imaginary marker there and pull the trigger when you get within range. Be greedy!

Always attack the near post from crosses in open play. Your run will be unselfish, as it will draw defenders and create spaces for teammates to gain goal scoring chances. You are working at the pressure end of the pitch. Enjoy the responsibility and glory that comes with being the No 9, but always appreciate the work the team puts in behind you.

Out of possession

Try to occupy both CHs. Your defensive role is to deny the pass inside to the CH or back to the GK.

Can you make play predictable by luring the FB to make a pass to the GK, knowing that you can get there first?

Can you work out which CH is more likely to make a mistake? He might be the one to press when he's on the ball.

Don't waste your energy chasing FBs down the line. Close the passing lines and work centrally the width of the penalty box.

10 Central Attacking Mid (CAM)

In possession

The main responsibility for this player is to support and play off of the central striker (9).

You must read the game well and be able to anticipate our attacking play based upon the runs made by the attackers.

You must always look to keep the central balance of the attack by being available to receive the ball from any of the three attackers.

Can you read opposing central defenders in order to determine which type of run needs to be made? For example, if the CF makes a checking run to receive the ball and draws both of the central defenders, can you recognise this and immediately attack the space vacated by his movement.

Can you find space continually? How can you achieve this? Can you receive the ball seeing both goals and play forward quickly?

You are the playmaker within the system and looked upon as the one who makes things happen in and around the box with your skill and vision. The No 10 will always be looked upon to create scoring chances for others and for themselves.

Study and understand the No 9's document as your partnership with him is crucial to the team's success.

Out of possession

You will need to support the press when the opposition players make a bad touch or are facing their goal with the ball. This needs to be done quickly and aggressively.

Try to close the passing lines from the opposition CHs and apply instant pressure if the ball is played to their CDM. If you steal the ball, use it purposefully to hurt the other team.

Play between the width of the penalty box and assist in shutting the opponents into uncomfortable areas. Speak with your coach if you are unsure as to what this means.