

## Castlewellan Town FC — The Club Game Model

**What a Castlewellan player looks like, from U6 to the senior team — one page, both sites.**

The senior curriculum names the club's identity: **organised, adaptable, competitive, and brave**. A team that knows what it is doing without the ball, is willing to take risks with it, and can change its shape without losing its shape of mind. This page exists to say something the two coaching folders have never said out loud: *the youth sessions build exactly that player*. Every senior principle below has a youth session — usually several — where it is first planted, years before anyone calls it a principle.

None of this changes how a youth session is run. Youth football at this club is about touches, decisions, confidence and enjoyment — the sessions already say so, and the age-group guidance in the youth folder always wins. This page is for the coach who wants to know *why these forty-four sessions and not some other forty-four*: because they are the junior half of one idea.

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### The four moments, at every age

| Moment                   | The club's way                                                                                            | Seeded in youth                                                | Named in seniors                     |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>In possession</b>     | Hard to press — always an option short, wide and long; forward when forward is on, patient when it is not | “Support Angles — Three Options, Always” (S14)                 | Support & passing angles             |
| <b>Out of possession</b> | Compact and collective — nobody presses alone; middle and box defended first                              | “Press, Cover and Balance” (S25)                               | Pressure, cover, balance             |
| <b>Won it</b>            | Think before you react — counter, find the free player, or keep it                                        | “Counter-Attacking — The Three Seconds After You Win It” (S22) | Recognise the picture before playing |
| <b>Lost it</b>           | The nearest players react first; everyone else recovers goal-side                                         | “Counter-Pressing — The Three Seconds After You Lose It” (S21) | The nearest players react first      |

## Where each senior principle is born

**In possession.** *Width & depth* starts life as “Width and Depth — Making the Pitch Big” (S13) — the same principle, the same words, seven years earlier. *Support & passing angles* is S14 (“Three Options, Always”). *Progression — through, around or over* is the whole arc of S15–S20: “Playing Forward” teaches when, “Building from the Back”, “Beating the First Press” and “Building Under Real Pressure” teach the three ways out. *Overloads* begin as “The Wall Pass” (S09), “Overlaps and Underlaps” (S10), “The Third-Man Run” (S11) and “Attacking Overloads” (S31). *Switching the point of attack* grows out of S13’s big pitch and S18’s third way out.

**Out of possession.** *Protect the centre, then the box* is “The Compact Block — Making the Pitch Small” (S26), “Defending the Wide Areas — Where We Send Them” (S27) and “Defending the Box — The Last Thirty Metres” (S28), in that order — the senior priority is literally the youth session sequence. *Pressure, cover, balance* is S25 by name. *Collective pressing triggers* and *defend the space in behind* are the senior-shaped versions of the reading and patience first taught in “The 1v1 Defender” (S07) and “Defending the Wide 1v1” (S08): approach, angle, patience — then, later, together.

**Both transitions.** The senior programme’s proudest idea — *transition is a decision, not a reflex* — is taught to eleven-year-olds as “Transition Decisions — Nobody Tells You Which One” (S24), flanked by S21–S23. A senior coach inheriting a Castlewellan youth player is inheriting someone who has been asked “counter or keep?” since primary school.

**The player underneath it all.** Brave in possession starts at “The 1v1 Attacker” (S05) and “The First Touch That Travels” (S02). Trusted to decide starts wherever a coach follows the folder’s standing instruction: *say less than feels comfortable* — the youth method (guided discovery, questions, planned non-intervention) **is** the senior method (“players are trusted to make decisions”), applied to smaller people.

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## What this asks of coaches

**Youth coaches:** nothing new. Run the sessions as written, at the age-appropriate format, with the enjoyment-first priorities the folder already states. If it helps, know that S13, S14, S21–S25 are the sessions the senior team will one day thank you for.

**Senior coaches:** assume the principles have been met before, and coach accordingly — a new signing from the club’s own youth section needs vocabulary connected (“this is the third-man run you know — here’s where it lives in our Tuesday”), not concepts introduced. The “New to the Squad” pathway does this; this page is its map.

**Everyone:** the formations differ, the pitch sizes differ, the stakes differ. The football is the same football.

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*Castlewellan Town FC · one club, one idea · written by Alan Cunningham with Claude AI.  
Session numbers refer to the youth folder; principle names to the senior Season Architecture.*