



Castlewellan Town FC — Senior Coaching Curriculum

Stage 1: Season Architecture

A nine-month, principle-led programme for two one-hour sessions a week, built around a club identity that survives every change of formation.

Stage 1 only — the architecture. Per the production sequence, this stops here for review before Week 1 is written in full.

0. How to read this document

This curriculum does not build the team around a formation. It builds the team around a set of **principles** that stay constant, and teaches players to express those principles through **whichever formation and structure fit the players available and the opponent in front of them**. Three words are used precisely throughout, and are worth fixing before anything else:

TERM	MEANING
Formation	The nominal shape on the team sheet — 4-3-3, 3-5-2, and so on. What you'd tell a supporter if they asked how the team lines up. It is a label, not an instruction.
Structure	How the team is actually organised, moment to moment, in each phase of the game — the build-up shape, the pressing shape, the shape when defending a set piece. A team can play a 4-3-3 formation and build up in a back three every week.
Principles	The behaviours that stay true regardless of formation or structure — provide width, protect the centre, press with cover behind the presser. These are what is coached. Formation and structure are the vehicles; principles are the content.

A session that "teaches 4-3-3" teaches one team's answer to one problem. A session that teaches *width* teaches every team's answer, in every shape they'll ever play. This curriculum is built entirely on the second kind of session.

1. Club Playing Philosophy

Organised, adaptable, competitive, and brave. A team that knows what it is doing without the ball, that is willing to take risks with it, and that can change its shape without losing its shape of mind.

In possession, the team should be **hard to press**: whoever is playing behind the ball — centre-backs, a dropping midfielder, the goalkeeper — splits and offers passing lines in more than one direction, and somebody is always available short, long and wide. The team goes forward when forward is on, and is patient when it is not; recognising the difference is the actual skill being coached, not the forward pass itself.

Without the ball, the team is **compact and collective**. Nobody presses alone. The team accepts that a well-organised block concedes territory before it concedes chances, and defends the middle of the pitch and the penalty area first.

In both transitions, the team **thinks before it reacts**. Losing the ball does not automatically mean chase it; winning the ball does not automatically mean force it forward. The three or four seconds after the ball changes hands are coached as deliberately as anything else in the programme, because at this level they decide more matches than any set-piece routine will.

Underneath all of it: **players are trusted to make decisions**. The programme is built on guided discovery and game-based practice rather than rehearsed patterns, because a team that only knows what to do when the picture matches training will not cope with a Saturday, which never quite does.

2. Formation-Neutral Principles of Play

Fourteen principles, grouped under possession, non-possession and the two transitions. Every week of the season is built on one of these as its **primary principle**, with a second reinforced alongside it. None of them describe a formation. All of them describe a job that needs doing regardless of formation, and each is written with the position-free language used consistently for the rest of the programme.

IN POSSESSION

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS ON THE PITCH
Width & depth	The team occupies the full pitch — touchline to touchline, box to box — so the opposition cannot compress the game into a small area. Width can come from a full-back, a winger, or a midfielder who drifts wide; depth from a striker, a runner from midfield, or a goalkeeper stepping up. Who provides it changes with the shape; that it is provided does not.
Support & passing angles	Every player in possession has at least two team-mates offering a different angle — one who can be found under pressure, one who progresses the play. Support means distance and angle, not proximity; standing next to the ball-carrier removes an option rather than adding one.
Progression — through, around or over	The team has three ways to break a defensive line: a pass into space between opponents (through), a pass around the outside (around), and a longer pass or switch that skips a line altogether (over). A team that can only progress one way is solved the moment the opposition removes it.
Overloads & rest defence	The team creates a numbers or positional advantage where the ball is, while leaving enough players behind it to defend the counter if possession is lost. Rest defence is not "who's left over" — it is planned, and it is coached as carefully as the attack itself.
Switching the point of attack	When the ball side becomes congested, the team moves it to the far side before pressure arrives there, rather than after.

OUT OF POSSESSION

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS ON THE PITCH
Protect the centre, then the box	Central areas and the penalty area are defended first; width is conceded before central compactness is.
Compactness — vertical and horizontal	The distance between the front and back of the defensive block, and between its widest players, stays small enough that no pass can be threaded through it without an opponent needing two touches to do it.
Pressure, cover, balance	The player closest to the ball pressures it; the next player covers the space and the pass behind the presser; the rest of the team balances across the pitch, ready to shift. No pressing action happens without this structure already in place.
Collective pressing triggers	The team presses together, off a shared signal — a poor first touch, a pass played backwards, a full-back forced infield — not off one player's individual decision to chase the ball.
Defend the space in behind	The line defends the space behind itself as much as the ball in front of it, particularly against direct or in-behind runners.

TRANSITION TO ATTACK (REGAIN)

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS ON THE PITCH
Recognise the picture before playing	Not every regain is a green light to go forward immediately. The decision — counter now, find the free player, or secure and reset — is based on space, opponent balance, numbers, and match state, and is coached as a decision, not a reflex.
Exploit the disorganised opponent	When the picture <i>does</i> say go, the team goes early and directly, before the opposition can get goal-side and re-form its shape.

TRANSITION TO DEFENCE (LOSS)

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS ON THE PITCH
The nearest players react first	The player who loses the ball has an immediate job (delay, foul-stop, or press); the next two players close the pass forward and protect the central lane; players further away recover goal-side rather than chasing the ball.
Counter-press or recover — a team decision, not an individual one	The team either counter-presses collectively within the first few seconds to win the ball back high, or drops together to defend organised — never a mix of one player pressing alone while the rest retreat.

3. Common Coaching Terminology

Consistent language, used identically by every coach and repeated by players, so a one-word call does the job a paragraph would otherwise need. Introduced gradually through the early season and then used without further explanation for the rest of it.

CALL	MEANING
Turn	You have time and space to face forward — do it.
Set	Take a touch and keep it, the picture ahead isn't on yet.
Hold	Keep the ball, don't force the next pass.
Drop	Come short to offer an out-ball.
Squeeze	Close the distance to the ball as a unit, right now.
Screen	Block the pass or the shooting line without diving into a tackle.
Lock	Mark tight — this runner is your job and nobody else's.
Travel	Carry the ball forward, the space in front is open.
Switch	Move the ball to the far side.
Step	Press forward out of the defensive line.
Cover	Fill the space behind a team-mate who has pressed or been beaten.
Delay	Don't dive in — slow the opponent down and hold your shape.
Inside / Outside	Directs the presser which way to force the ball-carrier.
Time	You have longer than you think — relax the next action.

PLAYER ROLES RATHER THAN FIXED POSITIONS

Positions on the team sheet are labels for selection. **Roles** describe the job a player is doing at a given moment, and the same role is frequently performed by different positions depending on the structure chosen that week.

ROLE	TYPICAL JOB
First-line build-up player	Receives from the goalkeeper or wins first phase possession; usually a centre-back, but a holding midfielder dropping in performs the identical job.
Central progression player	Receives facing forward between the lines and turns defence into attack with the next pass.
Wide outlet	Provides width high up the pitch — full-back, wing-back, winger or an inside forward who has swapped with an overlapping team-mate.
Player between the lines	Finds pockets of space between the opposition's midfield and defensive lines.
Depth runner	Threatens the space behind the last defender.
Support player	Offers an angle close to the ball to keep possession moving.
Balance player	Occupies the side of the pitch away from the ball, ready for the switch.
Rest-defence player	Positioned behind the highest point of the attack specifically to stop the counter.

ROLE	TYPICAL JOB
First presser	Initiates the press — often a striker or winger, occasionally a central midfielder stepping out.
Cover defender	Covers the space and the pass behind the first presser.
Screen	Sits in front of the back line to block the central passing lane.
Box defender	Holds a defensive position inside the penalty area during crosses and set plays.
Transition runner	Makes the first forward run the instant possession is regained.
Target player	Provides an out-ball under pressure who can hold up play and bring others in.
Second-ball player	Positioned to win the loose ball after a duel, long pass, or knockdown.

A full-back can be a wide outlet one week and a first-line build-up player the next. A winger can be a depth runner in one structure and a central progression player, tucked inside, in another. Players are coached to recognise which role the picture in front of them calls for — not to memorise a job description tied to a shirt number.

4. Season Phases

Six phases across 36 weeks. Principles are introduced progressively but are **revisited**, not retired — Phase 4 does not stop coaching compactness because Phase 2 introduced it.

PHASE	WEEKS	FOCUS
1 — Pre-Season Foundation	1–5	Physical readiness through football, team standards, communication language, core principles introduced, honest assessment of the squad's attributes, first look at adaptable structures.
2 — Early-Season Identity	6–11	Build-up principles, progressing through pressure, compactness, collective pressing, transition reactions, set-piece foundations.
3 — Developing Collective Understanding	12–17	Unit relationships, overloads, playing between the lines, final-third combinations, defensive shifting, pressing different opposition shapes.
4 — Tactical Adaptability	18–23	Changing shape in and out of possession, alternative build-up structures, one striker vs two, back four vs back three, mid-block and low-block organisation.
5 — Match Management	24–29	Protecting a lead, chasing a game, playing with/against ten, managing momentum, controlling restarts, the closing minutes.
6 — Performance Consolidation	30–36	Refining identity, fixing recurring weaknesses, opposition-specific preparation, maximising set pieces, sustaining intensity, decisive matches.

5. The 36-Week Overview

Match-day connection describes what a supporter should be able to see on the Saturday that follows each week's training — the observable link between the training ground and the result.

WK	PHASE	TUESDAY THEME	THURSDAY THEME	PRIMARY PRINCIPLE	SECONDARY PRINCIPLE	PHYSICAL EMPHASIS	MATCH-DAY CONNECTION
1	1 Pre-Season	Reintroduction: ball-based conditioning	Standards & communication	Support & passing angles	—	Aerobic base via SSGs	Team sets its own standards before ball one
2	1	Building the aerobic base through possession	Width & depth in small spaces	Width & depth	Support & passing angles	Aerobic base, moderate duel volume	Squad shows early shape without the ball
3	1	Pressure-cover-balance introduced	Compactness as a unit	Pressure, cover, balance	Compactness	Repeated accelerations, moderate	First press-and-recover pattern visible
4	1	Transition to attack: first picture	Transition to defence: first reaction	Recognise the picture before playing	Nearest players react first	Building tolerance to repeat sprints	Fewer aimless forward balls after regains
5	1 (review)	Four-week consolidation game	Set-piece foundations (corners)	All Phase 1 principles	Attacking corners	Moderate-high, pre-season peak load	First fixture-ready attacking corner
6	2 Early-Season	Build-up vs first line of pressure	Playing around pressure — wide overload	Progression: through, around, over	Width & depth	High-intensity actions rising	Cleaner exits under opposition press
7	2	Playing through pressure — central	Compact mid-block introduced	Progression: through	Compactness	Duel intensity	Fewer turnovers in the build-up third
8	2	Collective pressing triggers	Defensive set pieces	Collective pressing triggers	Defend the space in behind	Repeated high-intensity press actions	Press starts on a shared signal, not a chase
9	2	Switching the point of attack	Free-kick routines (wide)	Switching the point of attack	Support & passing angles	Moderate, tempo-based	Fewer sustained spells trapped on one side
10	2	Rest defence during build-up	Throw-in patterns	Overloads & rest defence	Recognise the picture before playing	Moderate	Fewer clean counters conceded from our own attacks
11	2 (review)	Phase 2 consolidation game	Set-piece review & confidence finishing	All Phase 2 principles	Progression	Moderate-high	Identity recognisable across two structures
12	3 Collective Understanding	Unit relationships: back line + first midfield line	Playing between the lines	Player between the lines	Support & passing angles	Repeated actions, moderate-high	Central receivers turning under less pressure
13	3	Creating overloads — central	Creating overloads — wide	Overloads & rest defence	Width & depth	High-intensity duels	Numbers-up situations converted more often
14	3	Final-third combinations	Arriving in the box with numbers	Progression: through, around, over	Overloads & rest defence	Repeat sprint, high	More players arriving late into the box
15	3	Defensive shifting as a block	Pressing a back four	Compactness	Pressure, cover, balance	Change of direction volume	Block shifts as one unit, not in parts
16	3	Pressing a back three / three build-up	Defensive corners & second-phase	Collective pressing triggers	Defend the space in behind	Moderate-high	Press adapts to opponent shape inside a half

WK	PHASE	TUESDAY THEME	THURSDAY THEME	PRIMARY PRINCIPLE	SECONDARY PRINCIPLE	PHYSICAL EMPHASIS	MATCH-DAY CONNECTION
17	3 (review)	Phase 3 consolidation game	Set-piece review	All Phase 3 principles	Player between the lines	Moderate	Combination play visible in the final third
18	4 Tactical Adaptability	Changing shape in possession: back four to back three	Changing shape without the ball: mid-block to low-block	Structural adaptability (possession)	Compactness	Moderate, decision-density high	Shape change without a stoppage in play
19	4	Alternative build-up: 2-3 vs 3-2	Alternative build-up: 3-1	Progression: through, around, over	Rest defence	Moderate	Build-up unaffected by which shape is used
20	4	One striker vs two: attacking principles	One striker vs two: defensive principles	Width & depth	Overloads & rest defence	Moderate-high	Front players interchange without confusion
21	4	High press vs mid-block: choosing	Low block organisation	Collective pressing triggers	Protect the centre, then the box	High-intensity press bouts	Team defends in more than one block by choice
22	4	Playing against a high press	Playing against a low block	Progression: through, around, over	Switching the point of attack	Moderate-high	Two distinct in-possession solutions on show
23	4 (review)	Phase 4 consolidation game — shape change under pressure	Set-piece expansion (second option)	All Phase 4 principles	Collective pressing triggers	Moderate	Formation changes mid-match without confusion
24	5 Match Management	Protecting a lead	Game management: seeing out the clock	Recognise the picture before playing	Compactness	Moderate, situational intensity	Fewer points dropped from winning positions
25	5	Chasing a game	Breaking down a deep, organised opponent	Progression: through, around, over	Overloads & rest defence	Moderate-high	More territory won in the closing 20 minutes when behind
26	5	Playing with ten players	Playing against ten players	Compactness	Overloads & rest defence	Moderate	Composure and shape maintained after a red card
27	5	Managing momentum after scoring / conceding	Controlling restarts (kick-offs, goal kicks)	Recognise the picture before playing	Nearest players react first	Moderate	Fewer immediate goals conceded after our own goal
28	5	Final-five-minutes scenarios (winning)	Final-five-minutes scenarios (losing)	All transition principles	All possession principles	Moderate-high, match-specific	Composed game management late on
29	5 (review)	Phase 5 consolidation game — scripted match states	Set-piece review & pressure finishing	All Phase 5 principles	Recognise the picture before playing	Moderate	Team controls at least two distinct match states
30	6 Consolidation	Refining identity: possession principles	Refining identity: defensive principles	All possession principles	All non-possession principles	Moderate, maintenance	Recognisable style regardless of opponent
31	6	Opposition-specific: direct, physical opponent	Opposition-specific: possession-based opponent	Compactness	Progression: through, around, over	Duel intensity, moderate	Two clearly different tactical plans delivered

WK	PHASE	TUESDAY THEME	THURSDAY THEME	PRIMARY PRINCIPLE	SECONDARY PRINCIPLE	PHYSICAL EMPHASIS	MATCH-DAY CONNECTION
32	6	Opposition-specific: fast counter-attacking opponent	Set-piece maximisation	Defend the space in behind	Rest defence	Moderate-high	Fewer transition goals conceded
33	6	Addressing the season's recurring weakness (diagnostic)	Addressing the season's recurring weakness (solution)	Coach-selected, season-specific	Coach-selected, season-specific	Moderate	Targeted improvement in the identified area
34	6	Maintaining intensity — fixture congestion management	Sharpness & confidence work	Pressure, cover, balance	Support & passing angles	Reduced volume, high quality	Squad freshness into the run-in
35	6	Decisive-match preparation: our principles vs this opponent	Decisive-match set pieces & shape confirmation	All core principles	Match-specific	Low-moderate, taper	Clear, calm final preparation
36	6 (season review)	Season-defining match — full expression of identity	Structured review & individual feedback	All core principles	All core principles	Low, recovery-oriented	Team recognisable as itself, whatever the shape

Weeks 5, 11, 17, 23, 29 and 36 anchor the four-week and phase-end review cycle described in Section 9. Where a Saturday fixture is postponed, moved to a cup date, or a week carries a rare mid-week match, the coach shifts the Tuesday/Thursday content by a day rather than dropping content — the principle sequence does not reset.

6. The Weekly Cycle — Tuesday and Thursday

Every week is one idea taught twice, from two directions, either side of a Saturday match. The two sessions are never independent topics.

Tuesday is re-entry and construction. Physically, it carries the week's larger stimulus, because players are furthest from Saturday's match and closest to a full recovery window. Tactically, it opens with a short, honest look at what the previous match showed — not a lecture, three or four coaching points — and then introduces or develops the week's primary principle through possession-based and small-to-medium-sided games. Technical execution under match-realistic pressure is coached inside these games, not stripped out into isolated repetition.

Thursday is sharpening and rehearsal. The physical load drops; the technical and tactical quality does not. Thursday confirms team shape, rehearses the specific scenarios and set pieces the weekend is likely to produce, and finishes with something that sends players into the weekend confident — a finishing game, a possession game the team dominates, a shape run-through that clicks. Players should leave a Thursday session sharp and certain, not fatigued and uncertain.

Match-day and post-match close the loop. Saturday's objectives are drawn directly from the week's primary and secondary principles (Section 5 and the weekly Match-Day Objectives template, Section 11). The following Tuesday's review section (Section 8) opens the next cycle with what that match actually showed.

Every week's session plans account for uneven match loads: players who played 90 minutes, players who played a fragment, players returning from injury, and players who missed the match altogether all need a different Tuesday, and the standard session template (Section 11) carries a named field for exactly that adjustment.

7. Physical-Load Progression

Conditioning is delivered through football throughout — there is no stand-alone running block anywhere in the programme. Load is managed as an arc across the season, and as a wave within each week.

Across the season:

- **Weeks 1-5 (Pre-Season):** progressive aerobic base-building through small-sided and medium-sided games, rising duel and repeat-sprint exposure, peaking in intensity by Week 5 ahead of the first competitive fixtures.
- **Weeks 6-23 (Early season through Tactical Adaptability):** a maintained in-season wave — higher relative load on Tuesday, lower on Thursday — modulated week to week by fixture outcomes, cup matches, and individual match minutes.
- **Weeks 24-29 (Match Management):** load stays moderate and increasingly situation-specific; physical themes are expressed through scripted match-state practices rather than generic intensity work.
- **Weeks 30-36 (Consolidation):** a controlled taper toward the season's most significant fixtures — reduced volume, sustained quality, protecting freshness over accumulating more work.

Within each week, and account for players who did not carry a full match load, using the standard adjustments below:

PLAYER GROUP	TUESDAY ADJUSTMENT
Played 75+ minutes Saturday	Standard Tuesday load; emphasis on quality over volume in the first 15 minutes
Played a fragment (under 45 minutes)	Standard-to-elevated Tuesday load; this is a legitimate training stimulus for this group
Returning from injury	Individualised reduced volume, built up according to medical guidance — see the caution below
Missed the match / unused substitute	Elevated Tuesday load; additional targeted conditioning worked into the session's games rather than delivered separately

A caution, stated once and meant throughout the programme: none of the above constitutes medical advice or a return-to-play diagnosis. Any player returning from injury or reporting concussion symptoms is managed according to qualified medical or physiotherapy guidance, not the training plan. Where a club has access to sports-science support (GPS, heart-rate data, a physiotherapist), that guidance takes precedence over anything written here; where it does not, the coach's own observation — set out under Coach's Eye in every session — is the tool available, and it is a real one.

8. Set-Piece Development Pathway

A small number of reliable routines, taught early and refined all season, rather than a large catalogue introduced once and forgotten. Set pieces get a dedicated slot on Thursdays, building progressively:

PHASE	SET-PIECE WORK
1 (Wk 5)	Foundations: one reliable attacking corner routine, defensive corner organisation, restart discipline (kick-offs, goal kicks).
2 (Wk 8–10)	Add: defensive set-piece structure formalised, one wide free-kick routine, throw-in patterns (defensive and midfield thirds).
3 (Wk 16–17)	Add: second-phase organisation after a corner (rebounds, second balls), a direct free-kick option, attacking throw-ins.
4 (Wk 23)	Expand: a second attacking corner option (near-post variation), refine defensive marking assignments against the season's evidence so far.
5 (Wk 27–29)	Pressure-test: set pieces rehearsed inside match-state scenarios (defending a lead, chasing a goal), penalty protocol confirmed.
6 (Wk 32, 35)	Maximise: opposition-specific set-piece adjustments, final confirmation of routines and personnel ahead of decisive fixtures.

The full routine-by-routine detail (starting positions, blocks and screens compliant with the Laws of the Game, rebound positions, rest defence, alternative options, diagrams and image prompts) is produced with each relevant week in Stage 2 — kept here to a small, deliberately limited set so that what the team executes is well-drilled rather than merely demonstrated once.

9. Monthly (Four-Week) Review Points

A structured review sits at the end of every four-week block — Weeks 5, 11, 17, 23, 29 and a season-closing review after Week 36 (six reviews across the 36-week season, aligned to the phase boundaries rather than a rigid calendar count, so a phase is never cut mid-idea). Each review covers, per the template used throughout the programme: principles covered, evidence of progress, recurring technical and tactical problems, physical observations, communication and leadership development, set-piece progress, match transfer, and priorities for the next block — plus the four contingency routes (ahead of schedule / behind schedule / inconsistent attendance / results-performance mismatch) detailed in Section 12 below and applied fresh each time.

10. Visual Diagram Legend

One consistent symbol set for every tactical diagram in the programme, extending the convention already established for the club's youth materials so the two programmes read as one family.

SYMBOL	MEANING
Green player	Team in possession / the team being coached
Black player	Opposition
Yellow player	Goalkeeper (either team)
Orange marker	Equipment — cones, poles, flat markers, gates (never a player)
Solid arrow	Pass
Solid arrow, double line	Dribble / ball carried
Dashed arrow	Player movement without the ball
Dashed arrow, short	Pressing run
Curved dashed arrow	Defensive recovery run
Looping solid arrow	Rotation between two players
● (ball symbol)	Ball starting position
Grey shaded zone	Target zone, channel, or area of emphasis
×	Restart location (free kick, throw-in, corner)
Coach silhouette icon	Coach position
Rectangle, full or dashed outline	Pitch or grid boundary, with dimensions labelled

Diagrams are top-down, use this legend exclusively, and are kept to one clear phase of play per image — a practice with two distinct phases (for example, a build-up pattern followed by a finishing phase) is shown as two linked diagrams rather than one crowded one. Every diagram in Stage 2 is accompanied by its own AI image-generation prompt, specifying this legend, exact player numbers and colours, pitch dimensions, and a clean vector, light-background, coaching-manual style — consistent with the realistic training-ground illustrations that accompany each main practice.

11. Standard Session Template

Every session in Stage 2 (and, eventually, in the club's coaching app) is built from this identical field set, so content stays interchangeable across the season and portable into Markdown, JSON or a database without rewriting.

Week-level fields: Week number · Season phase · Core principle · Secondary principle · Previous match review focus · Weekly tactical problem · Formation-neutral explanation · Example structural applications (at least two shapes) · Match-day objectives (3 team, 3 unit, individual role reminders) · Measurable performance indicators.

Session-level fields: Session number · Week number · Season phase · Training day · Session theme · Short summary · Tags · Primary learning objective · Secondary learning objective · Match connection · Expected tactical outcome · Expected physical load · Recommended intensity · Equipment list (exact quantities) · Player numbers · Goalkeeper requirements · Pitch dimensions · Area layout · Attendance contingencies (low / high) · Restricted-space contingency · Minute-by-minute timeline summing to 60.

Practice-level fields: Practice name · Duration · Training load (Low / Moderate / Moderate-high / High) · Tactical purpose · Organisation (dimensions, numbers, GK involvement, team sizes, neutrals, equipment, starting positions, ball supply, restart location, coach position, rotation method, direction of play) · Practice walkthrough · Rules · Tactical roles (individual / unit / team / transition) · Decision-making triggers · Communication language used · Coaching points (technical / tactical / physical / psychological / communication & leadership) · Guided discovery questions (5–8) · Progressions (3+) · Regressions (3+) · Common problems and corrections · Coach interventions · Success indicators · Coach's eye · Tactical diagram + AI image prompt · Realistic illustration + AI image prompt.

Formation-translation field, attached to every principle-led practice: *Applying This Across Different Shapes* — which roles perform it, what stays the same, what changes, what must not change, the risk each structure carries, and how the opponent's shape should influence the choice.

Stage 1 — Quality-Control Check

- Formation is never treated as the organising idea; principles are. ✓
- Every week names a primary and secondary principle, not a formation. ✓
- The 36-week table sums to 36 weeks / 72 sessions and covers all six phases. ✓
- Physical load is planned as a season arc and a weekly wave, and accounts for uneven

match minutes. ✓

- Set-piece development is a small, progressively built set, not a catalogue. ✓
- Review points are fixed at four-week intervals aligned to phase boundaries. ✓
- Terminology, roles and legend are defined once and used consistently from here on. ✓
- Design and voice match the club's existing (Youth) coaching materials. ✓

This is Stage 1 only. Per the production sequence, Week 1 (full Tuesday and Thursday sessions, diagrams, illustrations, image prompts and coach review) is written next, on approval, and each subsequent week follows one at a time on request.

Written by Alan Cunningham with Claude AI · Castlewellan Town FC — Senior Coaching Curriculum · session design follows the four-corner model used in UEFA coach education (technical, tactical, physical, psychological) and the principle-led, formation-neutral approach set out in modern coach education. An independent club resource, not an official UEFA or Irish FA publication and not endorsed by either.