

Donald Park appointed SFA Head of Coaching



Former Hearts' player and Hibs' coach Donald Park has been appointed as Head of Coaching and will work closely with the Scotland national youth team coaches as well as provide coaching support and mentorship to academies within the Club Academy Scotland structure.

In addition, Jim Fleeting will move on from his post as Director of Football Development to become Director of Coaching and will lead on coaching within the seven regional Performance Schools whilst also overseeing the coach education programme.

As part of the changes Andrew Gould will succeed Jim Fleeting by becoming Head of Football Development, overseeing the grassroots football programmes following 10 years as Head of Regional Development.

SFA Performance Director Malky Mackay said: "Jim and Donald are two highly respected and experienced coaches and these new roles will greatly enhance our coaching programme at all levels.

"Our coach education programme is among the most highly-regarded in Europe but these changes will allow us to provide greater focus in education and mentoring at all levels of the game.

"The roles will not only provide our own national youth teams and Performance School coaches with better support, but the clubs, and the coaches working within the clubs, will also benefit greatly.

“These are important changes that will support the development of our coaches and ultimately serve to help us produce better players for the Scotland national team.”

The appointments are the next stage of Project Brave, a series of changes aimed at harnessing the success of the strategic plan and ensure a more efficient pathway to first-team football.

The proposals include a reduction from the current 29 funded academies to a maximum of 16, selected via an independently audited criteria-based system. That, in turn, would streamline the number of players in the academy system from around 2500 to around 1200, bringing greater focus to talent development and optimising playing opportunities.

In addition, enhanced funding for achieving Measureable Performance Outcomes will encourage best practice, the alignment of youth-age matches to a summer season will promote attractive football and the return of reserve-team football is designed to expose young players to more intense competition at the key age of development.

Since the launch of Scotland United: A 2020 Vision in 2011, the Scottish FA has worked in partnership with senior clubs to provide a pathway for the country’s most talented players from the seven regional performance schools, Club Academy Scotland and the national youth teams programme.