

SOUTH GALWAY STORMERS

CLUB CURRICULUM GUIDE

What players should learn, how learning progresses and what readiness looks like

Cubs • Academy • U12 • U14 • U16 • U18

Version 1

0. How to Use This Guide

This guide translates the Stormers coaching philosophy into a club-wide learning pathway. It explains the purpose of each age group, the phases players move through and the outcomes coaches should work toward.

- Use the age-group overview to understand where your team fits in the pathway.
- Use the phase tables to plan the season and maintain a clear development sequence.
- Look one stage backward to understand what players may already have experienced.
- Look one stage forward to understand what your team is preparing players to do next.
- Treat the outcomes as direction, not selection criteria. Players develop at different rates.
- Use the later practice-session guides to turn each phase into weekly sessions.

The curriculum tells us what to develop and in what order. Practice plans tell us what to run today.

1. Curriculum Purpose and Principles

The purpose of the curriculum

The Stormers curriculum gives coaches a shared development pathway while preserving the freedom to respond to the players in front of them. It is designed to build long-term confidence, skill, understanding and responsibility rather than short-term results.

Six curriculum principles

Build from the player outward

Begin with movement, confidence and individual control before adding pressure, combinations, team concepts and systems.

Skills must lead to decisions

Technique matters, but players must learn when, where and why to use it.

Learning should become increasingly game-like

Practices progress from exploration and guided repetition toward live decisions and realistic pressure.

Revisit rather than rush

Important skills and concepts return across several stages with greater speed, pressure and complexity.

Prepare players for the next stage

Each age group should leave players confident with the demands they will meet next.

Adapt without lowering the purpose

Coaches may simplify or extend activities, but the intended learning outcome should remain clear.

2. The Stormers Pathway at a Glance

The purpose of each stage can be expressed in one short phrase. These phrases do not replace the curriculum; they clarify the main development priority.

Stage	Pathway purpose	Curriculum emphasis	Game emphasis
Cubs	Love the game	Movement, confidence and ball familiarity	Play, exploration and very simple decisions
Academy	Learn to play	Core skills and simple basketball actions	Small-sided play with guided choices
U12	Learn to think	Technique connected to decisions and advantage	1v1 to 4v4 principles and basic team play
U14	Learn to adapt	Skills under pressure and tactical awareness	Changing situations, screening, help and transition
U16	Perform under pressure	Consistency, roles and team systems	Game-speed execution and opponent preparation
U18	Lead and prepare	Advanced decisions, leadership and adult readiness	Game management, adjustment and ownership

The philosophy stays consistent. The level of independence, pressure and tactical responsibility increases.

3. Development Strands Across the Club

The same development strands appear throughout the pathway. What changes is the complexity, pressure and independence expected at each stage.

Movement and physical literacy

Balance, coordination, acceleration, stopping, turning, landing and safe physical development.

Ball control

Ball familiarity, dribbling, protection, changes of pace and direction, and control with either hand.

Passing and receiving

Target hands, passing technique, receiving balance, passing angles, timing and movement after the pass.

Shooting and finishing

Confidence near the basket, balanced shooting, finishing footwork, shot selection and finishing under pressure.

Defending and rebounding

Safe stance and movement, containment, help, recovery, rebounding and team defensive responsibility.

Spacing and team play

Seeing space, supporting teammates, creating advantage, transition and increasingly structured team principles.

Decision-making

Scanning, choosing between pass, dribble and shot, reading defenders, managing advantage and adapting in games.

Rules, responsibility and leadership

Court language, rules, conduct, role understanding, game management and player ownership.

4. Cubs Curriculum

Love the game

Primary curriculum focus

Movement, confidence, ball familiarity and belonging.

Phase progression

Phase	Phase approach	Expected outcomes
1. Welcome, Movement and Ball Confidence	Create a welcoming routine. Use movement games and a ball from day one. Build safe stopping, balance, confidence and early court awareness.	Players join in confidently, move safely, handle the ball without fear and recognise basic court areas and instructions.
2. Moving with the Ball	Develop walking dribbles, stopping, direction changes, use of both hands, passing, catching and close shooting through active games.	Players move with the ball under increasing control, pass and catch with a partner, stop safely and shoot from an achievable distance.
3. Playing Together	Introduce movement after passing, helping the ball carrier, open space, direction of play and simple possession changes.	Players begin to spread out, share the ball, recognise teammates as options and understand attack and defence direction.
4. Using Skills in Games	Introduce 1v1, 2v1, 2v2 and simple 3v3 gradually. Use basic rules without stopping play too often.	Players make simple pass, dribble and shot choices, defend safely and participate in small-team basketball.
5. Celebrate and Prepare	Revisit favourite activities, combine core skills, recognise personal progress and explain Academy positively.	Players enjoy basketball, show growing independence and approach Academy with confidence and curiosity.

Ready for Academy

- Enjoy attending and joining in.
- Move safely and confidently.
- Handle, bounce, pass and catch with growing control.
- Understand basic court areas, direction and simple rules.
- Share the ball and respond positively to mistakes.

5. Academy Curriculum

Learn to play

Primary curriculum focus

Core skills and simple basketball actions.

Phase progression

Phase	Phase approach	Expected outcomes
1. Ready to Learn and Control	Establish practice routines, balanced stops, pivots, ball control, passing targets and close-range shooting.	Players demonstrate basic balance, control and readiness to receive, pass, dribble or shoot.
2. Build Core Skills	Develop direction changes, use of both hands, pass-and-move habits, finishing, receiving in triple threat and safe on-ball defence.	Players use core skills with greater control and begin connecting one skill to the next.
3. Create and Use Space	Teach spacing, purposeful cuts, driving lanes, passing under pressure, shooting after movement and help-and-recover concepts.	Players recognise useful space, move to support the ball and respond to simple defensive pressure.
4. Play with Advantage	Use defender reads, 2v1, transition, finish-or-pass choices, rebounding and core rules in live play.	Players recognise simple advantage, make earlier decisions and transition more effectively between attack and defence.
5. Connect Skills in Games	Combine skills, recover from mistakes, communicate, review progress and play increasingly independent 3v3.	Players apply core skills in small-sided games and understand the expectations of U12 basketball.

Ready for U12

- Use core skills with reasonable control.
- Stop, pivot and receive in balance.
- Recognise basic spacing and passing options.
- Defend safely and understand possession changes.
- Make simple pass, dribble and shot decisions.

6. U12 Curriculum

Learn to think

Primary curriculum focus

Technical skill connected to decisions, spacing and team principles.

Phase progression

Phase	Phase approach	Expected outcomes
1. Establish Core Skills and Habits	Build reliable stops, pivots, ball control, passing, shooting, finishing, on-ball defence and practice standards.	Players perform core skills with control and understand the behaviours expected in structured team practice.
2. Develop Skill Combinations	Connect pass-cut-replace, dribble moves, closeout reads, rebounding, help defence and movement after the pass.	Players link two or more actions and begin choosing skills based on defender and teammate position.
3. Create and Use Advantage	Develop spacing, drive-and-kick, screening basics, transition offence and defence, and numerical advantage decisions.	Players create and use advantage before it disappears and understand how spacing supports decisions.
4. Apply Team Concepts	Introduce team offence and defence principles, inbounding, press-break spacing, game management and rule awareness.	Players contribute within simple team concepts and manage possession, restarts and pressure with growing composure.
5. Perform, Review and Prepare	Combine skills under live pressure, set personal goals, communicate, prepare competitively and review readiness for U14.	Players demonstrate independent decisions, accountability and consistent application of core team principles.

Ready for U14

- Perform core skills under light pressure.
- Use spacing and movement to create advantage.
- Understand basic team offence and defence.
- Communicate and transition between roles.
- Accept greater responsibility for decisions and effort.

7. U14 Curriculum

Learn to adapt

Primary curriculum focus

Skills under pressure, live reads and tactical awareness.

Phase progression

Phase	Phase approach	Expected outcomes
1. Re-establish and Raise the Standard	Confirm core skill quality, movement efficiency, communication and practice expectations at greater speed.	Players execute core actions with improved pace, balance and responsibility.
2. Develop Live Reads	Use 1v1, 2v2 and 3v3 to read closeouts, gaps, help, cuts, screens and finishing choices.	Players adapt technical actions to defender position rather than relying on predetermined moves.
3. Connect Team Actions	Develop screening, spacing, drive-and-kick, ball reversal, help-and-recover, rebounding and transition responsibilities.	Players understand how individual actions create team advantage and defensive coverage.
4. Apply Tactical Constraints	Use changing defensive coverages, possession targets, score-and-time situations and opponent-style challenges.	Players recognise common tactical problems and make effective adjustments during play.
5. Compete and Prepare for Roles	Increase game-speed execution, role understanding, communication and preparation for U16 expectations.	Players compete consistently, understand developing team roles and respond constructively to tactical feedback.

Ready for U16

- Adapt skills to defenders and changing situations.
- Apply screening, help-defence and transition concepts.
- Compete consistently at game speed.
- Understand developing team roles.
- Respond positively to tactical feedback.

8. U16 Curriculum

Perform under pressure

Primary curriculum focus

Consistency, role execution and team systems.

Phase progression

Phase	Phase approach	Expected outcomes
1. Establish Performance Standards	Set expectations for preparation, intensity, communication, execution and recovery.	Players understand the level of consistency and accountability required for performance basketball.
2. Refine Role-Specific Skills	Develop guard, wing and interior actions without fixing players permanently into positions.	Players perform the actions required by their likely roles while retaining broad basketball ability.
3. Execute Team Systems	Develop offensive structure, defensive coverages, transition systems, special situations and shared terminology.	Players execute team concepts reliably and understand how their role supports the whole.
4. Prepare for Opponents and Pressure	Use scouting themes, pressure simulations, score-and-time constraints and game-speed repetitions.	Players adapt execution to opponent tendencies and maintain decision quality under pressure.
5. Lead Performance and Prepare for U18	Increase leadership, self-review, ownership of preparation and readiness for advanced tactical responsibility.	Players communicate, prepare and perform with greater independence and reliability.

Ready for U18

- Execute reliably within team systems.
- Understand role expectations and game plans.
- Perform under competitive pressure.
- Communicate and lead within the group.
- Take responsibility for preparation and improvement.

9. U18 Curriculum

Lead and prepare

Primary curriculum focus

Advanced execution, game management, leadership and adult readiness.

Phase progression

Phase	Phase approach	Expected outcomes
1. Establish Adult-Game Standards	Align preparation, conduct, physical readiness, communication and role accountability with senior basketball.	Players understand the expectations and responsibilities of adult team environments.
2. Refine Advanced Execution	Develop high-level finishing, shooting decisions, ball-screen reads, post and perimeter actions, defensive technique and rebounding.	Players execute advanced actions with efficiency and recognise where they create value.
3. Manage Team Tactics	Build fluency in offensive and defensive systems, coverages, rotations, special situations and role adjustments.	Players understand the game plan and can explain their responsibilities within it.
4. Adjust During Games	Use film, live problem-solving, score-and-time situations and player-led tactical discussions.	Players identify patterns, communicate solutions and make appropriate in-game adjustments.
5. Lead and Transition	Develop leadership, mentoring, self-management and pathways into adult competition, coaching or club contribution.	Players leave youth basketball ready to participate responsibly, lead others and continue in the game.

Ready for adult basketball

- Manage game situations independently.
- Adapt tactically during play.
- Communicate and lead teammates.
- Understand adult-team standards and responsibilities.
- Take ownership of preparation, performance and conduct.

10. Comparing Curriculum Progression

The same basketball ideas recur throughout the pathway. The table below shows how expectations increase rather than simply replacing one topic with another.

Development area	Early pathway	Middle pathway	Later pathway
Ball control	Explore, bounce, recover and use both hands.	Change pace and direction, protect, combine moves and read pressure.	Create separation, manage pressure and initiate team actions.
Passing	Pass to a target and move after the pass.	Create angles, pass under pressure and connect to cuts and advantage.	Manipulate defence, execute system timing and deliver under pressure.

Development area	Early pathway	Middle pathway	Later pathway
Shooting and finishing	Build confidence close to the basket.	Shoot and finish after movement, reads and controlled contact.	Select efficient shots and finish against game-specific coverages.
Defence	Move safely, stay between player and target.	Contain, help, recover, rebound and communicate.	Execute coverages, rotations, scouting priorities and late-game decisions.
Team play	Share, spread out and recognise direction.	Create advantage through spacing, cutting, transition and simple team concepts.	Execute systems, manage roles and adjust tactically.
Responsibility	Join in, try and support others.	Prepare, communicate and own decisions.	Lead, self-review, manage performance and support team standards.

11. Adapting the Curriculum to the Team

A curriculum is a pathway, not a script. Coaches should protect the intended learning while adapting the route to the players, space, coaches and competition calendar.

Adapt when players need more support

- Increase space and time.
- Reduce defensive pressure.
- Shorten distances.
- Use smaller groups.
- Return to a familiar activity.
- Focus on one decision or cue.

Extend when players need more challenge

- Reduce space or time.
- Add a defender or recovery pressure.
- Require a second action.
- Introduce a decision rather than a fixed pattern.
- Connect the skill to transition or a scored game.
- Ask players to explain the read.

Do not confuse advancement with complexity

More advanced coaching does not always mean more instructions, more drills or more systems. It means that players execute, decide and adapt with greater speed, pressure, responsibility and independence.

Keep the phase outcome. Change the activity, pressure or progression when needed.

12. Using the Guide to Plan a Season

Before the season

- Confirm the age-group phases and likely number of sessions.
- Assess the group's previous experience without labelling players permanently.
- Identify essential foundations that may need revisiting.

- Agree common language across the coaching team.
- Plan how competition and breaks affect the sequence.

Within each phase

- Choose a small number of priority outcomes.
- Revisit them across several practices.
- Move from low pressure to guided pressure and then live play.
- Use observation to decide when to progress.
- Keep important skills active even when the main theme changes.

At the end of each phase

- What can players now do more confidently?
- What decisions are they beginning to recognise?
- Which behaviours are becoming consistent?
- What still needs to be revisited?
- What should the next phase build upon?

13. Curriculum Summary

The Stormers curriculum begins with belonging, movement and confidence. It progresses through core skills, decisions, advantage, team concepts, pressure, responsibility and leadership.

No stage is complete in isolation. Cubs prepares players for Academy. Academy prepares players for U12. Each later stage revisits the same game with greater complexity and independence.

Build confidence. Develop skill. Teach decisions. Create adaptable players. Prepare them for what comes next.