

## PRESS RELEASE

### Premier League & @Futsal Group Collaborate to deliver Futsal to top football clubs

*The Premier League has selected @Futsal Group's international Futsal arena in Birmingham to host a number of events that will feature FIFA's only approved form of indoor football called Futsal ...*



The Premier league will be inviting the academies from its professional clubs to play the fastest growing indoor sport in the world, in what is considered to be Europe's largest indoor Futsal arena in Birmingham. Budding stars of the future will get to follow the same development path as global football stars like Messi and Ronaldo, who honed their abilities playing the game of Futsal.

Frank Rodriguez, Managing Director of the @Futsal Group, commented, " We are delighted to be collaborating with The Premier League as this follows what many of the top European and South American professional clubs and players having been doing for years with combined Futsal and 11 a-side football programmes "

The Premier League has developed an exciting winter programme of Futsal for the club academies and this is likely to involve participation from leading European football clubs. The events start with u9 and u10 age groups on Sunday 4th December and will continue throughout December, January and February 2012 with different age groups.

Ged Roddy, Director of Youth from The Premier League, commented, "The Premier League is committed to providing our young elite players with a wide variety of football experiences and Futsal delivers real benefits for those that want improve their technique, movement and speed of thought.

"We held a pilot event for Under 11's earlier in the year and it was a huge success. It provided the clubs with a different form of small-sided football than they may be used to.

Futsal is now an important addition to our winter programme of festivals and tournaments that we deliver for Premier League and Football League Academy clubs."

The collaboration is already expanding into other initiatives like a district schools Futsal Festival, which is already scheduled to take place in February 2012 and will also be hosted in Birmingham. Initiatives are likely to extend to other activity sessions including tournaments, player and coach development.

The Futsal arena is easily accessible from the ring road and located close to central Birmingham, so it can be reached from most locations within a short drive time. Public transport is also good, so if you have not had a chance to experience the future of small sided football, then get your team to the arena and sign-up for a taster game. The arena is simply amazing and you will never have seen or played in one like it – it's no wonder it is rapidly becoming a centre of excellence for the game having hosted flagship events like The FA Cup Futsal earlier this year.

#### Editor Notes:

#### About Futsal

Futsal is the only officially recognised form of indoor football accepted by FIFA, the world governing body for football. It is reported to be the world's fastest growing indoor sport with over 30 million players worldwide. Players such as Zidane, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and many others have developed their abilities playing Futsal from a young age. The Football Association have recently adopted Futsal and it is now seen as a cornerstone of The FA's strategic development plans. Futsal is an indoor version of association football (soccer). The name "Futsal" simply combines the Spanish words for "hall" – Sala and "football" – Futbol into Futsal. It is the format of small sided football that is recognised and supported by FIFA, UEFA and recently the FA, with world and European championships taking place for club and national teams. Futsal is played between two teams of five players, one of who is a goalkeeper. In addition each team may have up to 7 substitutes, which means each team can comprise a maximum of 12 players. Unlike some other forms of indoor football, the playing arena boundaries are marked with lines, and not walls or boards that players can use to rebound the ball. Futsal is played with a smaller regulation ball with 30% less bounce than normal. The ball can also be kicked above head height, so goals are similar in size to hockey goals. Corners can be taken and throw-ins are replaced by kick-ins from touch lines, both of which must be taken within 4 seconds. This makes the game very fast, dynamic and exciting. As a small-sided game, players are constantly placed in situations where they must receive or play whilst under pressure or in confined spaces and it places considerable demand on technique, movement, tactical awareness and fitness. It is also very exciting and a huge amount of fun!

@ Futsal Group are in the process of rolling-out a number of arenas across the UK that will enable people to play Futsal in a modern environment that will provide an innovative lifestyle and playing experience. The arenas will incorporate a number of modern and high-tech features to enable a unique experience. The @Futsal arenas will provide local and national leagues for adult and junior players, both male and female.

#### Further Information

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