

The Football Coach's Scottish Phrasebook

A Wee Guide tae Coachin' in Scotland

Aye, so ye've decided tae coach fitba in Scotland, have ye? Good luck tae ye, pal. This guide will help ye understand whit yer players are sayin', and maybe - just maybe - earn their respect. Probably no, but worth a try, eh?

Whit's Inside This Wee Book

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Important Disclaimer: This guide is written wi' affection for Scottish football culture. If ye cannae take a joke, this might no be for ye. Scotland has produced some of the world's finest players and managers - Sir Alex Ferguson, Kenny Dalglish, Billy Bremner, Denis Law... so there's clearly somethin' in the water (probably whisky).



Essential Scottish Vocabulary

Basic Words Ye Need tae Ken

English	Scottish	Usage Notes
Know	Ken	"D'ye ken whit I mean?" = "Do you understand?"
Yes	Aye	Universal agreement. Can also mean "Oh really?"
No	Naw / Nae	"Nae bother" = "No problem"
Small	Wee	Everything is wee. Even big things are "a wee bit big"
Not	Nae / No	"Ah'm no sure" = "I'm not sure"
Very	Pure / Dead	"Pure brilliant" = "Very brilliant"
Good	Braw / Belter	"That was braw" = "That was excellent"
Bad	Mince / Honkin'	"That was pure mince" = "That was terrible"
Friend	Pal / Big Man	"Alright big man?" even to wee players
Young person	Wean / Bairn	"The weans" = the youth players
Football	Fitba	Never call it "soccer" unless ye want trouble

Essential Intensifiers

English	Scottish	Example
Really / Very	Pure	"That was pure class"
Absolutely	Dead	"Dead easy that"
Completely	Totally / Pure	"Totally gubbed them"
Extremely	Absolutely	"Absolutely Baltic" (freezing cold)

Cultural Note: In Scotland, understatement is an art form. "No bad" is high praise. "Alright" means excellent. And if someone says something is "magic," they might actually mean it's only okay. Reading the tone is everything.

Trainin' Session Phrases

Startin' & Stoppin'

English	Scottish	When to Use
Go! / Start!	Right, go! / Away ye go!	Standard start command
Stop!	Haud on! / Stoap!	Emergency brake
Wait	Haud yer wheesht!	When they won't shut up
Again	Again! / Wan mair time!	Repetition
Take a break	Right, take five	Rest period
Water break	Grab some juice	Any drink is "juice" in Scotland
Gather round	C'mere the lot ae ye	Team talk incoming
Listen up	Right, listen in	Demanding attention
That's enough	Right, that'll dae	End of exercise
Training's over	Right, we're done	Time to go home

Tempo & Intensity

English	Scottish	Notes
Faster!	Get a shift on!	Universal speed complaint
Much faster!	Move yer erse!	When they're being sluggish
Slower	Calm doon / Easy	Rare - usually want them faster
Sprint!	Gie it laldy!	"Laldy" = maximum effort
Push yourselves!	C'mon, dig in!	Motivation
Don't walk!	This isnae a dander!	"Dander" = leisurely walk
Full effort!	Gie it absolute welly!	"Welly" = boot/power
Maximum intensity!	100% every time!	Standard Scottish expectation
Stay focused	Heids in the game!	Mental engagement
Come on!	Mon then! / C'mon!	Encouragement or challenge

Movement Commands

English	Scottish	Context
Move!	Shift! / Move!	Get going
Stay there	Stay put / Bide there	Hold position
Come here	C'mere	Summoning
Go there	Get yerself ower there	Directing
Swap positions	Switch it up	Change places
Form a line	Line up	Organization
Spread out	Spread oot	Make space
Get closer	Tighter!	Compact

Ball Work

English	Scottish	Notes
Pass!	Gie it! / Pass!	Release the ball
Pass it properly	Pass it, dinnae punt it!	Quality over power
Dribble	Take it on / Beat yer man	1v1 situations
Control it	Get it doon!	First touch
Shield the ball	Haud ontae it	Keep possession

Shoot!	Hit it! / Leather it!	Strike at goal
Volley	Oan the volley	Strike out of air
Header	Heid it!	Use your head
Clear it	Get rid! / Boot it!	Safety first
Cross it	Whip it in!	Delivery into box

Pro Tip: If a Scottish player tells you they'll "gie it a wee skelp," they're going to kick it hard. "Skelp" means to hit or slap. A "wee skelp" might actually be a massive strike - remember, everything's "wee" in Scotland.



Tactical Instructions

Positions (The Scottish Way)

English	Scottish	Cultural Notes
Goalkeeper	Goalie / Keeper	Same as English, surprisingly
Centre-back	Centre-half / Stopper	The hard man
Full-back	Full-back	Right-back, left-back
Defensive midfielder	Holding midfielder / The anchor	Does the dirty work
Central midfielder	Centre-mid / The engine	Box-to-box warrior
Attacking midfielder	The number 10 / The playmaker	Creative type
Winger	Wide man / Winger	Get it wide and cross it in
Striker	The striker / The frontman	Goal poacher
Target man	Big man up top	Hold it up, head it doon

Attackin' Phrases

English	Scottish	Meaning
Attack!	Get forward! / Attack!	Push up
Make a run	Make a run! / Go!	Movement off the ball
Find space	Find some space!	Get free
Overlap	Overlap! / Get ootside him!	Wide run
One-two	Wan-two! / Wall pass!	Give and go
Cross it!	Whip it in! / Get it in the mixer!	Delivery into box
Shoot!	Hit it! / Have a dig!	Strike at goal
Get in the box	Get in there! / Attack the box!	Enter the area
Switch the play	Switch it! / Play it wide!	Change sides
Play it forward	Forward! / Get it up the park!	Direct play

Defendin' Phrases

English	Scottish	Meaning
Defend!	Get back! / Defend!	Track back
Press!	Squeeze them! / Get tight!	Close down
Man on!	Man on! / Behind ye!	Warning
Mark him!	Pick him up! / Get tight tae him!	Track the runner
Hold the line	Haud the line!	Defensive shape
Drop back	Drop! / Get back!	Retreat
Clear it!	Get it oot! / Boot it!	Safety clearance
Block it!	Block it! / Get a body on it!	Shot blocking
Win the ball	Win it! / Get stuck in!	Win possession
No foul!	Nae fouls! / Stay on yer feet!	Keep it clean

Transition Phrases

English	Scottish	Context
Counter-attack!	Go! / Hit them on the break!	Fast transition
Quick!	Quick! / Hurry up!	Urgency
Everyone back!	Everybody back! / All back!	Defensive recovery
Slow it down	Keep it! / Calm it doon!	Possession play

Scottish Football Philosophy: Traditional Scottish football values hard work, determination, and getting stuck in. While modern coaching has evolved, you'll still hear "Get it up the park!" from the terraces. Balance tactical sophistication with the passion Scottish fans expect.



Match Day Patter

Pre-Match

English	Scottish	When to Use
Are you ready?	Ye ready or whit?	Pre-match check
You're starting	Yer startin' the day	Good news delivery
You're on the bench	Yer oan the bench	Less good news
Believe in yourselves	Believe in yerselves!	Motivation
Let's do this	Right, let's dae this!	Final rallying cry
Play for each other	Play fer each other!	Team unity
Leave everything on the pitch	Gie it everythin' ye've got!	Maximum effort demand

Durin' the Match

English	Scottish	Situation
Good!	Aye! / Good! / Get in!	Positive play
That's it!	That's it! / Lovely!	Good execution
Come on!	C'mon! / Mon!	Encouragement
Unlucky!	Unlucky! / Close!	Near miss
What was that?!	Whit wis that?!	Poor play
Wake up!	Wakey wakey! / Switch on!	Loss of concentration
Stay calm	Keep the heid!	Emotional control
Time!	Time! / Ye've got time!	Not under pressure
Communicate!	Talk! / Shout!	Lack of communication
Don't argue with the ref	Leave it! / Dinnae argue!	Dissent prevention

Substitutions

English	Scottish	Context
You're coming on	Yer comin' on	Good news
You're coming off	Right, yer comin' off	Mixed news
Warm up	Get warmed up	Preparation
Good game	Well played / Good shift	Post-performance
Here's what I need	Right, here's whit ah need fae ye	Instructions

Post-Match

English	Scottish	Situation
We won!	Get in! We won!	Victory
We lost	Ach, we lost	Defeat (stoic acceptance)
It was a draw	We drew / It wis a draw	Neutral result
Well played	Well played / Good effort	Positive feedback
That wasn't good enough	That wisnae good enough	Honest assessment
We'll do better next time	We go again next week	Forward looking
Proud of you	Proud ae ye	High praise (use sparingly)

Warning: Scottish referees have heard every complaint. Dinnae bother. Also, if it's raining (it will be), expect to hear "Typical!" approximately 47 times.

Player Feedback (The Scottish Way)

Positive Reinforcement

What You Mean	What You Say	True Meaning
Excellent!	No bad!	Highest praise available
Very good!	Aye, that'll dae	You've done well
Perfect!	That's it! That's the wan!	Exactly right
Great effort!	Good shift!	Hard work appreciated
Beautiful play!	That was class!	High quality
Outstanding!	Belter!	Truly excellent
Keep it up!	Mair ae that!	Continue performing
Much improved!	That's better!	Progress noted
Good decision	Smart!	Good thinking

Constructive Criticism (Scottish Directness)

What You Mean	What You Say	Real Translation
That wasn't good	That was mince	Genuinely poor
Terrible effort	That was honkin'	Really bad
You can do better	C'mon, ye can dae better than that	Below your standard
What were you thinking?	Whit wis that?!	Bewilderment
Focus!	Heid in the game!	Concentration needed
That was lazy	That wis lazy	No sugar coating
Try again	Again. Better this time.	Opportunity to improve
Not like that	Naw, no like that	Correction needed

Encouragement

What You Mean	What You Say	Scottish Interpretation
Don't give up	Keep goin'! Dinnae give up!	Persistence valued
You can do it	C'mon, ye can dae this!	Vote of confidence
Stay positive	Heids up!	Mental fortitude
Next time	Next time!	Future opportunity
Everyone makes mistakes	Forget it, move on	Practical approach
I believe in you	I ken ye can dae it	Real confidence

Scottish Coaching Truth: Scots appreciate directness. Don't over-praise - it'll seem fake. A simple "no bad" carries more weight than ten "fantastic!" comments. Save the big praise for when it's truly earned.

Dealin' Wi' the Parents

Common Parent Interactions

Situation	What They Say	What They Mean	How to Respond
Their kid isn't starting	"How come oor Callum isnae playin'?"	My child is better than yours	"He'll get his chance"
Questioning tactics	"Should ye no be playin' 4-4-2?"	I played once in 1987	Smile and nod
After a loss	"The ref was a disgrace"	It can't be our fault	"Aye, tough day"
After a win	"Oor boy wis brilliant, eh?"	Please agree with me	"Team effort"
Weather complaint	"Surely we're no trainin' in this?"	It's raining	"Aye we are"
Schedule question	"Whit time's kick-off again?"	I've forgotten	Tell them (again)

Useful Phrases for Parent Management

English	Scottish-Friendly Version	When to Use
Your child is doing well	Aye, they're comin' on	Progress report
They need to work on...	They could work on...	Constructive feedback
All players will get time	Everyone'll get a game	Playing time concerns
Please arrive on time	Try tae be here fer...	Punctuality issues
Training is cancelled	Trainin's aff	Weather/pitch issues
Thanks for your support	Cheers fer yer help	Appreciation



Weather Excuses (Ye'll Need These)

Critical Information: In Scotland, the weather is never "good." It ranges from "no bad" to "absolutely Baltic." Learn these phrases - you'll use them every week.

Weather	Scottish Description	Training Status
Light rain	"It's just spittin'"	Training is ON
Heavy rain	"It's chuckin' it doon"	Training is ON
Very cold	"It's absolutely Baltic"	Training is ON
Windy	"It's blawin' a hoolie"	Training is ON
Freezing	"It's pure freezin'"	Training is ON
Snow	"There's a wee bit ae snow"	Training is probably ON
Horizontal rain	"Standard"	Training is ON
Sunny	"Taps aff weather!"	Enjoy it (rare occurrence)
Waterlogged pitch	"Pitch is boggin'"	Training is OFF (finally)

Translation Guide: "Taps aff" means it's warm enough to remove your top. In Scotland, this occurs approximately 3 days per year. "Baltic" refers to temperatures cold enough to make you question your life choices.



Emergency Phrases

10 Essential Scottish Football Phrases

Phrase	Meaning	Use It When...
No bad!	Excellent work	You're genuinely impressed
Get it up the park!	Clear it long	Under pressure
Gie it laldy!	Give it everything	Demanding effort
C'mon!	Come on / Let's go	Motivation needed
Get stuck in!	Win the ball	50-50 situations
Keep the heid!	Stay calm	Emotions running high
That was mince!	That was terrible	Honest feedback required
Right, again!	Do it again	Repetition needed
Whit wis that?!	What was that?	Bewildering decision
We go again!	On to the next one	Post-match, win or lose

Understanding Scottish Football Fans

What They Shout	What It Means
"Get intae them!"	Play more aggressively
"That wis never a foul!"	It was definitely a foul
"Referee!"	I disagree with every decision
"Aw c'mon!"	General frustration
"Boot it!"	Clear the ball immediately
"Time wasting!"	The other team has possession
"Mon the [team]!"	Support for your team
"He's offside!"	He probably wasn't

Survival Phrases

English	Scottish	Critical Usage
I understand	Aye, ah ken	Show comprehension
I don't understand	Eh?	Request clarification
Excuse me	'Scuse me / Sorry pal	Getting attention
Thank you	Cheers / Ta	Gratitude
No problem	Nae bother	Casual response
See you later	See ye / Catch ye later	Farewell
Good luck	Aw the best	Well wishes
How are you?	Awright?	Greeting (no answer expected)

Final Words of Wisdom:

- **Never criticize the players' dedication** - Work ethic is sacred
- **Accept the weather** - Complaining marks you as soft
- **Learn the rivalry dynamics** - But stay neutral (publicly)

- **Embrace the dark humor** - Self-deprecation is an art form
- **Don't overdress** - Scots in shorts when it's freezing is normal
- **Tea and/or Irn-Bru** - The drinks of champions
- **"No bad" is the highest praise** - Use it wisely
- **Football is life** - Treat it with appropriate reverence

Good Luck! If you can survive coaching in Scotland - the weather, the directness, the passionate parents, and the phrase "that wis mince" - you can coach anywhere. Scotland has produced some of football's greatest figures, and there's a reason for that: they're tough, they work hard, and they never gie up. Now get oot there and gie it laldy!

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Nae Scottish coaches were harmed in the makin' of this guide.

