Greatham Youth Football Club
Club Ethos & Philosophy Policy

CLUB ETHOS

Our club ethos is a written declaration that sets out how we want to run as a club. It's simple and concise and can be understood by players, parents and officials.

- To provide football to children of all ages and abilities, in a safe and friendly environment.
- To deliver age-appropriate coaching to support long term player development.
- To encourage all players to try their best and make the most of their abilities.
- To offer a challenging but supportive environment where children can learn from their mistakes without undue pressure and anxiety.
- To promote good behaviour and respect for others.

Our clearly defined coaching philosophy provides direction, purpose and guidance to the process of coaching young players.

Coaching aims:

- Make the game safe, fair and enjoyable
- Provide age-appropriate coaching (5-11, 12-16, 17+)
- Develop the whole player across all four corners of the Football Association's LTPD model
- Improve the player's movement skills: agility, balance, co-ordination and speed (ABCs)
- Develop the player's technical skills
- Increase the player's decision-making capabilities
- Teach the player life skills (co-operation, teamwork, communication and friendship)

Role of Coach:

- Listen to players, give advice and extend their thinking
- Set appropriate challenges to inspire the players
- Make the environment welcoming and inclusive
- Allow players to enjoy playing the game

A good coach:

- Encourages players to try new skills
- Enthuses and motivates players
- Supports and inspires regular practice
- Encourages children to be the best that they can be
- Prioritises the unique individuality of the child
- Puts the child and their needs at the centre of all activity

A good coach also:

- Understands issues that impact upon young player development
- Considers how children learn as well as issues of self-esteem and motivation
- Communicates using age-appropriate language and instructions
- Understands children are not mini-adults and that developing football players is a long term process
- Fosters a life-long love of the game

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COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

As a minimum, all coaches at our club will undergo the following training courses:

- The FA Level 1 Award in Coaching Football
- FA Emergency Aid
- FA Safeguarding Children Workshop
- All our coaches have Enhanced FA CRB checks
- The FA requires everyone who works or volunteers in children's football and regularly cares for, trains, supervises or is in sole charge of children to apply for a FA CRB Enhanced Disclosure

Coaches Behaviour:

- Coaches are required to strictly follow the Respect Code of Conduct
- Players must be free to play during matches, with positive encouragement from parents and coaches
- Information from the touchline should be in the form of occasional questions from the coaching staff
- Patrolling the touchline giving continuous shouted instructions must not happen
- Players always try their best and will learn from their mistakes without being told they have done wrong

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

A holistic approach based upon the FA's four-corner model for long-term player development: Technical, Physical, Social and Psychological.

The FA Four Corner Model

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Technical:

- Encourage players to try new skills in practice and work out where they can be used in a game
- Where appropriate, practice should replicate the demands of the game, encouraging players to think and make decisions just as they would in a match
- Vary the difficulty to match the needs of the individual, by altering the Space, Task, Equipment or Players (STEP)
- Cut down on the 'stop, stand still' phrase and let players' experience the flow of the game and practice

Physical:

- Appropriate movement skills which develop agility, balance, co-ordination and speed should be encouraged through enjoyable games such as tag
- Through well designed practice, all coaching activities can include physical outcomes
- Remember players grow at different rates and may need support and patience as they develop
- Children are not mini-adults and shouldn't be subjected to laps of the pitch or press-ups

Psychological:

- Use different methods of communication to engage with different types of learners
- Visual (seeing): Tactics boards, posters, diagrams, cue and prompt cards, as well as cones on the pitch
- Auditory (hearing): Speak with players, ask questions, encourage discussions in groups amongst the players to solve game-related problems
- Kinaesthetic (doing): Demonstration to the team by the coach or by a player to their team-mates

Social:

- Be a good role model for the players
- Create a positive and welcoming environment
- Praise players for their effort and endeavour as well as their ability
- Manage mistakes to the player's advantage – understand what they were trying to do. Sometimes they will have the right idea but just fail in the execution of the technique or the skill
- Make sure football is fun, but with a purpose. Ensure the development of skills and game understanding

ABILITY AND OPINION

A player's performance in practice and matches can be influenced by the following factors, all of which need to be considered when forming an opinion of a player's true ability:

Date of Birth, Body Type, Adolescent Growth Spurt, Physical Maturity, Psychological Maturity, Social Maturity, Previous Experience, Opposition, Own Team's Playing Standards, Position Suitability, The Instructions Given to the Player, Recent Playing Activity

GROWTH AND MATURATION

- Appreciate that all players are growing and maturing at different rates
- Be patient, supportive and encouraging with ALL the players in your squad
- Understand that all some players need is 'time'

- Don't mistake levels of physical maturity for maturity in other areas
- Don't assume that the current success of a player is an indicator of on-going proficiency
- Don't over-burden the players that represent the extreme early or late developer

RELATIVE AGE EFFECT

Recruitment trends in professional academies show a bias towards players born between Sept-Dec, making them the older players in their age group

Design and deliver challenges which offset the relative age effect:

- Consider changing the pitch size, the size of the ball, rules of the practice/game, the game format
- Consider grouping bigger and physically developed players to compete against each other in practice

MINIMIZING DISTRACTIONS

- By planning ahead the coach can create an environment that minimises distractions and helps players to stay 'on-task' for longer
- Organise sessions that are interesting, challenging, varied and fun
- Avoid players being stood in line or asking them to wait around for too long without a focus
- Plan arrival activities so players can begin practising as soon as they arrive

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

- Outline rights and responsibilities to players. Refer to FA Respect Codes of Conduct
- Praise and reward good behaviour
- If you have to intervene, do so in a calm and controlled manner
- If boundaries are consistently broken then there should be a consequence
- As a coach, remember the only person's behaviour you can control is your own, so set a good example

POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Encourage players to be creative and take considered risks in both practice and games
- Remember – mistakes do happen
- Let players make some of the decisions
- Let them know that their opinions count too
- Create opportunities for players to explore, question and foster their natural curiosity and imagination
- Allow all players to experience success

LET THE PLAYERS PLAY

- All children should be given equal playing time on match-day wherever and whenever possible
- Help players develop their game-understanding by rotating positions during practice and games
- Ensure players are given the chance to play a 'game' during every practice session
- Don't let the children's arena become dominated by adults