



Club Ethos and Working Principles

Club Ethos

Our intention is Football For All offering a range of football opportunities for players of all ages and abilities.

Club Statement

We want all our players at all levels to improve, be competitive and enjoy winning, but not at all costs. Instead we want football to be played in the correct spirit, fairly, where ideas, creativity and therefore often mistakes on the pitch are encouraged, and everybody is welcome to play.

It is important players of all ages develop whilst having fun, which creates the correct tone in order to progress. Progression occurs over years, not months and weeks. Our players play football in a positive, inclusive environment, where ability is not the only focus. We believe our football will be competitive if played in this way and individuals/teams will over time develop towards their potential if treated in this way. This is our goal.

Working Principles

Approach

1) We keep a passive approach during match days and training, with recognition that players cannot play football by remote control. Players need to have as much guidance in training as they can, and when they run over the white line, it is their game. They make the decisions.

2) We praise every one of those decisions, vocally and individually.

3) There are a number of teams who bark instructions, sometime very frequently, sometimes bordering on aggressively, from the touchline, both on match days and in training. This is not what we do. A calm, measured, supportive presence is how we work.

4) We know matches are important, we all have tight games/cup games we want to win etc. This can easily turn into a shouting match from the touchlines. What are the implications of this?

- Players can feel embarrassed or ridiculed.
- Players are not permitted to decide for themselves over time, they rely on instruction.
- Players can become confused.
- It can set the tone for parents to join in.

5) Over time, self-reliant footballing decisions, positioning, anticipation, vision, confidence, experience etc. will accumulate. Football development happens over years, not over a single season. Our progress over the longer term will be stronger as individuals and teams with a more passive and inclusive approach.

Communication

6) Match day communication from coaches come from positive vocal support used sparingly (see 9) below), or quarter/half time breaks, or by calling players over quietly during a dead ball moment, or by communicating messages through the players. Positive praise should also be given for both teams.

7) Vocal support should be entirely praising, encouraging and reinforcing the positive. Errors should be softened. E.g. unlucky¹, nearly¹, 'could see what you were trying¹, 'not quite¹.

8) Specific instruction should be loosened e.g. 'Mark up', 'positions', instead of, e.g. 'Mark no 10'. We let players think for themselves with coaches guiding not instructing.

9) Players are taught to communicate with each other and taught to make their own decisions and help teammates make their decisions without the coaches doing this at volume. Inclusive is good. Self reliance is good.

Compliance with Coach's Directions

10) Players are expected to comply with the reasonable requirements of the coaches, including positions and tactically. It is fine for players to be creative, experiment and make mistakes, within the boundary of coach's directions and set up for a match. There will be matches where players will not be into their 'normal' positions, or be required to play with 'less' creativity e.g. in a tight game. This is at the Team manager's discretion at any time. However, in the main, there will be ample opportunity to experiment on the pitch over the course of a season.

Compliance with the Official's Decisions

11) Players having a go at the ref/linesman is not the way we play. Any players doing this will be taken off for 10mins and reminded. Call it a sin bin. Dropped if persistent even. Any official's mistakes are just that. Mistakes. They have a hard job and we need them.

Fair Play Football

12) Same for any deliberate fouls. Players need to be taken off as a sin bin. Dropped if persistent. Definitely not the way we play. (Players are also reminded that any yellow or red cards may result in a financial penalty from the league FA. This is to be repaid by the player/parents).

Football for All

13) Players will at all times shake the hand of the all opposition players and coaches at the beginning of the match, the end of the match, applaud our spectators, and not react to any unsporting play by the opposition.

Player of the Match

14) Up to U12, we award 'Player/s of the Match'. This award comes from relative start points, not just the best player on the pitch, or the one who scores the goals. E.g. If the player who always scores a hat-trick scores another hat trick, is this in fact expected? If the player who is less established as a footballer exceeds expectations with a much simpler 3 tackles and a pass to feet, then there you have it, player of the match. All based on individual targets and expectations. At the Team Manager's discretion, we may ask parents to decide this award after each game.

15) From U12, we do not award 'Player/s of the Match', instead we focus on team performance as part of overall team development.

Mixed teams v 'A'/'B' teams.

16) Up to U12, our teams are mixed and not streamed in terms of ability. Everyone has equal time on the pitch as far as we can over the course of a match and definitely over the course of a season. Where opposition teams are stronger there will be a bias in team selection and minutes played towards our stronger players. Where opposition is less strong, then the opposite, there will be a bias towards our less established players. We will always however try to win.

17) From U12, we recognise football becomes more competitive, and we support 'A' and 'B' teams at the discretion of the individual Team Managers. In this event, each team will be equally resourced and managed, and each player will receive equal focus in whichever team.

Coach's Children

18) Our starting point is that players who are children of the coaches will not receive preferential treatment and will miss weeks if there needs to be rotation from time to time. If however individual coaches wish or need to play their children more frequently, we recognise this is a voluntary role and support this.

Matchday Team Selection

19) Up to U12, team selection on a week-to week basis is entirely at the Team Manager's discretion, reasonably reflecting level of commitment, availability, injury and fitness.

20) From U12, 'A' and 'B' team selection is entirely at the Team Manager's discretion, reasonably reflecting ability, level of commitment, availability, injury and fitness".

Guidance in Application

1) Selection decisions need to be based on overall level of commitment, availability, injury and fitness.

2) We do not support a strict interpretation of 'no train, no play' policy. E.g. Where a player is not selected for a match automatically because they miss training during the week, particularly if players are otherwise committed and absences are occasional. This is too strict.

3) It is fine, within reason, over a period of time, to give priority to players who train regularly and are frequently available. 'No train no play' is to be used as a last resort for regular non attendance.

4) More than this, give thought also to why there is an absence. The reason may well be something worthy of praise and therefore far from penalising the player for missing training or a match, they should be singled out for praise and an as example to others, e.g. Playing a final in a different sport, academic/school performance, receiving an award etc.

5) Consider other options e.g. a measured, again supportive discussion with parents to explain the impact on continuity / impact on the team. This may help players and parents understand the implications.

Selection of Captains

21) Up to U12, captains are selected either by rotation or performance in line with 'Player of the Match' in a previous week, at the discretion of the Team Manager.

22) From U12, captains are selected by rotation or we support a season long team captain, at the discretion of the Team Manager.

Substitutes

23) Team Manager's will select as many substitutes as is deemed necessary to ensure each player plays at least half of every match. This also allows the Team Manager to take into account the opposition, match conditions and injuries etc.

24) Substitutions during a match will be entirely based on the progress of a game for footballing reasons in an attempt to either seek to give equal time to all players, and/or as an attempt to win the match, so long as each player plays for at least half the match.

25) Half a match minimum is subject to a player's behavior and attitude on the day.

26) Given that a number of teams have large squads to ensure sufficient players on match days, we support squad rotation instead of excessive numbers of substitutes. It follows that if for whatever reason players are less available or less able to play or train, they are likely to receive less match time over the course of a season.



Available online at <http://myfc.me.uk/web/index.php/about-us/club-ethos/>
Version updated 14/09/2017

Football for All