

Junior Football at Great Horwood FC

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Purpose of Junior Section

Great Horwood Juniors aim to produce 11-a-side teams with players who will eventually progress and play for Great Horwood 1st team. The seniors team play between Level 12 and 15 of the football pyramid (Note: there are 27 levels).

In order to meet this aim small sided football played on Saturdays seeks to play competitive football at the appropriate level with a team that will progress to Sunday 11-a-side games. Development of the small-sided team needs to focus on the need to maintain numbers to progress to Sundays (minimum of 12 – maximum of 18 players for Sundays).

Approach to Junior Football

The leagues - both MKDDL and Border Counties are becoming increasingly worried by the amount of pressure being put on young players by coaches and parents. This is being demonstrated in the worst cases by verbal or physical abuse being directed towards players opposition and officials. The FA are seeking to halt the decline in standards with their RESPECT initiative towards officials and restating the aims of junior football by publicising stages of development to hopefully put junior football into context for managers, coaches and parents.

For example, the MKDDL league is intentionally a friendly league up until under 10's. The thought behind this approach is to allow players and teams to develop without the pressure associated with 'competitive' football. i.e. this weeks game is so important because it's a top of the table clash etc....

You will notice as the years go by the intensity will change when the idea of league tables and cup competitions are introduced. The MKDDL friendly format allows players to develop at their own pace. Players will only get better if they play football so ALL players should get a fair go up until they reach an age where their ability dictates a pecking order.

Selection should be based on three principles:-

Attitude

Aptitude

Willingness to learn

Rolling substitutes gives the flexibility to adopt this approach all the way through to Under 17's, and by keeping all players involved there is a greater chance of maintaining numbers, especially through the Sunday 11-a-side format.

The FA recommend the following approach:-

Ages 5 to 8 – FUNDamental stage – with the emphasis on FUN

Ages 8 to 11 – Learning to Train – learning the basics focusing on techniques

Ages 14 to 16 – Training to compete - diagnosing individual strengths and areas of development.

Ages 17 and up – Training to Win – players should be striving to be successful in competition.

As you can see the point where we should be focusing on winning is not until players have been able to mature physically, socially and psychologically. All players should therefore be given a chance to play and learn the game and winning or league position should not be considered important to the player.

I know we are all keen to reward success and we all see the game in different ways but player development is what we should be about and we need to promote this approach across all junior teams.

The approach is fully supported and encouraged by the FA and is one of the reasons all tournaments for the younger age groups are also friendly with no league or finals and everyone getting a medal.

For younger teams playing friendly tournaments or indeed all teams playing tournaments it is possible to have rewards for the day i.e. with 8 players you could have 8 awards e.g. sweets, at the end of the day for 8 different aspects of the game e.g. tackle of the day, pass of the day, best vision, best shot, best save, best trick, best control, best throw etc etc..... this should reward every player for doing something well and encourage a desire to improve. The game itself is always competitive so we don't need to add any more pressure than the players put on themselves.

Useful links

<http://www.grassrootscoaching.com/index.htm>

<http://www.thefa.com/GetIntoFootball/Coaches>

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/>

<http://www.thefa.com/Leagues/Respect/NewsAndFeatures/2011/Resources>

<http://www.thefa.com/GetIntoFootball/Coaches/FACA>

Coaching Styles:- Directive(*early years*) – Discovery – Developmental(*over time*)

Coaching methods:- Shaping – Chaining – Whole-part-whole

FACA - Code of Conduct

Members of The F.A. Coaches Association are required to abide by the Code of Conduct set out below:

- coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every person and treat each equally within the context of the sport
- coaches must place the well-being and safety of each player above all other considerations, including the development of performance
- coaches must adhere to all guidelines laid down by FACA and the Rules of The Football Association
- coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect
- coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward
- coaches must encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance
- coaches must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players
- coaches should, at the outset, clarify with the player (and, where appropriate, their parents) exactly what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their coach
- coaches must co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, physiotherapists) in the best interests of the player
- coaches must always promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant rules and regulations or the use of prohibited substances or techniques
- coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance Any breach of any provision(s) of this Code of Conduct by a member of The F.A. Coaches Association shall constitute a breach of the Rules of The Football Association pursuant to Rule E1 and shall be dealt with under the procedures as set out in the Rules of The Football Association.

The Football Association and The F.A. Coaches Association wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution of The National Coaching Foundation and The National Association of Sports Coaches in creating this Code of Conduct.