



CHESTERFIELD JUNIOR BLUES FOOTBALL CLUB

PLAYING AND COACHING PHILOSOPHY

We aim to be more sporting than our opponents, to be more creative than our opponents, and to try to score more goals than our opponents; but we don't aim to do the third unless we are already doing the first two.

BACKGROUND

The Club's playing and coaching philosophy is based on ideas from several sources. The most important are the Football Association's book "The Future Game" and our experience of coaching youngsters, achieving coaching qualifications, and working with parents, referees, Leagues, the FA and professional clubs. We have also looked at other clubs' and coaches' philosophies. We support the FA's Youth Development Review and the FA's Youth Award coaching programme; and we endorse the FA's Respect programme. We look forward to seeing how the new England DNA project can add to our philosophy.

Our playing philosophy is a game based on:

- a possession-based approach
- playing through the three thirds of the pitch
- high quality of passing, short and long
- intelligent movement and support off the ball
- penetrative and incisive attacking play, and
- counterattacking.

The value of technique is important to us:

- coaches must attach significant importance and value to the development of technique and skill.

We believe the best coaches are innovative teachers of the game:

- effective coaches understand the individuals in their care and have an understanding and awareness of their age, stage of development and learning, and their abilities.

We have a single view through the whole game:

- whilst having fun and developing social skills are essential, we want to develop players that can perform at the highest stage, and that means coaches at all levels of the game should understand what characteristics lead to high-class performance.

MANAGING TEAMS

We have ways of managing teams that are important to us. This is what we will try to do:

- communication channels – we aim keep talking to players and parents and to be available during and after matches and training sessions, and by phone, email and text at other times
- time keeping – we will aim to be early for matches and training and we ask players to be on time but recognise this won't always be possible
- playing time – all squad members who regularly attend training will have equal playing time over the season
- substitutions and who starts the game – starting line ups and substitutions, including the time at which substitutions will be made, will be announced to the players by the manager before the match starts (perhaps at a training session several days before a match), and will be available to parents and carers no later than at the start of the match
- trials – each year, usually in June, the Club holds trials for players in each age group in which we expect to run teams in the following season. Those playing for CJBFC in one season will normally be automatically invited to play the following season unless there have been issues of poor behaviour (eg disrupting training so that others don't benefit) which will be brought to the player's and parent's attention in time for improvement before trials are held
- sharing responsibilities – each team will have at least one manager/coach who will be a fully qualified FA coach and will be responsible for all football matters in their team including child welfare and emergency aid during matches and training sessions, except that parents and carers will always be primarily responsible for their own child. Parents are always responsible for bringing their child, or arranging for another responsible adult to bring them, to and from matches and training. The Club looks to parents to help out where they can, for example acting as assistant referee or arranging social events
- winning at all costs v development of the players – each match is competitive, and we expect the players to try to win; but coaching and the management of the team will focus on the development of all players in the squad and not on winning at all costs
- the FA's Four Corners Long Term Player Development model – coaching will follow the FA's four corners model and thus cover technical, psychological, physical and social aspects of learning and playing football, and
- the FA's Respect Programme codes of conduct – CJBFC fully endorses the FA Respect Programme and expects everyone involved with CJBFC including players, parents and officials to follow the relevant codes.

TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Each manager/coach will have development plans for their own team or age groups, and may have their own team philosophy to add to the Club's. Individual team plans will be based on the needs of the individuals in that squad and will take into account their starting skills levels. Each player will be set goals based on their own development needs as well as helped to achieve team goals.

As an example, these are the coaching aims for two u8s teams set by a UEFA 'A' level coach working with in summer 2012.

Attacking:

- try to find good space as soon as our team wins the ball
- try to shoot whenever you can near to their goal
- try to push up the pitch out of defence if our team is attacking – to help fill the gaps in the middle of the pitch
- try so see if there is there someone else in our team in a better position to pass to, and
- try to get near to their goal when someone on our side shoots.

Defending:

- try to be our goal side of their players so you can see the player you are marking and the ball at the same time
- try to mark a player each and not leave anyone free
- try not to kick the ball just anywhere but pass to one of our players or into attacking space
- try to overload in defence, that is have more defenders than attackers, and
- try to tell each other if they need to mark another player.

In some teams the manager/coach will try to go beyond this and ask players to complete a personal player plan which will, overtime, lead to individual and group player programmes. This is a complex and time consuming task for coaches so may not be available to all teams.

MINI-SOCCER PHILOSOPHY

In addition to the foregoing, it is the policy of the Club to encourage mini-soccer teams to train at the same time and in the same place, where that is possible, so that each can benefit from the skills of a greater number of coaches – eg to give goal-keeping training to keepers from several teams at once - and from playing training games against other age groups. This covers teams in the u7, u8, u9 and u10 age groups and younger players in the development school. Where there is more than one team in an age group, much of the training will be for the age group cohort as a whole. Coaching will be focussed on development rather than winning (although winning will be celebrated) and will start with the ABCs – agility, balance, co-ordination and speed – with skills and technique work introduced as individuals will benefit from it.

Youngsters in these age groups who attract the attention of professional clubs' academies and who wish to move on to them will be supported in that decision, and, if they later wish to return to the Club, will be welcomed back.

DEVELOPMENT BEFORE WINNING

"Losing 13-0 as a player makes you feel rubbish and puts the pressure on you in many ways. You want to win the next game badly... so people don't start to mock you." A 10-year-old player

Not all 10-year-olds will feel so bad about losing a game; some will have forgotten the score as soon as the match is over and not many will worry about it later, although in matches between teams from the same school who won and who lost may be remembered in the playground for days. But matches that one team wins by 7 or 8 goals or more, can be demoralising for the losing team (and their parents and coaches) and do nothing for the development of the players in either team.

Some people argue that football is all about winning and losing and we should not seek to protect young players from the harsher realities of life; we in CJBFC support the FA line which is that research clearly shows that young football players value learning, trying to do their best, and having fun, much more than they value winning. Teams in all age groups will be entered into cup competitions where the result does matter (and can be published) but league matches up to under 10s in 2014/15 and up to u11s in 2015/16 are developmental - results will not be published and there will be no league tables. For age groups with published league tables the FA has banned goal difference being a factor in deciding league positions, so there is no reason why strong teams at any age up to u18 should try to score more and more goals.

To try to ensure we give players fun development opportunities, we need to have some idea of how to manage games so that big wins and big defeats are avoided.

If you're winning

Keeping your players motivated is not very difficult if you are one of the fortunate coaches whose team wins most of its games. But scoring goals virtually at will is unfair on your opponents, and isn't likely to help the development of your players.

It's rare for a team to come back and win a game after being five or six goals down so if your team is winning by that sort of margin, it is probably going to win the match. What you can do:

- give individual players challenges (eg for a player who passes a lot, try to run with the ball, and vice versa). If you can, for example at half time, ask the players what challenges they'd like to be set; even if they can't tell you straightaway it'll prepare them for the question in the future,
- move your players around - your goalkeeper will be getting bored by now so get him/her out of goal and put them up front. Move your defenders into attacking positions and put your strikers into defence, and
- it's important that you respect the opposition but if they and the referee agree you could suggest the opposition use extra players to give them a better chance and to give your players a new challenge.

If you're losing

Motivating a team that is getting hammered most weeks is a tough challenge but it can be done. Regardless of the age of your players, you can minimise the importance of the final score by setting your players individual and/or team objectives either before the game or even during the game if it becomes clear they are going to lose by several goals.

The actual objectives will depend on the age and ability of your players but as an example:

- defenders can be tasked with blocking one shot on goal, or close marking a particular opposition forward,
- any player could be set the objective of taking a throw-in with both feet on the ground or making a good pass to a teammate,
- attackers could be asked to try to make a shot on your opponent's goal, or keep possession of the ball for, say, three seconds, and
- the team can be set the objective of conceding fewer goals in the second half or conceding no goals for a set period of time.

It's important to make the objectives slightly stretching but achievable. Praise your players for effort in trying to achieve their objectives (not just for succeeding in achieving them) and change objectives from one game to the next as your player's skills change.

SUMMARY

Having fun, whilst developing football and social skills, is the corner stone of the CJB philosophy. Sometimes this may not be easy to achieve but that is what we are aiming for.