



Leighton United Coaches Academy – *Football Philosophy*

Summary

This document has been produced to define the footballing philosophy all coaching and footballing related activity will aspire to under the Leighton United Football Club structure.

The rationale, principles and vision the philosophy sets out provides a single, clear reference point that all footballing activities should be developed around. The philosophy also provides clarity around the fundamental footballing development building blocks to ensure that day to day footballing activities can be delivered within a longer term footballing strategy as the blueprint to meet the club and FA's footballing aspirations on player development and quality.

Leighton United FC's footballing philosophy has deliberately been developed to completely align and support the overarching FA's football philosophy for grassroots football. It is the responsibility of the club as a Charter Community Standard recognised organisation to positively contribute to FA's playing philosophy and aspirations.

'Football should be played with an efficient, economical, measured, possession based approach, where pass quality combined with intelligent and timely support and movement lead to progress and penetration through the thirds of the field to provide goal-scoring opportunities IF counter attacking opportunities are denied.

To defend effectively and efficiently: a team should display a controlled, calculated and assertive approach where all players contribute and have a clear understanding of the tactical objectives being used to regain possession of the ball.

The game will allow and encourage all players to contribute to the attacking phase with variety, audacity and with considered risk taking and in the defending phase with understanding, assertiveness and decisiveness.'

FA Source – *The Future Game, Grassroots Edition*

Although there is full and clear alignment the between the FA's and the clubs footballing philosophy, the Leighton United document has been specifically developed to include the clubs history, culture, current and future capabilities and align these with the very latest world-class models and best practices with regards to player development.

Key considerations in the publication of this paper include the new Leighton United Coaches Academy footballing structure, significant contribution from the current coaching resources and importantly the clubs player and parent base. The clubs footballing philosophy along with the new footballing structure document aspires to provide all the necessary fundamental details to drive through the Coaches Academy the transition of the club to a coach-led footballing model building on its existing reputation, development and growth to now also include coaching excellence.

Philosophy Built On Club History, Principles & Culture

The club under its initial guise (BR Foxes FC) was established in 1985 by a group of local parents with one under 12 team. In 1989 the club changed its name to become Leighton Foxes FC. By then the club had expanded from one to six youth teams, a senior team, had set up a nursery section offering coaching to under 9's and had appointed a club coach.

In 1990 the club purchased 3.0 hectares of farmland near the village of Tilsworth established four football pitches and by the mid 1990's the club changed its name again to become Leighton United FC, adopting a policy of "Investing in Youth".

Football Association Charter Standard Community status was initially awarded in 2002 and in 2006 the club was awarded the Charter Standard Community Club of the Year accolade by the Bedfordshire Football Association. A major landmark in the club's history was the completion of a state of the art clubhouse in 2007 and this along with substantial year on year investment in pitch playing surface improvement now provide the clubs playing base with facilities widely regarded as one of the best both regionally and nationally. The club is a self-funding football organisation that is run entirely on a voluntary basis to provide high quality facilities and coaching across all levels of qualification from Level 1 through to Level 3 /UEFA B License and across the new FA Youth module pathway to its player base.

However at the heart of the club is a fundamental desire to provide all of its teams and their players with strong early life skills drawn from their experiences with the club, their footballing activities, successes, failures and interactions with both team mates and opposition. The progress of the club both on and off the field since 1985 evidences its efforts to create and maintain a high quality set of principles and culture that supports development of its players within a positive environment leading to respectful, well-rounded behaviours both on and off the field of play.

The club has a history, principles and culture of youth development particularly when looking at the not only player development (a number of previous and current players have gone on to play professionally or are attached to professional clubs at all levels of the game including the English Premiership), but also young referee and young leader development who have both extensively been promoted within and by the club benefitting not only Leighton United, but the wider local footballing and school communities.

With all of this in mind the club's Footballing Philosophy has been developed with the clubs history, and principles at its centre and looks to further build on its existing culture that naturally shapes the clubs current footballing activities with a definitive and structured reference point that all training, matches and wider footballing ambitions will be built from.

Philosophy Principles

A major number of significant global football clubs and internationally renowned footballing coaches/ managers base their philosophies on a set of people value principles that underpin their wider footballing aspirations. Typical examples are provided below –

‘When we play matches we impress on the boys three objectives, firstly they must be the more sporting team, committing fewer fouls and being less aggressive. Then they must try to win by playing very well, more creatively than the opposition, with attacking football. And finally they need to win on the scoreboard, but we don’t want to win without the first two aims being fulfilled’- Albert Capellas, FC Barcelona Senior Youth Coordinator (Spain)

‘You cannot be a good player until you are a good person’ – Juventus FC Philosophy (Italy)

‘You shouldn’t teach children to win the game, you should teach children to play the game’ – Jose Mourinho, Chelsea FC Manager (England)

It is with these global best practice reference points in mind that the Leighton United Footballing Philosophy has been intentionally developed to align with key people value principles as outlined above, but shaped to meet the clubs individual aspirations, capabilities and culture.

It reinforces player development as the consistent reference point and priority outcome that will define and influence all footballing activities within the club regardless of the player age, gender or playing format and will be the blueprint that will deliver ongoing growth and success of the club, its coaches and player base.

Success within the club will be aligned with its Footballing Philosophy and will focus on the tangible development of both its player base as individuals and its teams as collectives. The clubs established history of success measured in traditional benchmarks of league and cup outcomes will not be undermined by the club’s Footballing Philosophy and its successful ongoing implementation across the club structure will deliver further sustainable positive on-field accolades and reward – However the Footballing Philosophy or its coaching model will not be compromised for any short term gain or perceived ‘must win’ environments

Leighton United FC’s Footballing Philosophy principles are outlined as follows –

‘Through developing challenging, but supportive learning environments that see no differential between training or game time, we will consistently provide appropriate opportunities to equip all our players with a variety of capabilities to adapt to multiple scenarios. Enabling them to develop and deliver effective and creative playing solutions.’

Footballing Philosophy Delivery Model

To underpin the key reference points within the clubs Footballing Philosophy principles the following delivery model has been developed to provide the next layer structure and fundamentals that will be considered and used as consistent reference points in the development and planning of all footballing activities at the club.

Specifically referenced in the Footballing Philosophy outlined above is the overarching principle that no differential will be made between training and game time. Both environments will be viewed by all coaches and managers as identical opportunities to develop the clubs player base. By taking this approach both environments will have a consistent outcome objective of player development and should provide all players involved with appropriate opportunities to develop their own solutions to real time challenges. 'Appropriate' should not be viewed singularly as just a time measure, but should also consider the type of challenge and its complexity based on an individual or teams capability.

In order to further drive player development the Footballing Philosophy delivery model should drive the players to develop their own playing solutions covering both effectiveness and creativity components. Both training and game time will be structured to provide the players with the basic problems and challenges and give them various scenarios for them, through their participation in the sessions, to develop their own solutions. Through various styles of coach/manager interventions and the player executing their solutions within the session they will subsequently develop and improve their capabilities and decision making through guided learning as opposed to prescribed answers being provided to them. There are obviously scenario's where it is appropriate for a coach or manager to provide players with a very structured practice or response to a specific challenge, but this should be in the minority with the majority of training or game environments created to focus on the player or team developing their own solutions and answers to a footballing challenge.

More relevant to the training environment, the Footballing Philosophy looks to support the manager or coach in defining the framework for developing small sided formats to increase the number of touches every player gets with the ball, increase the time each player is directly contributing to a session and its outcomes and also improve player development. Depending on the players age and the format of the game they are currently playing in (five, seven, nine or eleven a-side) the way small sided game training formats are utilised can vary, however the principles of smaller numbers of players in smaller playing areas focussing on structured topics will still be a significant consideration when developing training or game environments.

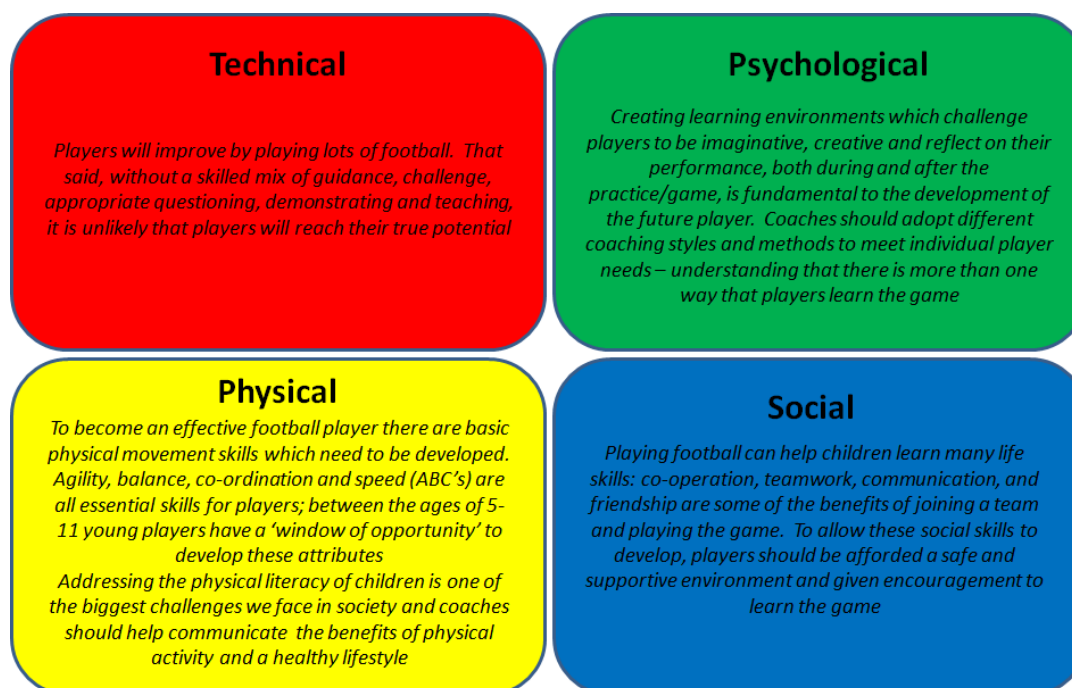
The clubs Footballing Philosophy and its delivery is enabled through effective coach and manager interventions and their style in both the training and game environments. Different players respond positively to a number of intervention types and coaching styles. The employment of these intervention types will differ depending on the environment, the challenge and the player. Throughout the club structure different coaches and managers will have differing coaching styles, however it is critical that they have all of the intervention types within their coaching skillsets to effectively use them where appropriate to increase team and player development.

The various coaching styles and intervention types are described as follows -

Coaching Styles	Command (Directive)	Question & Answer	Observation & Feedback	Guided Discovery	Trial & Error
Intervention	Coach tells & shows required solution	Coach leads with question to gain response from players	Coach & players observe	Coach asks a question or issues a challenge	Players &/or coach decide on challenge
Example	'I want you to...'	'Can you tell me what you can do here?'	'Let's watch this'	'Can you show me....'	'Try for yourself....'
Description	Coach determines the chosen out-comes in practice	Coach poses question & player offers verbal solution to the challenge	Players & Coach observe & discuss feedback	Coach prompts & players offer visual demonstration of their personal solution	Players are encouraged to find solutions with minimal support from coach

FA Source – The Future Game, Grassroots Edition

The club's Footballing Philosophy looks to directly support the FA's 'four corner' development model and as such when planning each footballing activity the coach/manager will consider each of the four corner development components as outlined below –



FA Source – The Future Game, Grassroots Edition

Through constant reference back to the FA's four corner model this will ensure that all footballing activities within the club look to underpin not only the short term required outcome of a particular training session or game, but will also directly support both the FA's Long Term Development Plan, the clubs overarching Footballing Philosophy and importantly the clubs people values, culture and principles around off field, life skill development of players.

Another critical outcome from the clubs Footballing Philosophy is to provide its players with a variety of capabilities and ensure that they can react in real time to an ever changing game and practice environment based on excellent self-decision making.

In order to continually support these key areas of the player's development the delivery model will drive all footballing activities to provide appropriate player position rotation including the roles of the goalkeeper and substitutes. Particularly in young players at the start of their footballing development significant benefit is received from rotating players across all positions within the small sided game format. This has two purposes, the first being that in order for a player to appreciate the different attributes and responsibilities of their team mates playing in different position to themselves they need to experience playing in the position itself. This will lead to a greater appreciation of the dependencies players playing in other positions have on each of their fellow team members.

For example, a player who experiences most of their game and training time playing in a defensive role will have a poor appreciation of the attributes required for a striker, midfielder or goalkeeper to be successful. Further to this they will not consider how they can best support players in other positions from the role they are playing within any football scenario. This can include how best to support an individual or unit when in and out of possession of the ball, positional awareness, delivery of a pass (including weight of pass, direction of pass in relation to the receiving player, communication etc) and many more considerations. By restricting a players experience to a specific role or position within a team this will limit their future capability to adapt to any changing playing environment or reduce their ability to perform a number of roles effectively within the team.

A typical example within the modern game for players to have multiple capabilities is the essential requirement for a goalkeeper to have strong outfield player attributes to effectively deal with back-passes and scenario's outside of the penalty box (e.g. the defence is asked to play a high line with and adjusted goalkeeper start position to act as a sweeper-keeper). This consideration around broadening player's awareness of different roles and responsibilities according to the position they play also extends to that of the role of the substitute. All players must experience the position of starting games in the role of the substitute in order for them to observe the game from the sideline (alongside the manager or coach). This will enable the player to personally analyse the game, its tactical attributes and the strengths and weaknesses of both their team and the opposition. The players own conclusions, coupled with those of their manager or coaches input will then provide them with the opportunity to apply these observations and learn how to best positively influence the game when they enter the field of play.

The second purpose of player position rotation is to prevent a player particularly of a young age being labelled as a specific player type again leading to significantly reducing that players opportunity to develop a more rounded set of playing capabilities and limiting their development opportunity. Too easy are players type-cast into specific positional roles by coaches / managers and parents / carers with these decisions being based upon limited visibility (particularly in younger age groups) of that players existing capabilities and more importantly their future potential playing in a different role.

No distinction should be made when considering the player position rotation principle between very young or older player age ranges. However the outcomes or focus for the player position rotation may be slightly different in how this is introduced to the footballing activity for the older aged player groups. In the younger player range it is essential that each player gets significant opportunities to experience playing in all roles across the team, but it may be that a manager / coach of an older age group will use player rotation in their footballing activities (essentially including games in this category) for a slightly different purpose. For example more extensive player rotation may be used in older players in specific areas within a playing system. In a traditional 4-4-2 system player rotation may be more extensively used with specific players carrying out 'connected' roles such as the left back, left sided centre midfielder and left winger or the right sided striker, right winger and right sided midfielder. This will enable the same Footballing Philosophy principles to be implemented within the activity and will deliver the same outcome with that of a more generic exercise with far younger players (i.e. players getting a greater appreciation of the responsibilities and attributes of other players playing in different positions), but in the older age group will look to drill down on more specific technical detail based on a more focussed phase, function or playing area within the game.

In order to fulfil the Footballing Philosophy's principles of all players being equipped with a variety of capabilities to adapt to multiple scenarios to enabling them to develop and deliver effective and creative playing solutions, it is essential that player positional rotation is applied across all teams and individuals within the club in both game and training environments.

In order to execute the clubs Footballing Philosophy there are multiple components and influences that have to be considered pertinent to the situation, player, session topic or desired outcome (including the game environment). However the club's Footballing Philosophy looks to outline a structured format that can be applied regardless of footballing activity type (game or training environment) and provides a framework that supports excellent player development.

For all footballing activities within the club the repeatable structure and its components are outlined below. These should be at the centre of all practical footballing activities and describe the framework that should be clearly evident regardless of game formats, age or gender player profiles -

- Introduction briefing – Brief discussion with all participants within the activity (training or game) outlining the topic or outcomes the activity is looking to achieve and chance for the players to raise anything relevant (injuries etc) with the coach or manager
- Warm up – Dynamic and if possible appropriate to the topic that will be the focus for the session. This can also include a game activity where the focus maybe to a certain playing style and as such any warm up should be relevant to the activity's focus
- Relevant and appropriate activity – This is the actual footballing activity of either a game or training session
- Appropriate breaks – Dependant on the environment and player profile (age etc). Should be used as an opportunity to rehydrate, develop or amend (including improve) the activity and also gauge player understanding and benefit of the activity
- Relevant and appropriate activity – Restart of the activity including any changes or progressions made as a result of observations from the first half of the activity

- Cool down and check for learning – Any level or intensity of the cool down should be appropriate to the player profile, but regardless of this at the end of the activity there should be an opportunity for the coach / manager to assess its success by checking for player learning of the intended outcomes and provide the players with an opportunity to clarify any areas that aren't clearly understood

All the previously described components of the Footballing Philosophy within the Delivery Model section of this document should be a constant reference point in the design and delivery of all footballing activities within the club. Its repeatable application, albeit adjusted to suit the player profiles and ability, will ensure that the Philosophy's principles will be underpinned and supportive, but challenging environment created to ensure that all players can maximise their full development potential.

Model Player Attributes and Practice Curriculum

To underpin the key reference points within the clubs Footballing Philosophy principles the following player attributes and practice curriculum has been developed to provide the next layer structure and fundamentals that will consistently be considered in the design and development of both training and game activities. This will ensure that each activity week on week, season on season strives to build on all previous activities efforts to continually develop each player as individuals and teams as collectives in order to maximise potential.

In breaking down the Footballing Philosophy principles the model player attributes and practice curriculum don't look to restrict or dictate playing systems and formations or produce players who all have generic capabilities that only produce generic playing solutions. However it looks to provide the next level playing and player framework that should be a key consideration in planning and developing all footballing activities by the manager or coach.

The Footballing Philosophy looks to underpin the development of players who each have a variety of capabilities that can adapt to different game scenarios. In order for players to have this variety of capabilities and be adaptable they cannot be consistently exposed to a rigid playing style or formation that will restrict the development of that adaptability. As such the preferred playing style that the practice curriculum looks to develop is one of fluidity where players are encouraged to play through the thirds of the pitch and will provide the challenging environment to develop higher levels of technical capabilities which is not only the aim of the clubs Footballing Philosophy, but also the aspiration of the FA's modern approach and vision for the game.

With intentional full alignment to the FA's Future Game Grassroots Philosophy the following technical, tactical, physical and psychological components should always be considered when planning specific footballing activities with the aspiration to develop the player with model attributes of -

Goalkeeper

Technical

- Excellent handling skills
- Makes good decisions, knowing when to catch, deflect or parry
- Has the composure to pass and receive with both feet
- Can pass the ball over varied distances using many passing techniques
- Confidant in dealing with crosses, especially in congested areas (e.g. set plays)

Tactical

- Understands the principles of a good starting position, both in and out of possession
- Effective communicator, using commonly understood terms
- Has an appreciation of the state of the game and adopts a no risk mentality
- Initiates counter-attack opportunities for the team
- Good game understanding and decision making

Physical

- Has the flexibility, agility and athleticism to move around the pitch/goal with speed balance and co-ordination
- Quick reactions, both in thought and movement
- Has the power and strength needed to deal with physical and contact situations

Psychological

- Has the courage to dive at the feet of opponents and smother the ball
- Demonstrates good powers of concentration and is alert when called into action
- Able to cope with errors and criticism
- Makes positive decisions and plays with presence

Defender

Technical

- Reads the game well and positions effectively
- Understands when to mark opponents from different distances according to game circumstances
- Presses opponents effectively, intercepting passes, spoiling possession and containing attackers
- Can defend in all 1v1 situations including counter attacks
- Tracks opponents movements and can pass players onto team-mates if required
- Challenges decisively and fairly
- Can cover other defenders and mark space effectively
- Runs with the ball into midfield and beyond with composure
- Can play accurate passes to forward players in front and behind opposing defence
- Passes the ball with both feet, using any surface of the foot over a variety of distances with deception and spin. Passing into midfield and forward areas if necessary
- Can beat an opponent with movement with the ball in an opposed situation to relieve pressure

Tactical

- Understands how to defend individually and collectively and the concepts of defensive safety and risk
- Defends with composure and accuracy
- Reads and anticipates play and makes good decisions
- Supports, receives and plays in and from the defending third with composure and understanding
- Can move into midfield areas and combine play intelligently with midfield players
- Changes the ball position and play as required

Physical

- Quick and explosive particularly over short distances
- Can compete aerially possessing spring and timing, if not height, when jumping to challenge
- Possesses upper body strength for contact situations

Psychological

- Mentally adaptable and tactically capable in a variety of defending circumstances
- Courageous and focussed throughout the game
- Displays composure and competitiveness

Midfielder

Technical

- Able to receive the ball in all circumstances
- Can receive, secure and protect the ball under pressure
- Turns with the ball whenever possible in a variety of ways
- Uses a variety of one-touch skills with both feet (and all surfaces) over a wide passing range
- Delivers passes to forward players (or forward moving players) with sensitivity and accuracy, either aerially or on the ground. These passes can be executed over a range of distances with deception and variety
- Can beat an opponent individually, or through combination with team mates
- Strikes accurate shots from distances up to 30 yards

Tactical

- Understands playing the game side on
- Possesses excellent vision and awareness and observes all options available
- Retains possession with efficient passing skills
- Can play with disguise, showing one option, but performing another
- Moves into goal scoring positions inside the penalty area and scores with varied techniques
- Reads opponents attacking play and positions appropriately
- Recovers, presses, tracks and marks when defending
- Has an awareness and understanding of unfolding game events

Physical

- Demonstrates excellent aerobic and anaerobic capacity throughout the game
- Possesses explosive speed over short distances when both attacking and defending

Psychological

- Adapts playing style to the state of the game
- Displays intensity and composure throughout the game
- Has a positive, controlled competitiveness

Wide Attacker

Technical

- Receives the ball and turns to attack defenders
- Can beat an opponent with one or no touches when receiving
- Provides accurate passes and crosses to team mates in goal scoring positions whilst moving at maximum speed
- Scores goals in a variety of ways using different surfaces and skills

Tactical

- Where possible shows for passes behind the oppositions defence in wide positions
- Eludes tight marking opponents to receive passes in front of the defence in wide and in-field positions
- Combines with support players to beat the immediate wide defender
- Attacks opponents with the ball with the intention of eliminating them individually
- Can read an opponent's defending circumstances and evade them using varied dribbling skills
- Attacks in-field with and without the ball to contribute to penetrative play around the penalty area
- Performs a defensive support role, recovering, pressing and tracking opponents
- Shows a willingness to operate in defensive situations and understands defending strategies and tactics

Physical

- Explosive acceleration and pace both in and out of possession
- Shows speed endurance throughout the game
- Agile with and without the ball

Psychological

- Positive approach to attacking opponents
- Determined and persistent to repeatedly attack opponents
- Controlled and composed when supplying crosses, passes and when shooting

Central Striker

Technical

- Can react to an incoming service, or loose ball and finish with one or two touches
- Links with support players using one or two touches
- Protects the ball in tightly opposed situations, allowing supporting runs to take place
- Turns with the ball as frequently as possible
- Is effective in 1v1 situations

Tactical

- Shows as a pass outlet for players in possession in the defending third and deep midfield areas
- Understands how to position against and around opponents to cause maximum disadvantage
- Makes calculated movements and adopts positions that raise doubts in the minds of defenders of how to counteract these individual tactics
- Has the awareness and ability to exploit the spaces between and behind defences to receive passes in goal scoring and goal creating positions
- Escapes markers with timely and intelligent individual movement
- Understands positional movement and how to move opponents from good to poor defending positions to allow others to exploit the space created
- Moves into goal scoring positions
- Channels, traps and contains opponents in their defensive third
- Presses, marks and tracks opponents as required

Physical

- Has explosive speed and agility over short and medium distances (5-20 metres)
- Displays sustained speed over longer distances and speed endurance throughout the full game
- Has spring and timing (if not height) to contest aerial challenges for the ball
- Has the body strength to hold off physical challenges

Psychological

- Competitive and composed
- Willing to chase down forward passes delivered behind opposing defenders
- Adaptable and aware of the state of the game
- Shows bravery in potential goal scoring areas
- Displays intelligent positioning and cunning movement especially in goal scoring situations

Each footballing activity will have a clear linkage to the overarching Footballing Philosophy and should be planned with the intention of underpinning the principles within it around creating the right environment, technical development, capability variety etc. This will ensure that the Footballing Philosophy is consistently rolled out at high quality across all team ages and gender. To supplement the principles the Philosophy describes model player attributes which each footballing activity should focus on dependant on the function, phase, player/s or topic as this will ensure that the activity doesn't support random player development, but looks to contribute step by step with an end goal player blueprint in mind.

In order to provide a clear path that will support the player development journey with the model player attributes in mind the following practice curriculum is defined again with full alignment to the FA's Future Game Grassroots Philosophy that along with all other key building blocks within this Philosophy must be at the centre of considerations when the coach and manager is planning their footballing activities -

Attacking

Possession Practice

- Development and retention of possession in opposed directional practice, especially in reduced space and/or congested areas, creating individual space and time

Movement

- Understanding and implementing relevant patterns of movement
- Individual, group and team interchange and movement skills

Quality Passing

- Quick and early ground passing using both feet and a variety of foot surfaces
- Forward passing with side and back spin, in the air and on the ground over varying distances
- 20-60 yard passes to switch play in the air and on the ground
- Single touch passing skills over varying distances
- Measured, penetrating through passes
- Unorthodox and improvised passes over 10-40 yards

Individual and Combination Play

- Running with the ball away from opponents into space
- Dribbling
- Player combination skills, including wall passes and take overs
- Releasing and combining play with others whilst running with the ball

Receiving and Support Play

- Receiving ground and aerial passes on the move at speed
- Movement and first touch skills to retain possession
- Protecting the ball using ball manipulation and screening

Goal Scoring

- Crossing and finishing skills in game realistic practices which encourage orthodox and inventive goal scoring skills
- Striking at goal in realistic and varied scenario's, encouraging orthodox and inventive goal scoring

Defending

Delaying and Denying Progress

- Defending when isolated as opponents counter attack
- Channelling play in-field, outside and laterally
- Screening opponents preferred passing options

Pressurising Opponents

- Pressurising and containing opponents from in front and behind
- Intercepting, spoiling, challenging and blocking opponents' passes, crosses and strikes at goal
- Marking and tracking opponents
- Agility in tight defending situations

Ball Contacts

- Heading from a variety of heights
- One touch clearance and passing skills using head, volley and half volley
- Receiving and protecting the ball in defensive areas

The model player attributes are intentionally stated as an age generic profile and should be viewed as an end goal set of capabilities, but must be interpreted according to player age groups. It is obviously not realistic to expect an under 9 central striker to demonstrate the same technical attributes as that of an under 18 player, but when focussing on any specific attribute (e.g. *escapes markers with timely and intelligent individual movement*) it should be obvious to a coach or manager what that should mean specific to their age range of player and as such they should look to develop that attribute to the level and capability expected of their group of players.

Manager and Coach's role in delivering the philosophy

There are many influences when looking at the key components that enable player development at all levels of the game, but in particular that of youth player development at grassroots. However the singularly biggest influence on a player's development is that of the manager and /or coach.

The clubs Footballing philosophy and its subsequent footballing structure have been developed to significantly support each manager and coach in the planning and delivery of their footballing activities. It provides a repeatable framework and singular reference point that will lead to increased player development and subsequent on and off-field success. However although this provides the basic development blocks for all footballing activities it will only be successful and potential maximised if the delivery of the philosophy is of a consistent and ever-increasing level of quality by the manager and/or coach.

There are a number of basic requirements and mandatory behaviours that are expected of a manager or coach operating within the grassroots youth framework of the FA and these are defined and reinforced throughout all the FA's literature and resources across all levels of the game up to and including Elite Performance levels.

However because of the clubs significant Charter Standard Community Club status, its culture and ongoing efforts to continually improve quality across its coach and manager base these

fundamentals must form part of the Footballing philosophy definition given the direct impact these have on the player base.

The following attributes that all coaches and managers within the club should evidence is not designed to be an exhaustive list and there are a number of additional elements of the coach and manager profile that also could have been included. However to be in-keeping with the clubs aspirations to move to a quality coach-led model, the following attributes will support ongoing, consistent delivery of the Footballing Philosophy and as such ensure all players have a positive, direct interface for their footballing activities.

- Mandatory FA qualifications – Coaches and managers will have achieved an up to date and valid qualification of
 - *Emergency First Aid Certification*
 - *Safeguarding Children Module*
 - *FA recognised Disclosure and Barring Service clearance (previously referred to as Criminal Records Bureau CRB)*
- Technical qualifications – Coaches and managers will be FA qualified to a minimum of Level 1 or Youth Module 1 and will have achieved, or be working to, the aspirational qualification framework as outlined in the clubs Footballing Structure document appropriate to their teams age group
- FA Licensed Coaches Club – Coaches and managers will be members of the FA’s Licensed Coaches Club (or its subsequent incarnation) to ensure that they have full access to, fully utilise and then evidence in their footballing activities the latest views and opinions of new coaching best practice, philosophies and trends
- Appearance, personal standards and language – As a coach or manager within the club and in-keeping with its Charter Standard Community Status, principles and culture there is an expectation that supports the prerequisites placed on any candidate during any FA coaching qualification assessment regarding appearance, personal standards and language. Every coach or manager that operates within the clubs footballing structure must ensure that their appearance (including no smoking before, during or after the footballing activity where this can be witnessed by their players) is appropriate when leading any footballing activity and as such promote these expectations on their players. This will ensure that they set the tone and standard of the session from its beginning and also reinforce their expectations and that of the club on any participating players. Also key to maintaining high quality through all footballing activities is appropriately high personal standards of the coach and manager. This can mean professionally planned and set out sessions, the use of appropriate training aids or just an ongoing expectation placed upon themselves as managers to deliver high quality coaching sessions, but all of these and more are again central to setting high expectations and then meeting them. The other essential personal attribute that all coaches and managers will consistently evidence will be appropriate language when in both the training and game environments. In-keeping with the Football Philosophy’s principles around not differentiating between game and training environments the coach will consistently maintain appropriate language that is tailored to the age group they are working with and support player development by creating a strong learning environment in providing the players with technical content through effective interventions. Swearing is not tolerated and does not form any part of a quality coach and managers communication skills, particularly within youth football and consistent with expectations during any FA qualification assessment will not be viewed as acceptable.

- Challenging, but supportive environment – Reinforcing the Footballing Philosophy’s principles, each footballing activity planned by the coach or manager will look to create opportunities that encourage individual, unit and team development through self and kinaesthetic learning in a challenging, but supportive environment. The environment developed by the coach or manager should create challenges that stretch a players capability, but also provides support that coupled with the challenge present all the components that will deliver a successful development outcome and continually maximise potential
- Session preparation – All footballing activities will be adequately prepared and pre-planned by the coach or manager to achieve the required session / topic (including game environment) outcome. This will include ongoing reference to the Footballing Philosophy to maintain club wide alignment of its delivery, evaluation of individual player and team development needs and topic progressions from previous activities. Appropriate preparation and planning will ensure high quality session delivery and maintain player interest, commitment and subsequent development

The manager or coach’s role is critical in the Footballing Philosophy’s Delivery Model and their behaviours, attributes, preparation and high personal standards will not be sacrificed or compromised through diluting the clubs Footballing Philosophy for team or individual short term gain.

As is a consistent theme throughout this document, the principle underpinning all footballing activities within the club will be player development - with on field reward and off field personal development maximised through the successful ongoing delivery of the Footballing Philosophy and its subsequent iterations.