



BURY RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB YOUTH SECTION DNA



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THE BURY RANGERS YOUTH SECTION DNA – INTRODUCTION

The England DNA launched at the end of 2014 was designed to be a key turning point in the future direction of English football. After a number of disappointing World Cup and European tournaments the England DNA was developed to change the playing and coaching philosophy of the national team with the long-term aim of helping create successful senior teams in the men's and women's game. Bury Rangers as a leading Charter Standard Community Club has a responsibility for best practice and coaching excellence to ensure we are driving forward not only the England DNA, but also our own "Football for All" ethos.

The DNA approach is not purely centred on the international or elite end of the game, and while winning is ultimately a key aim of the strategy, the individual development of young players is the key priority. To ensure there is consistency with the grassroots level of the game – after all the young Bury Rangers players of today could be potential England players of the future – the FA are keen to cascade the DNA framework through the football pyramid and encouraging clubs like ours to create their own

DNA. Beyond the on-pitch element the DNA provides a strong infrastructure for the on-going operation of our club, and also acts as another vehicle for communication to our players, coaches and parents as to how we ensure good practice within the club.

The Bury Rangers Football Development team have considered the England DNA at some length, and have chosen to adopt the framework and a large degree of the content, integrated with other sources of good practice youth coaching materials (such as the FA Youth Award learner resources and the FA Future Game handbook) to create the Bury Rangers DNA, which is laid out in this document.

We hope you will find the content stimulating, challenging and thought provoking. It is not a mandate as to how everything must happen and some of the content may not be universally applicable, but is built on widely accepted best practice and latest thinking and therefore we hope that you are able to embrace it and apply it to your coaching to support the development of our young footballers.

THE BURY RANGERS YOUTH SECTION DNA CORE ELEMENTS:



THE BURY RANGERS YOUTH SECTION DNA – INTRODUCTION CONTD.

It is deliberately not a collection of session plans, as it would be impossible to capture the needs of all teams and individual players, but instead a toolkit to help you effectively deliver appropriately selected or designed practices relevant to the needs of your group.

You may notice that some of the content has openly been lifted from the aforementioned sources, or other available information. Where we have considered

it appropriate to do so we have condensed and/or simplified certain elements and also incorporated our personal beliefs as to what good coaching practice is, and how it should be delivered in the context of a grassroots youth football club. All that remains to be said is that we hope you can make good use of this resource for the benefit of your young players, and please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Football Development team if you would like to discuss any of the information in further detail.

FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Jason Levy
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WHO WE ARE



WHO WE ARE

The “Who We Are” element of the DNA centres on our club philosophy and therefore the values and behaviours with which we operate. This in turn provides direction as to how the Bury Rangers FC player, coach and parent community think and act, and ensures the development of young players is at the forefront of the actions of all parties.

The club mission statement is “To enable every football player to reach his or her full potential whilst ensuring enjoyment of all aspects of the game” with the words ‘every’ (opportunities for all), ‘potential’ (challenge and progression) and ‘enjoyment’ (it’s why kids play football!) particularly key and supported by multiple strands within the DNA. Our club code of conduct lays out the behaviours expected of our players, parents and also our coaches, but the following addresses in more detail some areas where it is critical that all parties are aligned.

Player development is our number one priority, not winning.

The relatively recent overhaul of youth football in the UK and in particular the introduction of non-competitive football (no league tables) until U12 puts a clear focus on player development as the number one priority ahead of winning, and as a club we have no reason to believe our approach should be any different.

Our young players will play at the appropriate level for their development.

The level a child plays at is often an emotive subject for the player, the coach and more so the parents of the child involved, and there is no absolute right or wrong answer or opinion on the subject of streaming. However, the more that this subject is discussed a clear overarching question emerges – is the child at the right level for their own development? This means are they playing in an environment where they are able to practice skills on a matchday with appropriate level of challenge and difficulty. A child will not learn from scoring six goals a week through playing against

too weak an opposition, nor will they develop if they do not get sufficient touches of a ball if the game is played at too high a pace for them. Schools group children at school on ability for key learning areas, and it makes sense that their sporting development should follow a similar path. Clearly at younger ages there may be further considerations e.g. players playing for fun, social development, physical wellbeing etc and it is important that these factors are recognised also.

Our coaches will ensure players get equal game time through the FA “mini-soccer” phase.

We also believe that through the FA “mini-soccer” phase (5v5 through to 9v9 inclusive) that coaches

should adopt an equal playing time policy. This may not be possible within each and every individual game for a multitude of reasons, but should be the target over a period of weeks and ultimately the season. This can be another highly emotive subject, and again particularly for parents although even our younger players are quick to recognise themselves where they are not getting a fair crack of the whip. Again there may be factors such as behaviour, training attendance, physical fitness/

injury which may need to be taken into consideration but it is critical that we focus on an equal distribution of matchday minutes.

“To enable every football player to reach his or her full potential whilst ensuring enjoyment of all aspects of the game.”

WINNING VS DEVELOPMENT

Winning

- Select players
- Measure success by league tables, trophies + tournaments
- Play strongest team for the majority/all of the games
- Release players

Development

- All welcome
- Positive behaviour and code for all involved
- Measure success by enjoyment and community feel
- All have the chance to play equally

WHO WE ARE: KEY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

- Do I put player development ahead of winning games?
- Are all the players in my team at an appropriate level?
- Are there any players who need more challenge?
- Are some players struggling to actively participate in the game?
- Do we – the age-group coaches – meet to discuss the development of players across the teams?
- Do I adopt an equal game time policy? Can I support this through keeping records? Would it help if I pre-planned my substitutions? Can I make sure that volunteer goalkeepers aren't 'penalised' via less outfield playing time?



HOW WE COACH



The England DNA Coaching Fundamentals, as illustrated below, provides a strong framework or checklist to support the delivery of effective practice to our young players.

The appendix to this document provides information around effective practice design and delivery, and to help you integrate these areas into your training sessions. Here we have provided further detail on some key areas and related topics.

Please be forewarned that the list of key questions to consider at the end of the 'How We Coach' chapter is lengthy, and for this there are no apologies, as this area is where we most impact upon our players and also have most opportunity to influence the quality of that impact.

70% ball rolling time.

We have limited training time with our teams, typically an hour per week, and therefore within those hours it is critical to maximise the amount of time where the balls are moving and all players are participating in the session – kids come to training and matches to play football, not listen to their adult coaches talking. Moreover, young players will learn by doing... 'let the game be the teacher'.

However, please remember that 70% as referenced in the England DNA is a guide and may fluctuate on a week by week basis, and remember that a slightly lower % in a U9 session that is realistic and challenging is likely a better outcome than 90% ball rolling time while dribbling around stationary cones before shooting into a full-size goal.

Training sessions are progressive and challenging.

One of the main reasons why training sessions can be ineffective is losing the engagement of players because the session is too easy or too hard, and hence it is critical that each practice allows first the opportunity for mastery of technique and then the opportunity to practice these skills in a less predictable environment.

As a further complication it is highly likely that within your group of players, even if within a streamed age-group, you will have some level of difference

of ability and some will adapt to the focus of the session quicker than others. Dependent on the topic you are also likely to find that the players who are pushing ahead of or struggling to keep up with the rest of the group vary on a week-by-week basis.

It is therefore imperative that as a coach we give consideration to how we can adapt the difficulty level within a session for both the group as a whole, and also for individual players within the group, and some principles/techniques for providing quality practice and effectively managing the difficulty of sessions for the group and individuals are further detailed in the appendix.

Recognise effort and decision making not just positive outcomes.

With rare exception, the players we coach are at a non-elite level, and as coaches it is important that end results are not the only measure of success whether in matches or training. If players are putting good effort levels into a practice or game, particularly in an area outside of their comfort zone, we should recognise this and in doing so may encourage further effort. Equally, if players are making correct decisions when faced by particular situations this should be applauded even if the outcome is not ultimately successful. Doing so will encourage the individual to repeat his/her actions when faced with a similar situation, allowing additional opportunity to practice and move towards success.

Through the younger ages appropriate emphasis will be placed on FUNdamentals.

Coaches of our 5-11 year old players will commit to recognising that this is a critical window for our players to learn physical literacy, and ensure that sessions have strong content around agility, balance, coordination and speed (ABCs). Ideally this is achieved through ball-focussed activities, but can also be supported by fun warm-up games that encourage running, jumping, changing direction etc.

A planned and structured longer-term approach to training with our limited contact time with our group, as coaches we are often guilty of trying to squeeze too much into a training session. Training sessions should have a clear learning focus (see Structuring

HOW WE COACH CONTD.

Practice in the appendices of this document) rather than elements of the session jump from e.g. passing, to tackling, to shooting. Indeed it may take more than one session to effectively cover a topic area such as, defending when 'disorganised/out-of-balance', and the wider topic of defending may be covered most effectively through delivery of linked sessions over a number of weeks.

Build on strengths as well as address weaknesses (or development areas).

In an ideal world, we would see our players for more than one hour per week outside of matchdays. In reality, we probably have even less time to impact our players and we need to be realistic about what we can achieve with the group and individuals within it during that time. While we should be taking a holistic view of the levels our players are at across all aspects of the game, as always there are tradeoffs to consider e.g. with an attack minded group of players that score a lot of goals and are entertaining to watch, should we be spending our engagement time with the players defending corners just because the team has conceded in these situation for two consecutive games? Or should we continue to build on the team strengths and hence increase the

likelihood of scoring more goals? Or on an individual basis, what is the likelihood of being able to coach a young player who has a very strong left foot to get his much less predominant right foot to the same level?

To an extent, a well-considered season-long training syllabus can support all-round development for the group and individual players, but we should remember the outcome of focusing on areas of strength is more likely to yield successful outcomes in a grassroots football environment.

Bury Rangers FC coaches will be up-to-date and innovative and in the longer-term work towards increased consistency throughout our age-groups.

We recognise that all Bury Rangers FC coaches are volunteers, and some may have more time and energy than others to devote to their role within the club. The Football Development team are here to support you in your coaching and will look to make available information to help you 'stay in touch' with developments relevant to grassroots youth coaching , but as a base you are strongly recommended to become a member of the FA Licensed Coaches Club (LCC) and utilise the available on-line resources.



THE BURY RANGERS YOUTH SECTION DNA COACHING FUNDAMENTALS:

Use a positive and enthusiastic manner with players at all times

Deliver realistic game-related practices

Use games whenever possible in training giving them time to practice and extend learning

Connect with the players before the session outlining the aims, objectives and specific targets

Develop practices that enable the players to make lots of decisions

Connect, activate, demonstrate and consolidate in every session

Value and work equally across the FA four corner model

Spend equal time delivering planning and reviewing

Include elements of transition in all practices and sessions where possible

Use a carousel approach to practice design maximising playing time

Use varied coaching styles based on the needs of the individuals and the group

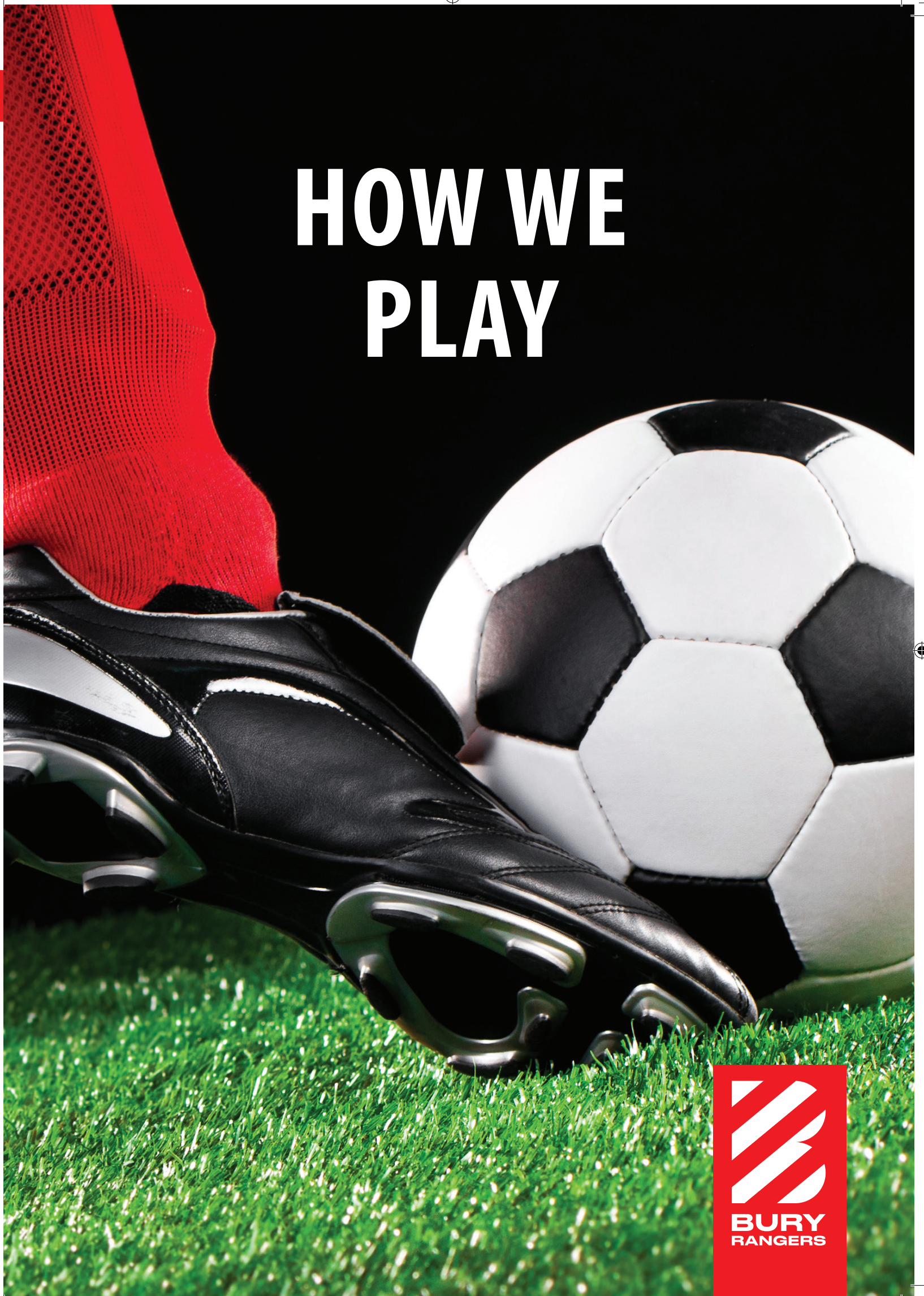
Aim for a minimum of 70% ball rolling time in all sessions

HOW WE COACH: KEY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

- How can I quickly set up a practice? Can I work multiple practices within the same area with minimal changes to set-up? Can I do fewer practices within a session?
- Can the players organise their own arrival activity? E.g. rondo/keepball, SSGs
- How long do I have to spend explaining the organisation of the practice? Are there 1-2 sentences of instruction I can use to get them playing and develop the practice while in motion?
- How often do I need to intervene? Can I intervene and affect an individual/unit/team without stopping the practice? Can I use an assistant to run the practice while I coach the players within it?
- Can I have a set format to guarantee 70% ball rolling time e.g. after a warm-up with a ball 3x 10 minute sessions with 2 minute coaching intervals followed by a drinks break and 15 minute SSG to finish?
- Have I planned how I can manage differences in achievement within the group?
- Can I use conditioned SSGs wherever possible?
- Are over/underloads appropriate to support the learning topic?
- Can I keep time/score or give targets to challenge the players?
- Can I issue stronger players within the session additional challenge e.g. focus on less predominant foot?
- Can I give the players lots of decisions to make during the practice?
- Do I acknowledge when decision making was correct, regardless of subsequent execution?
- Within our limited training/matchday hours with the players, should I focus on spending a lot of time improving a perceived weakness to potentially at best make it average? Or should I focus more on developing existing strengths of players to give them opportunities to excel?
- Can I ask questions where players can show rather than tell me the answer?
- Do I manage mistakes in a positive manner?
- Can I develop a syllabus for the term/season?
- Have the players learned/improved their skills during the session? Have the players enjoyed the session?
- Have they worked hard and improved their physical wellbeing?
- Am I deploying the learnings from my FA courses? Am I interested in attending further FA coach education? (Recommended pathway the FA Youth Modules)
- Am I a member of the FA Licensed Coaches Club and therefore have access to the significant online support resources that this brings?
- Do I attend the Bury Rangers FC coach forums? (3x annually) Have I asked the Bury Rangers FC Football Development team for support?
- Do I attend CPD events runs by Hertfordshire FA?



HOW WE PLAY



HOW WE PLAY

Within the England DNA, the aim is for all England teams to demonstrate a consistent playing style regardless of age – “the only thing that changes is the size of the shirt”. While this is difficult to achieve in perhaps all but the oldest age-groups in the club, the key aspects of this philosophy are all relevant to us at a grassroots level, and should shape the way we ask our teams to play:

- Aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.
- Aim to regain possession intelligently and as early and as efficiently as possible.
- Aim to sense changing moments in the game both in and out of possession, reacting instinctively and intelligently.

Beyond these, there are additional aspects that should be considered by the coaches of young players:

Adopt the principle that a move to a new format (e.g. 5v5 to 7v7) means more players on a pitch and not a wholesale change in playing style.

The 2011 changes to youth football introduced 5v5 (U7 & U8) and 9v9 (U11 & U12) alongside 7v7 (now U9 & U10 rather than U7 through to U11) and U11 (now from U13 earliest), and brought us more in line with how top footballing nations in Europe and South America have developed their young players for many years.

The benefits of 5v5 are manifold and empirically proven but centre on increased ball touches, less emphasis on formation/positions, and increased opportunities to practice 1v1 situations. Goal keepers not being allowed to ‘drop-kick’ from their hands and having to roll/throw/pass by foot along the ground is a fundamental step towards ‘playing through the thirds’ and should not be abandoned when such restrictions are lifted at 7v7. It is essential that a move to a new format does not abandon all previous learnings and that we treat it as an opportunity to practice existing skills in a new environment and develop further new skills alongside.

Promote teamwork but allow individuals to express themselves.

Creativity is a highly sought after attribute in the professional game, and often is central to the success of teams in individual matches and tournaments, explaining why players who are strong in this area often move clubs for many millions of pounds. A key challenge for us in the grassroots game is to encourage a team ethos but also give players the freedom to take risks in all areas of the pitch, the latter being something which you will openly see in academy training sessions and matches.

As our players move through the foundation years (5-11) we should not look to suppress their creativity, but can help (through appropriate practice design and delivery) to support development of their decision making skills as to where and when to take risks.

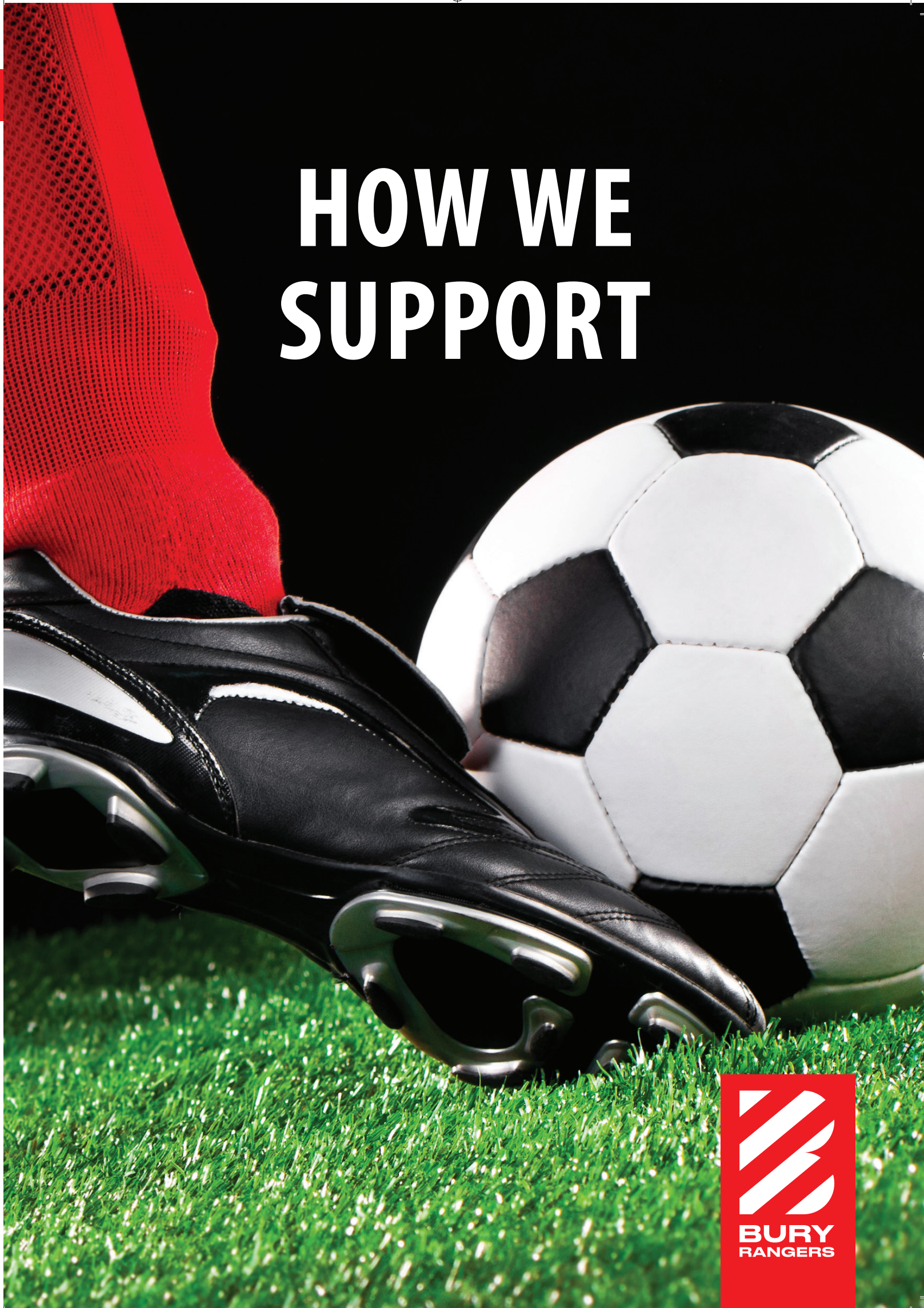
As far as possible through our younger age-groups we will play to individual teams/ strengths rather than hide/cover areas of relative weakness.

Remember we are developing young footballers, not trying to write our own managerial CV. Can we acknowledge the players we have and set up accordingly rather than force players into a pre-mediated formation that we think looks/sounds good? For example, if I have two strong forward players can I have them both playing at the same time rather than deploying a 2-3-1 (7v7) or 3-4-1 (9v9) formation because playing one striker is the ‘done thing’? Most of our young players would rather play in attacking roles and the younger years present more opportunity to learn a range of skills and experiment with creativity, e.g. it is much easier to convert a 14 year old winger to a defensive midfielder who sits in front of defenders rather than the other way around.

Clear player roles.

In order that our players are clear on what we are expecting of them in game situations we will provide them with information to give clarity on their roles when in possession (as an individual or team), out of possession, and how they can react and respond in moments of transition.

HOW WE SUPPORT



HOW WE SUPPORT

The 'How We Support' strand of the DNA highlights the ways in which the club supports the development of players and coaches to maximise participation and enjoyment, through a strong and evolving infrastructure and modus operandi.

Through exemplary practice with regards to Welfare, the club will provide players with a safe and positive playing environment.

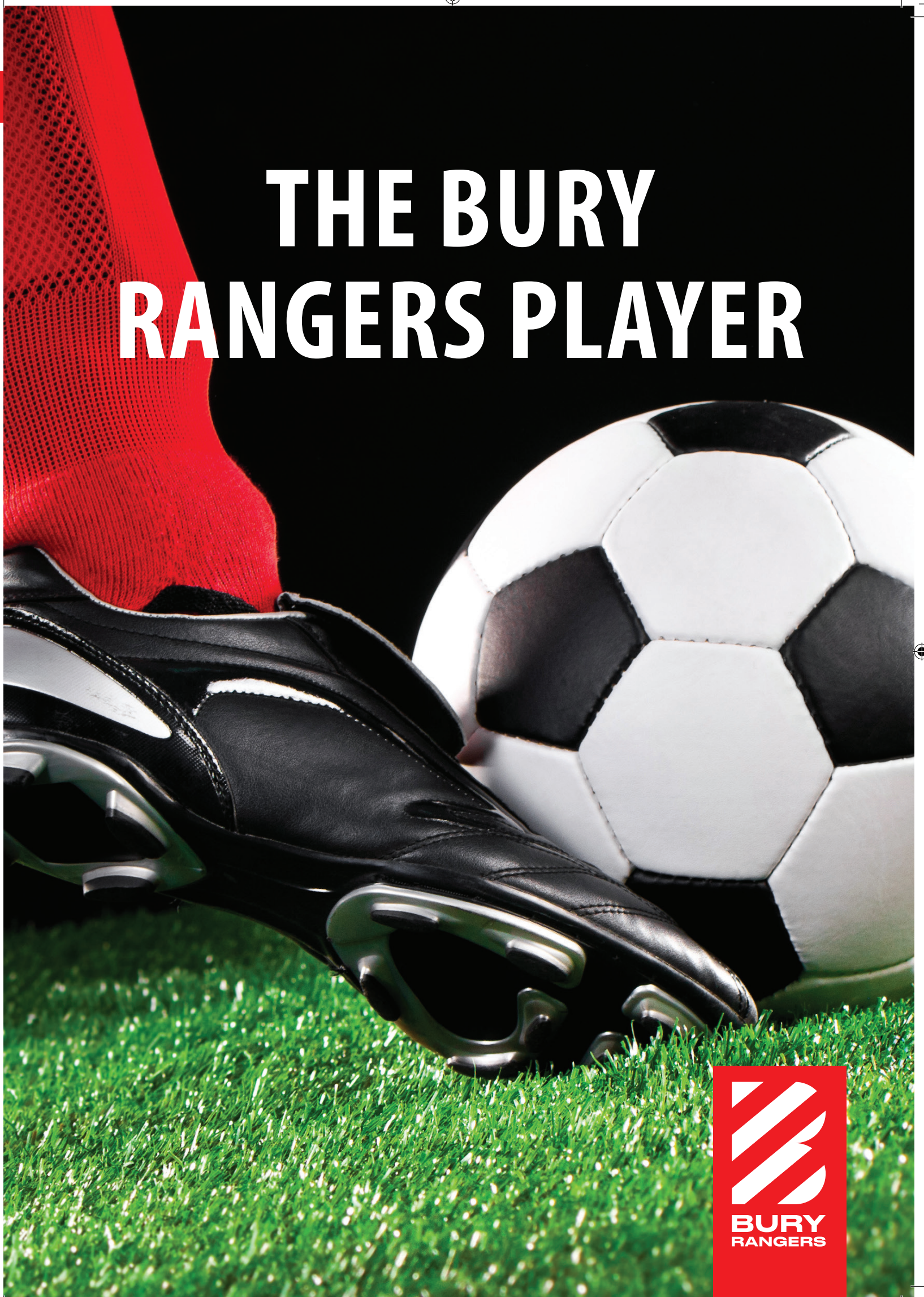
We will also take responsibility and care to ensure that players are provided with appropriate facilities, kit and equipment.

Coaches will have access to funding for education, forums and best practice sharing, and mentoring/ buddying from within the club coaching community.

Off the pitch, we will encourage social interaction amongst our players and coaching community, and recognise and celebrate both participation and success.



THE BURY RANGERS PLAYER



THE BURY RANGERS PLAYER

The key attributes the future Bury Rangers player should have, in line with 'The Future England Player' strand of the England DNA are highlighted below, grouped under the four headings of the FA Long Term Player Development model (the Appendix). A key point for consideration is the actions you can take throughout a young player's football to support and foster development of these attributes.

Technical/Tactical

- While players may have a preferred or stronger position, they will have the versatility to perform to good levels in other positions as and when required
- Similarly, while players will have a dominant foot, they will also have ability to use their less preferred foot when circumstances require
- Players should want to receive the ball and be comfortable in possession to give the team a base from which to launch attacks
- As they become older, players will become increasingly 'football intelligent' and 'tactically aware' in terms of their role within the team and within different scenarios within games

Physical

- Players will have developed strong ABCs (agility, balance, coordination, speed) to support key body movements required in the game (kicking, running, jumping, turning etc)
- Overall fitness levels will be high and allow the player to be hard working for the duration of the game that they are on the pitch

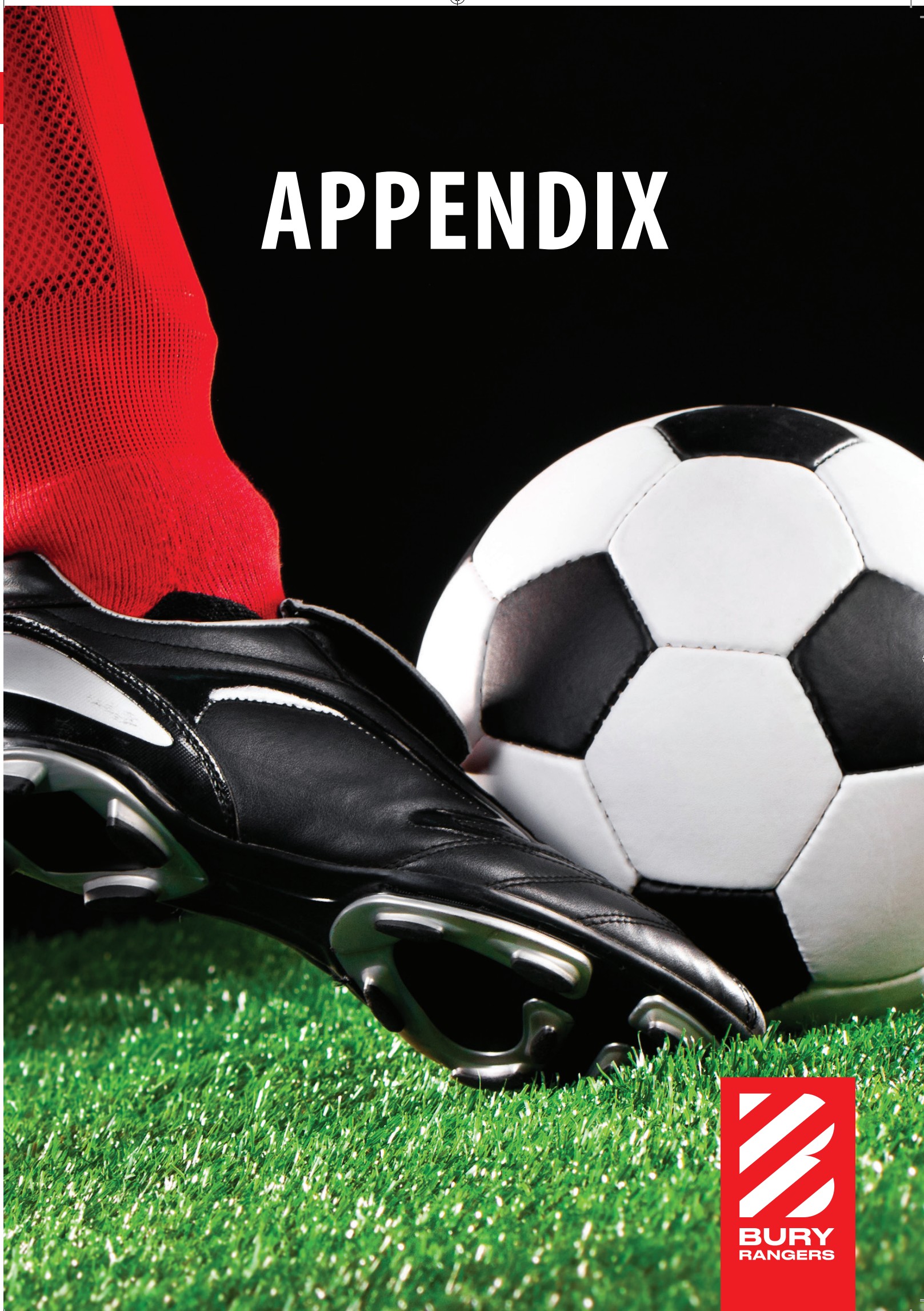
Psychological

- Our players will have confidence in themselves to play key roles within the game
- Strong decision-making skills fostered through exposure to different scenarios and challenge within practice and matches will help our players with the 'where' and 'when' to perform particular actions in game situations
- Creativity, particularly in (but not limited to) attacking areas of the pitch is a highly desirable quality for our future players

Social

- Our players will be sporting and well behaved towards their team-mates, the opposition and officials
- High levels of reliability and commitment to their team-mates and coaches should be expected
- Players should exhibit a strong team ethos, underpinned by positive encouragement and leadership in challenging situations

APPENDIX



PLAYER SNAPSHOTS: 6-8 YEARS

Physical	Psychological	Social
Developing and mastering fundamental gross motor skills	Respond to praise Like external rewards and positive reinforcement	Dependent on adults
Beginning to develop motor coordination	Success is important	Self and family orientated but beginning to experience empathy for others and start to become independent
Slow, steady musculo-skeletal growth	Sensitive to criticism and become frustrated quickly	Are learning how to be friends and may have several 'best friends' at a time
Mainly use large muscles and have better control of large than small muscles	Like to play games with simple rules	Opinions of peers are becoming more important
High energy levels but tire easily and recover quickly	Adult help is needed in learning to cope with failures	Often care more about being a successful in front of peers than parents
Girls and boys have similar abilities	Learn best by doing, copying and exploring	Boys and girls enjoy playing together
Learn best if physically active	Limited attention span, easily distracted	Positive acceptance of others
Low anaerobic and aerobic capacity	Easily motivated, like trying something new. Naturally curious and imaginative	Cooperation is being learned
	Handle only one mental operation at a time well	Motives to participate are to be with friends and have fun
	Lack spatial awareness and understanding of time	Start to take into account ideas and emotions of others

Action for coach

- Have variety in a session
- Do not have position specific practices – focus on general skills and ABCs
- Have and use frequent rest periods (time to think and breathe)
- Try to get 'play' into the practice
- Emphasis on success and co-operative games
- Offer positive support, a caring coaching approach and praise
- Give affection and attention to build confidence
- Use simple language without jargon
- Help them make sense of winning and losing
- Create an environment where all players can benefit and experience success
- Create an opportunity to explore, question and foster natural curiosity and imagination
- Create an opportunity for play, fun, participation and interaction with others

PLAYER SNAPSHOTS: 9-12 YEARS

Physical	Psychological	Social
Growth is slow until puberty	Capable of developing leadership skills	Becoming more independent
Many females and some males reach puberty and experience growth spurts	Have increased attention span, but have many interests which change rapidly	Begin to identify with peers, but still need and want guidance and support from adults
In puberty, skeletal system grows faster than muscular system, thus increase in injury risk	Learning to absorb new ideas, but tend to judge right/wrong or black/white	Like an environment with consistent standards and fair consequences
Whilst going through puberty, lack of coordination	Like finding the solutions to problems themselves	Enjoy organised group activities
Steady increases in motor skills, strength, balance and coordination – fine motor skills developing	Like to share thoughts and reactions	Like sense of belonging to group, team and club and enjoy working in cooperative activities
Hand eye coordination is relatively mature	Developing individual identity Use reasoning skills to solve problems	Enjoy taking responsibility and assuming simple leadership roles
Are maturing at different rates (individual, gender and ethnicity)	Will negotiate and compromise with peers	Girls more socially mature than boys
(Early maturing can be stressful – rapid physical change can be embarrassing)	Can differentiate between ability and effort (if I work hard, I will improve)	Admire and imitate older people (role models) – look for similarities between self and friends
	Clearer understanding of the concept of competition (social comparison)	Success should be emphasised and failures minimised. Like challenge but dislike public failure
		Find comparisons with success of others difficult and this erodes self confidence
		Need to feel accepted and worthwhile (self-worth)
		Easily motivated to be involved and take risks
		With puberty, changes in hormones and thinking patterns contribute to mood swings

Action for coach

- Give players an experience of a variety of positions
- Give them lots of activity with rotation of roles and equal involvement
- Make sure there is decision making
- Use games for understanding
- Introduce the notion of competition but with emphasis on improvement to win
- Provide a safe emotional, physical, cultural and social environment
- Reinforce the promotion of fair play and moral decision making
- Make sure you are an excellent role model
- Use lots of positive reinforcement and variety
- Allow learning through mistakes and creation of challenges
- Encouragement to take risks in game
- An empathetic environment (understand and listen to individual player's needs)
- Leadership and responsibility opportunities (independence)
- Understanding of hormonal mood swings (e.g. do not embarrass)

PLAYER SNAPSHOTS: 13-16 YEARS

Physical	Psychological	Social
Growth spurts occur and are likely to cause clumsiness	Increased awareness of body image (notice differences) e.g. disability, weight gain	Searching for personal (including athlete) identity – acceptance vs. isolation
Complex motor skills become more refined	Want responsibility and to be treated as an adult	Seek emotional autonomy from parents – peer groups are very important
Hormones affect body composition	Internally desire success, but are influenced by external pressures to conform (cool to be average)	Move away from family reliance
Capable of handling appropriate physical training/ workload (otherwise susceptible to injury risk)	Vulnerable to negative criticism, but respond to constructive feedback	Wider range of opportunities and time constraints can be barriers to sporting involvement
Capable of developing energy systems (anaerobic, aerobic)	Like to find their own solutions. Value presenting their own ideas	Emphasis on balancing career goals and roles in life – start to forward plan
Maturity differences within and between genders	Longer concentration span – ready for more in-depth learning	Role models are influential
	Capable of complex problem solving	Learning to cooperate with each other
	Begin to value setting goals based on feelings of personal needs and priorities	Hormones cause mood swings
	Tend to be self-focused	
	May lack understanding of their abilities and talents	
	Begin to demonstrate moral thinking and appreciate values	
	Capable of informed decision making and appreciate leadership roles	

Action for coach

- Be careful and mindful of any growth spurt
- Make sure the physical challenge is met
- Don't highlight physical difference e.g. weight
- Use goal setting based on need
- Involve the players in simple tactics
- Be firm but fair in terms of discipline
- Develop empathy (how does it look from the players side)
- Have realistic expectations of success
- Teach players to learn to make decisions and learn from mistakes
- Make sure you are an excellent role model
- Use lots of positive reinforcement and variety
- Allow learning through mistakes and creation of challenges
- Encouragement to take risks in game
- An empathetic environment (understand and listen to individual player's needs)
- Leadership and responsibility opportunities (independence)
- Understanding of hormonal mood swings (e.g. do not embarrass)

THE LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Technical

- Receiving skills
- Turning skills
- Travelling with the ball
- Passing over varying distances
- Attacking and defending skills
- Finishing skills
- Aerial ability

Psychological

- Confidence
- Creativity
- Concentration
- Emotional control
- Decision making
- Spatial awareness

Physical

- Agility, balance, coordination
- Speed/Speed endurance
- Flexibility
- Power
- Strength
- Nutrition and lifestyle
- Physical resilience
- Recovery

Social

- Behaviour
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Relationships
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Independence

The Ball and Your Game

- Q. What skills have you used today
- Q. How many difference playing positions did you try?
- Q. What areas of the pitch did you play in?
- Q. Did you learn anything about playing football today?

Your Mind and Thinking

- Q. How did you feel when playing today?
What made you feel that way?
- Q. What decisions did you make on and off the pitch?
- Q. Have you tried anything new today?
Why?

Your Body and Movement

- Q. How many different ways have you moved with and without the ball today?
- Q. Did you change direction when moving?
Why?
- Q. How fast did you travel? Did your speed change for a reason?

Your Friends and Squad-mates

- Q. How many of your squad-mates have you listened and spoken to today?
- Q. Who have you helped on and off the football pitch?
How?
- Q. What have you learnt about your squad-mates today?

COACHING STYLES AND COMMUNICATION

When planning a coaching session the coach should consider the most appropriate coaching method for the group of players they are working with and the outcome they wish to achieve.

The Coaching Methods table outlines a range of approaches that can be used to meet players' individual needs. Some of the key factors coaches should consider when planning their coaching methods are:

- The group of players/individual players the coach is working with
- The intended outcome and purpose of the coaching practice
- The technical content of the practice

Coaching Continuum

Coaching Methodology	Command (Directive)	Question and Answer	Observation and Feedback	Guide Discovery	Trial and Error
Player/Coach Interventions	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	Player &/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 outcomes in practice	Coach poses questions & players offer verbal solution to 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



Developing Practice

Planning is an essential part of the work of a coach, and reviewing and evaluating helps to form the next plan, therefore it is important that good quality evaluation takes place after each session.

Within your planning, the following elements should be considered:

Individuals – age, maturity, ability and experience of players

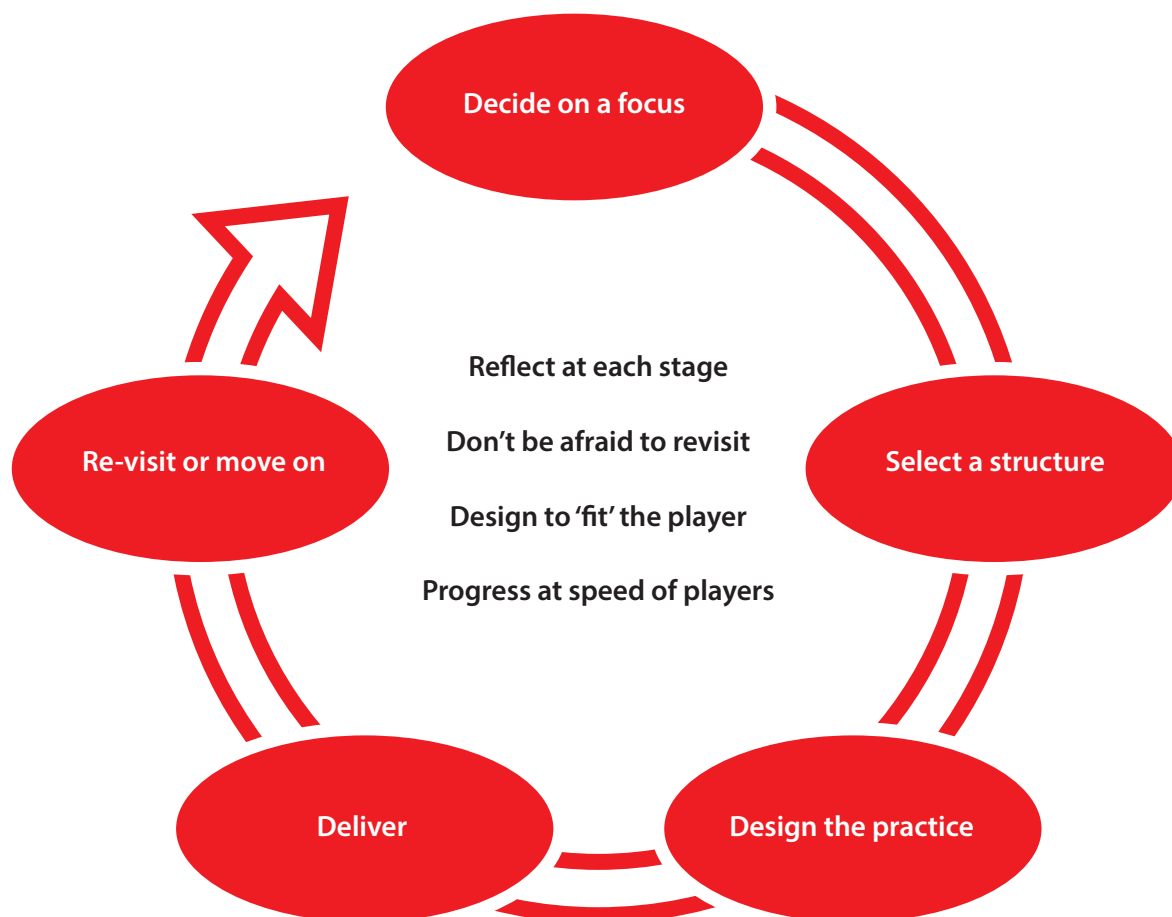
Priorities – how often do you see your players? This affects your priorities

Motives – why are your players at practice?

Structure – what type of session structure and practice(s) would be best for them?

Tools – Equipment, space, conditions, rules, delivery style, interventions

The Planning Process



STRUCTURING PRACTICE CONTD.

Learning Focus

Practices need a focus – for the coach and the player. ‘Passing’ for example is an umbrella topic, but ‘forward passing’ could be the learning focus. For older or more experienced players, the focus could be even more specific e.g. ‘forward passing from midfield’.

The focus needs to be simple and achievable, and relevant to the age, maturity, ability and experience of the players. It is possible to have more than one focus or in a game related practice, one team could have one focus area and the other team another. Individuals can also have different aspects to focus on. Ultimately the focus is flexible and can depend on many things.

Young players like what will help them get recognition and praise, and a focus helps them achieve this. It communicates your expectations and allows them to aim for success rather than hope for the best.

The focus area should also direct the coach towards key coaching points e.g. forward passing rather than everything to do with passing, and in the absence of a focus it can be difficult to offer help to the players without trying to coach everything and ultimately achieve little.

A good test of the usefulness of a practice is whether the players can transfer key learnings from practice into the game.

Simple or Complex

Coaches can manipulate time, space, other players, and equipment to make tasks or challenges easier or more difficult. This can depend on:

- Whether the technique, skill, practice or concept is new to the players
- Player age, ability, experience and maturity
- Progress of the players

The level of challenge can be influenced by:

- The numbers of decisions players have to make
- The number of players in the practice
- Group sizes
- Degree of opposition (overload, underload, matched up)
- Area size and shape

- Rules and conditions
- Interference and distractions within the practice
- Amount and type of information given to the players
- Number of tasks presented to the players
- Time restrictions

The skill of the coach is selecting the right ‘tool’ and recognising when and how to use it, and when to progress or go back a stage. Making the task too hard is as ineffective as making it too easy.

Some indications that the practice is not working effectively include:

- Behavioural changes – bored or frustrated
- Loss of quality in play or executions of techniques or skills
- Loss of enthusiasm/dropping out/playing on the periphery

Whatever practice is chosen, coaches need to take into account what the players can and cannot do at any one point in time. Challenges should be progressive but also enable success which is motivating.

Coaching in the practices

‘Minimum disruption, maximum effect’

Setting Challenges

Successful teaching or coaching of any subject requires the setting of challenges to meet, or problems to solve, that enables the learner to progress at their own pace and according to individual needs.

Many practices lend themselves to setting individual challenges within the practice itself. Individual players can be set their own challenges or it may be at a unit or team level. If, for example, the focus of the session requires the player to recognise the opportunity to play quickly, an example challenge for one or more players could be ‘try to play one touch where you can’. Phrasing of the challenge is important, use language like “try” or “can you” rather than words like “never” or “don’t”.

Within a practice, any players who are targets and servers need to be changed regularly and also given a practice focus/challenge. Any neutral/ floating players need to know exactly where they are playing and what they are doing, and make sure they can also ‘score’

if possible. Also remember that goalkeepers are an integral part of the team and should be treated with same attention as outfield players (see 'Incorporating Goalkeepers in Your Sessions').

It is important to apply the challenges that we issue to players on matchdays e.g. 'try to show them down the line' to practices for the player to get opportunity to practice and master what is being asked of them, to then take the experience and improved confidence back into the game situation.

Playing areas

Reducing or increasing the area size alters the returns from the practice in all four corners of development. Practicing in tight areas is an essential component of the players' overall programme. This will enable players to learn to deal with reduced spaces that occur all over the pitch and have the skills to play their way out of 'tight' situations.

Using a larger playing area gives the players more time and space. There may perhaps be more decisions, but players have more time to make the right choice.

Some likely outcomes of working in 'tight' areas:

- Speed of the game will raise
- Success will be random and not guaranteed initially
- Physical contact is guaranteed
- Speed of decision making is raised

Coaches tips:

- Play short games
- Take plenty of rest and reflection
- Be patient and don't be put off by apparent chaos

Safe zones

These enable players to practice techniques unopposed and are an ideal way of enabling players who may need less intensive practice to develop, as they are integral to the practice. Some players will be practicing unopposed while others are in the heat of an opposed game.

Safe zones can be placed inside, outside, at the ends or down the sides of the playing areas dependent on the aims and objectives of the practice.

- Make sure the same player(s) is not always in the safe zone(s)
- Encourage movement in and out of the safe zone rather than a player always inside at any one time
- Give the players a focus when they receive the ball inside the safe zone
- Experiment with the 'safety' of the zone, after a first touch inside the zone it can be deemed 'no longer safe'
- Ideal for goalkeepers to practice their touch and distribution
- Question whether you need a safe zone in the practice, or can your players succeed without it



CONSTANT, VARIABLE AND RANDOM PRACTICES

Practices sit on a scale/spectrum from simple to complex, and all will offer returns or benefits but will vary by player's age, ability, experience and motivations.

Simple passing between two players is at one end of the spectrum and while will offer specific benefits to the players (mastery of short passing) has little context to game situations. A small sided conditioned game will bear closer resemblance to a football match and will offer wider returns.

'Returns' are the benefits from performing a practice and can be categorised as follows:

Constant (returns)

Repetition of specific movements to acquire, refine or maintain technique, and takes place under constant conditions e.g. two players short passing to each other. Competition or challenge can be added but can negatively impact upon quality of repetition. Constant practice sits at low/simple end of the practice spectrum.

Variable (returns)

Practicing variation of the same technique under different conditions e.g. passing the ball in a variety of ways over varying distances and heights and at different speeds. The outcomes and returns are less predictable than constant practices but more closely resemble the game.

Random (returns)

A player practicing a variety of techniques under different and changing condition e.g. passing being combined with dribbling and shooting, and the unpredictable nature of the practice will require players to make decisions. If interference or opposition from other players is involved in the practice then the practice will encourage development of technique and 'where and when' decision making which is ultimately transferable to the game and hence random practices sit high on the practice spectrum.

The challenge for coaches is to manipulate conditions and pressure levels to develop the technique and decision making skills of all players in the group and will often require working across the full practice spectrum at different points across or within sessions.

Coaches needs to understand that constant, variable or random practices will involve a trade-off. Prioritising constant practice helps young players develop muscle memory and movement mechanics, but will not support the development of decision making and game understanding.

Likewise more variable/random practice gives young players opportunity to develop game understanding and decision making, but the trade-off is that players who still need to improve technique will have less ball contacts and opportunity to repeat movements and skills.

Before, During and After

Before - try to get into position to play the ball forward before you receive the ball.

During - try to leave the ball playable for the next person.

After - try to determine your next involvement as the ball travels.



SESSION STRUCTURES

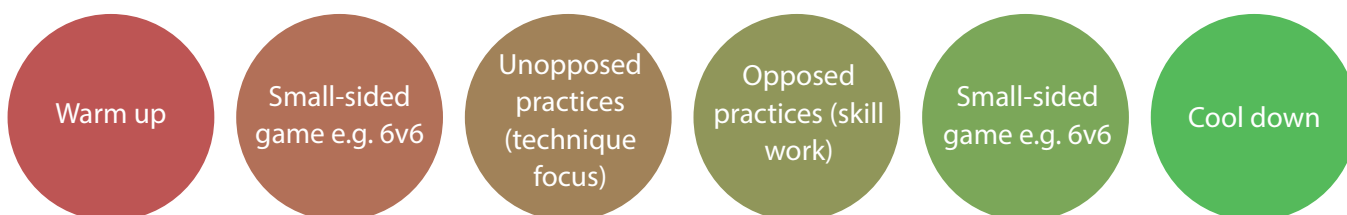
Up the steps

- Level of complexity, difficulty or challenges builds in logical steps
- Focus is generally on one element, for example passing between players or wall passes, and this runs throughout the session



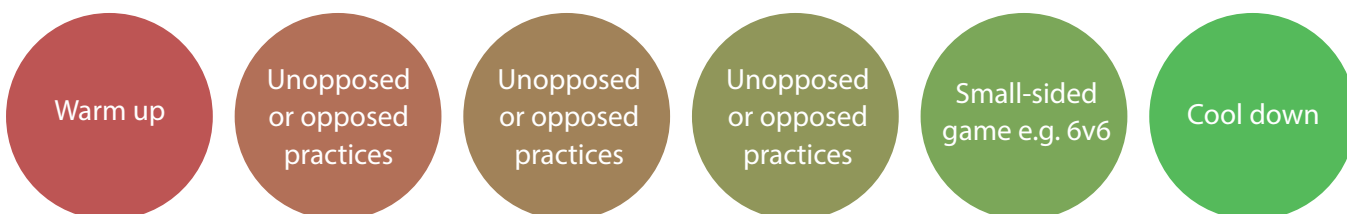
Whole – Part – Whole

Starts with a game and the practices revolve around a focus from the game e.g. combination play and then ends with a game to see what has been transferred or improved.



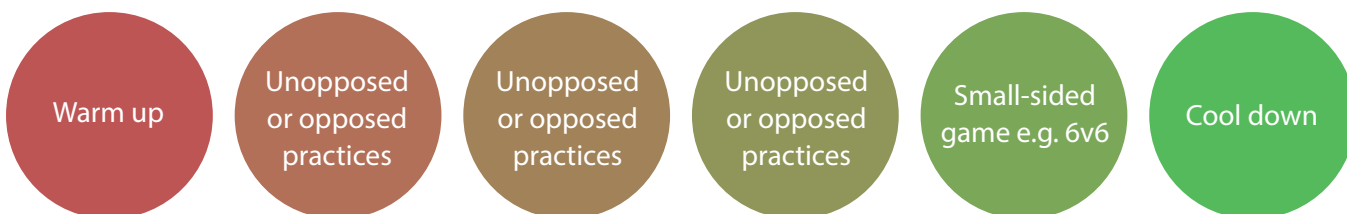
Carousel

- Different practices that focus on different things and players go from practice to practice in small groups
- 3 or 4 groups working at a time on different things
- Players need to know how to do all the practices



Variety

- Players work from practice to practice
- Whole group working on each practice (key differentiator versus carousel structure)
- Players work on different things in each practice



PRACTICE TYPES

'Play in, play out' practices

- Players 'play' themselves in and out of practices to enable them to change roles
- Multi-ball, can be directional or non-directional

'All in' practices

- All players working in the same area at the same time
- One ball between 2 or 3 players
- Multi directional or directional
- Well suited to warm up or technique practice

Repetition circuits/wave practice

- Players have a 'go' and return to the start to repeat practice
- Individually, or in small/larger groups
- Often appropriate to shooting/finishing practices

Zonal practices

- Zones marked within playing areas to help achieve the outcomes, e.g. when 'playing through the thirds'



INCORPORATING GOALKEEPERS IN YOUR SESSIONS

Including the goalkeeper in practices is a very important part of coaching, not least for the goalkeepers. Often, goalkeepers just join in and do what the outfield players do until there is a game with goals or a shooting practice. So for many keepers much of the session may not be relevant to them, and this can be de-motivating.

We can incorporate goalkeepers in all practices somewhere. It just requires careful thought and an understanding of the player's needs. Goalkeepers need excellent ABCs and as much game understanding and game craft skills as any outfield player.

Key factors to consider:

Organisation - organise the practice to include the goalkeepers in your planning from the start, not as an afterthought

Objectives - give them relative objectives and tasks
Decisions - ensure the goalkeepers are able to make decisions for themselves

Practice - are there opportunities to practice skills such as catching, throwing, shot stopping, distribution, communication or footwork?

Realistic - ensure realism through relevant distance, angles, rules etc

Active - ensure they can be 'active' in the practice

Communication - ensure all the players know what the goalkeeper is working on. Encourage the goalkeepers to work on their communication with others.

Technical - give the goalkeepers as much technical help as you would other players
Include - devise practices specific for the keepers

Confidence/esteem - remember any mistake from a goalkeeper is often costly. Give them confidence in practice and deal with mistakes sensitively

Some tips:

- Allow goalkeepers to use hands and feet in a practice
- Play as an outfield player



- Play as targets – score by getting the ball to the goalkeepers
- Play as servers – e.g. game starts with the goalkeepers
- Make sure they are involved in as much ABCs activity as the outfield players
- Ensure they get enough game related practices to build their new game understanding
- Shooting practices
- Do not expect goalkeepers to save everything – acknowledge all success and remember physical demands can be great and can lead to injury or de-motivation
- Ensure size of ball is right for the age and maturity of the player
- Control the practice so that the goalkeeper has a realistic time to 'set' him/herself
- Do not allow more than one ball to travel towards the goalkeeper at any time.

TIPS

Tips on Delivery

- Aim for more interaction and less information
- Focus praise on individual or group success rather than mistakes
- Watch for players who self-correct rather than stopping on the first mistake
- Observe rather than talk – let them practice rather than listen to you
- If you have to stop the whole group make sure it is relevant for the whole group, otherwise focus the information on the individual(s) that prompted the intervention in the first place
- Use different ways to get 'messages' to your players. Often you can take the player to one side whilst the practice is still going on
- Do not overdo Q&A. Children get fed up with answering too many questions. Mix up your methods of communication
- Try to avoid the terms 'must', 'never' and 'always' in your rules
- Set clear boundaries on behaviour and attitudes to practice
- Try to develop a practice ethic among your players

Tips for Player Motivation

- Don't stop the session too often – let them play
- Frequent praise for good play AND effort
- Relate the praise to specific actions e.g. 'that turn was at exactly the right time – well done!'
- Use breaks for frequent social interaction
- Change activities on a regular basis – every 10-15 minutes
- Ensure coaches, players, parents and spectators adhere to the RESPECT principles

Tips for Managing Self Esteem

- Make a point of talking to each player during a session, and take an interest in their wider activities
- Don't talk down to players or use sarcasm
- Create a safe and positive environment
- Try to give equal playing time and praise players equally
- Give frequent praise, make the praises specific, and give players the credit for team achievements
- Try to understand the 'risk taker' and try not to take away that creativity, instead try to build it into the strengths of the team
- Players don't care how much you know until they know how much you care
- Good coaches appreciate what being young is like

Tips for Managing Mistakes

- Realise that mistakes are key learning opportunities
- Don't stop the practice/game too often, look to see if the player self-corrects
- Let the players know when they have been successful and what they did
- Allow lots of opportunities to practice and play
- Praise risk-taking and creativity (in the right context) – even if it doesn't come off

Tips for Player Learning

- Present your information VISUALLY, VERBALLY and KINAESTHETICALLY (let the players see, hear and do) when working with a group
- Let the players EXPERIMENT, PRACTICE and PLAY during the session
- Allow the players lots of opportunities to explore and problem solve
- Don't always offer an immediate solution



Regardless of what formation, style or tactics a coach employs, football is based around the Principles of Play. These principles govern both the attacking and defending elements of the game.

Attacking

There is an argument that football is based around space. The team that is attacking is looking for space to exploit, while defending teams look to limit the space available to the opposition. Attacking play, is about creating, maintaining and exploiting space. Detailed below are the five attacking principles.

1. Penetration

The first intent when a player receives the ball should be “can I score or create an opportunity for a team-mate to score?” This can become lost in many coaching philosophies where keeping the ball is emphasised and in some cases over-emphasised. In football, the overall objectives of the game are to score goals at one end, and not concede them at the other, and so when attacking the first principle is to try and penetrate the defence and score. If this is not possible, or becomes with disproportionate risk, then a team should look to keep possession and ‘build’ a scoring opportunity.

In recent decades football has changed from a focus on scoring goals from crosses from wide areas, to the growing influence of scoring through ‘zone 14’ – the central area outside the penalty box. This area is traditionally occupied by the ‘number 10’ attacking midfielder/shadow striker. To counter this threat, teams are increasingly using a designated defensive midfield player, leading to the role of the number 10 spatially expanding to include other attacking areas.

2. Support

When the player in possession (first attacker) is in possession, he/she needs the support of players around him. This support should ideally be ahead of the ball through forward runs, support to the side, and support behind the ball (should he not be able to play forward). The priority is to attack in the quickest way possible, but at times the best support may well be backwards.

3. Length, Width and Pockets of Space

The principle of creating width and length is an effort to make the pitch ‘as big as possible’. This stretches defences to make attackable space a lot

bigger. At least one player should play as high as possible to push defenders back. By giving width defenders will be drawn away from central areas where they are protecting the goal. Crucially, once defenders are dragged apart, players can look to find pockets of space in central areas to support the ball, and ultimately penetrate the opposition and score.

4. Movement and Mobility

Movement is key when trying to create and exploit space. Off-the-ball attacking runs can include, amongst others, overlapping runs, underlapping runs, and third man runs. The intent is to destabilize and disorganise the defence. Clever runs can drag defenders out of position, allowing other attackers to exploit the space that is created. Teams that play against better opposition often point to superior movement of players being the most notable difference between the two teams.

5. Creativity

To some extent, defensive play is straightforward and governed by ‘rules’ and the best decision is often obvious and prescriptive – in particular situations a specific method is needed to defend. However, when attacking, there are always choices, some of which may be ‘better’ than others, but sometimes attacking, creative ‘flair’ players need to be allowed to do their thing. Creative genius and improvisation means players can see and execute things that are unpredictable.

Unpredictability and the element of surprise should be encouraged rather than coached, as creativity needs freedom and often an almost individual artistic touch. Encourage young players to be creative, with a safety-net of your support and encouragements if creative attempts are not always successful.

Defending

Defending principles of play are aimed at reducing the space available to opponents by denying, restricting and predicting space.

1. Press or Delay

When the opposition has the ball they will be looking to penetrate and score a goal. The first decision when defending is whether we can put pressure on the ball immediately, or whether we need to drop off, delay the attack, and reorganise.

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY CONTD.

If we can get immediate pressure on the ball and regain then that is a great outcome, but not always possible. To delay means getting in between attackers and the goal to prevent the opposition moving forward.

2. Support

Support players are essential to effective defending. While the first defender makes the decision about whether he can press or delay, his immediate team mates will look at what support he/she needs and where. This may involve making recovery runs to get back into cover positions – if the attacker beats the first defender, then others can form a secondary barrier between the ball and the goal. Likewise these support players can screen forward passes into dangerous positions.

3. Balance

'Balance' players are players on the 'weak' and less dangerous side of the attack e.g. if the attack is building on the left, the attacking players on the right are lesser priority. Therefore if the right-back is pressing the ball, the left back will 'tuck in' to

add protection to the goal. If the ball is switched to the weaker side the defender should travel as the ball travels and become the first defender.

4. Compactness

'Compactness' is the culmination of press/delay, support and balance to stop attackers making attempts on goal. By achieving compactness defenders reduce attempts to penetrate, cater for dangerous support players and negate forward runs. Being compact also means reducing the space 'between the lines', blocking the pockets of space that attackers will try to exploit.

5. Discipline

Defending requires lots of discipline. There will be occasions when defenders need to be patient, prioritise decisions, communicate effectively and show restraint. There may be times when defending is stressful and challenging. Any ill-discipline and rash decision-making, especially in and around the box, can lead to attackers exploiting gaps in your defence, or the concession of free-kicks and penalties.



ENGLAND DNA PLAYING PHILOSOPHY - OVERVIEW

In Possession

England teams aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.

Out of Possession

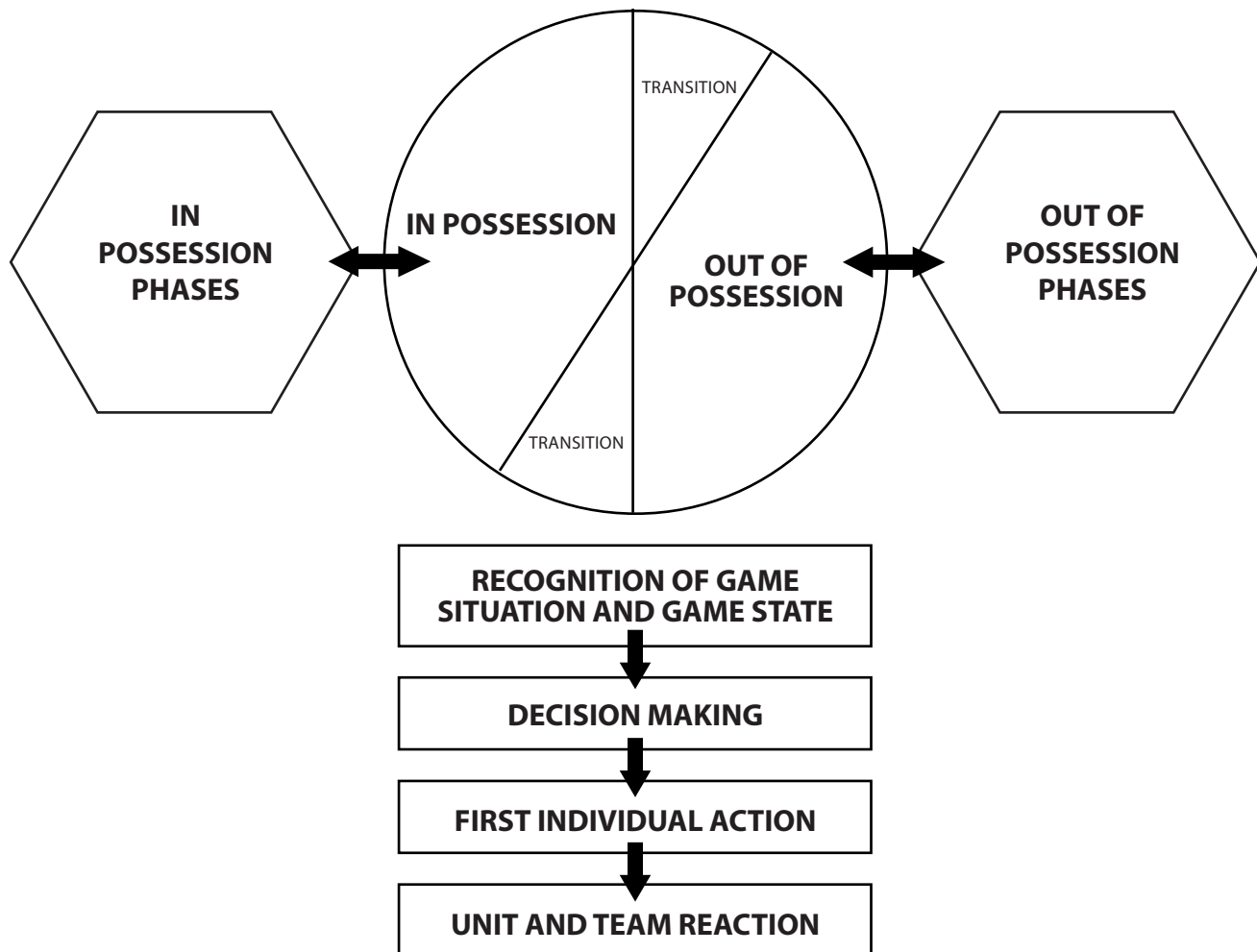
England teams aim to regain possession intelligently and as early and as efficiently as possible. All aspects of the out of possession philosophy will take into consideration the state of the game, the environment and the pre-determined game plan.

Transition

England teams aim to sense changing moments in the game both in and out of possession, reacting instinctively and intelligently.

Formation

England teams will play with tactical flexibility, based on the profile of the players available and the requirements of the match or competition.



ENGLAND DNA PLAYING PHILOSOPHY - IN POSSESSION

England teams aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.

To do so, we aim to develop England players with outstanding skills and decision-making abilities in all four aspects of the in-possession philosophy:

Counter-attacking

Counter-attacking is the execution of quick and incisive attacking play with the aim of exploiting opponents' defensive state to create goalscoring opportunities.

Why is counter-attacking important?

Counter-attacking is one of the most effective methods of creating goalscoring opportunities in open play.

How does counter-attacking happen?

Dribbling, running with the ball, incisive passing and effective support play are key aspects of counter-attacking. Counter-attacking aims to exploit space, eliminate opponents and create

goalscoring opportunities.

England goalkeepers play a crucial role in initiating counter-attacks and will be challenged to exploit attacking opportunities using a variety of distribution techniques to deliver the ball effectively over varying distances.

Quick free-kicks and throw-ins are other ways of creating counter-attacking opportunities.

Retaining the ball to build the play

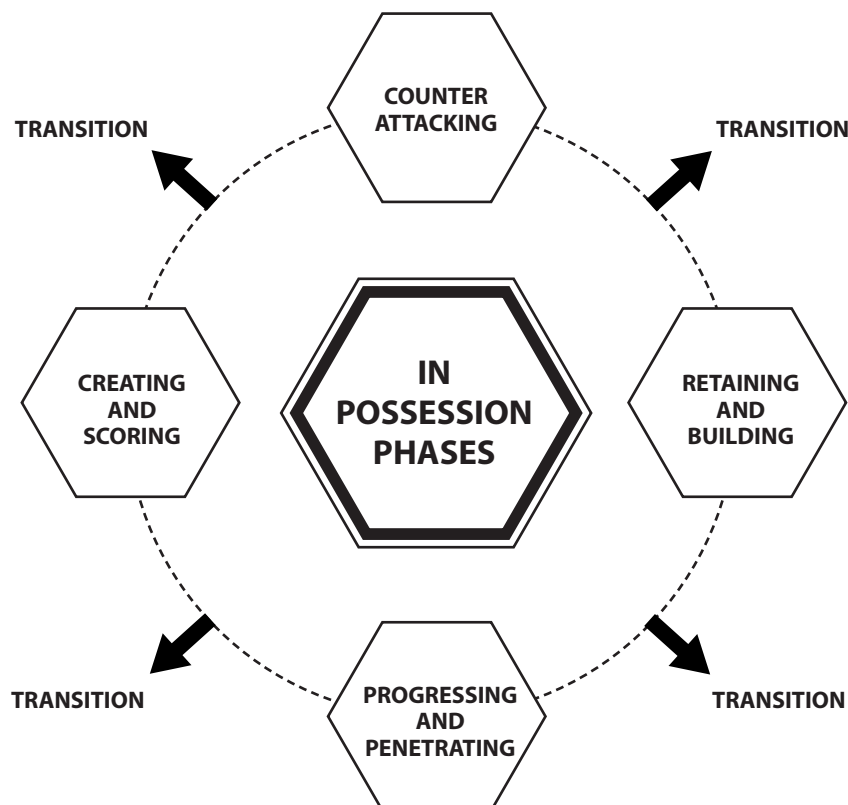
England teams aim to dominate possession with the aim of creating opportunities to penetrate the opposition and create goalscoring chances.

What are the benefits of effective ball retention?

Ball retention allows teams to manage the momentum of a game, requiring a patient and controlled approach.

How does ball retention happen?

A combination of intelligent passing, dribbling, and support play all contribute to effective ball retention.



ENGLAND DNA PLAYING PHILOSOPHY - IN POSSESSION

England goalkeepers will play a key role in this phase of play, fulfilling the role of the 11th outfield player and adopting effective positions to support the play.

Progress and penetration

England teams aim to penetrate the opposition by moving the ball intelligently between and beyond opponents to create goalscoring opportunities.

Why is progressive and penetrative play important to the England DNA?

Progressive and penetrative play is an effective method for opening up compact defences and eliminating opposition players from the game. Through accurate, intelligent and creative play the ball can be moved between and beyond the opposition to create goalscoring opportunities.

What skills are needed for effective progressive and penetrative play?

Accurate and deceptive forward passing, skilful dribbling and running with the ball combined with effective support play and movement are crucial to effective penetrative play.

England goalkeepers will contribute to penetrative play by using a range of effective distribution techniques.

Creating and scoring

Progressing play to the creating and scoring phase is the aim of all other aspects of the playing philosophy.

What skills are needed for effective play in the creating and scoring phase?

Clinical and creative individual and combination play is encouraged in the creation and execution of goalscoring opportunities. A variety of finishing skills, including unorthodox goalscoring techniques are encouraged.

Security

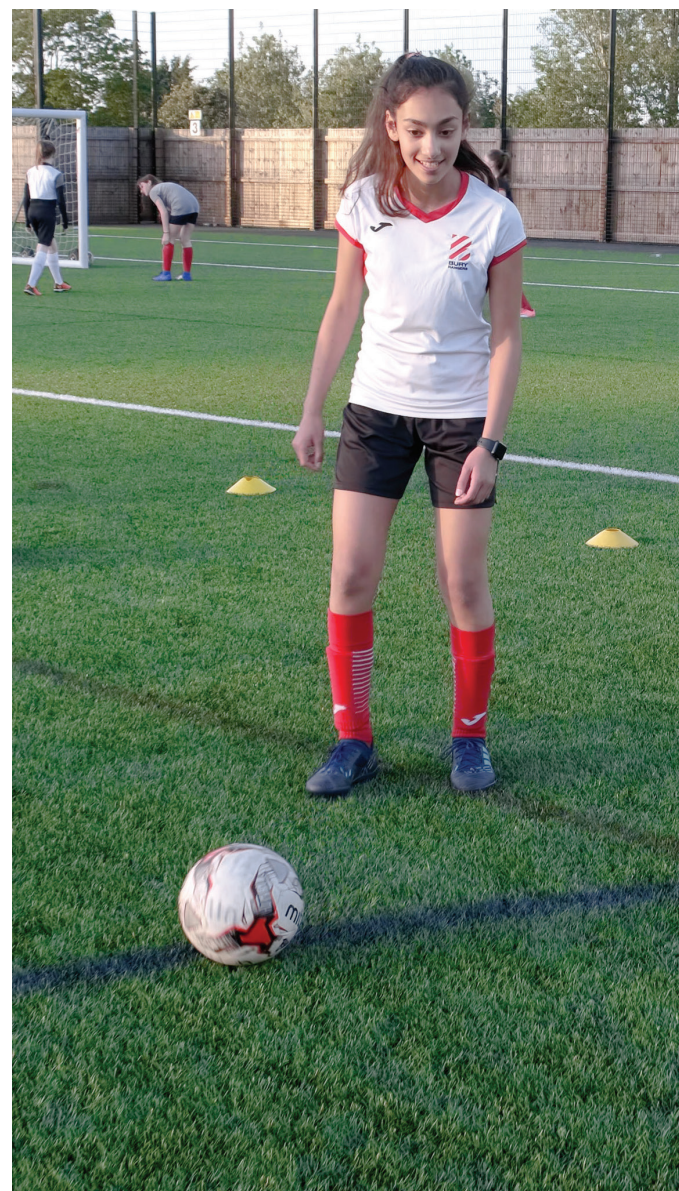
During all aspects of the in-possession philosophy, defensive security should be considered.

Awareness of defensive security ensures the team remains organised at all times and can react effectively when the ball is lost.

All players contribute to ensuring defensive security, in particular the goalkeeper through effective positioning, organisation and communication.

The fluid nature of the game means each aspect of possession is closely linked. Similarly, possession may be lost at any stage, prompting a transition to the defensive philosophy.

The future England goalkeeper will play an important role in all aspects of the in-possession playing philosophy.



ENGLAND DNA PLAYING PHILOSOPHY - OUT OF POSSESSION

England teams aim to regain possession intelligently, with a focus on winning the ball as early and as efficiently as possible.

To do so, we aim to develop England players with outstanding skills and decision-making abilities in all three aspects of the out of possession philosophy:

Pressing

Pressing involves pressurising the opposition in a strategic and controlled manner with the aim of regaining possession.

Why is pressing an important part of the England DNA?

Quickly pressing the opposition after losing possession prevents the opposition initiating their own attacks and is the preferred method of regaining the ball if there are opportunities to do so.

What skills are needed for effective pressing?

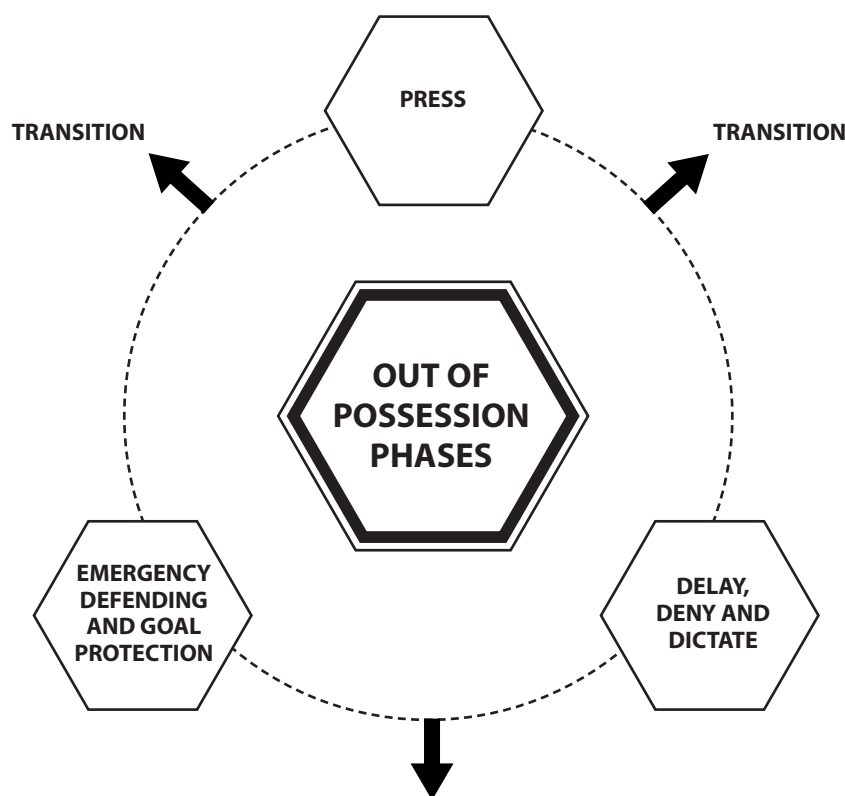
Pressing is triggered by the nearest defending player attempting to regain possession. Support from surrounding teammates is necessary to ensure attempts to press are not done in isolation. Maintaining a compact team shape behind the ball is crucial to effective pressing.

There are three main strategies for pressing the ball: high press (pressing the ball as high up the pitch as possible), mid-press (from the attacking mid-third area) and low-press (from half-way line).

The goalkeeper supports pressing by adopting an appropriate start position and communicating effectively with individuals, units and the team.

Delay, deny, dictate

If effective pressure can not be applied, England teams will attempt to delay, deny and dictate opposition attacks. This involves denying space, dictating the direction and speed of play and preventing the opposition from using their preferred attacking method.



ENGLAND DNA PLAYING PHILOSOPHY - OUT OF POSSESSION & TRANSITION

Why is delaying, denying and dictating important?

By delaying, denying and dictating the movement of the opposition, a compact defensive shape can be achieved and attacking opportunities reduced.

Channelling the direction of opposition attacks into areas of defensive strength helps to control the momentum and speed of attacks and helps lead to the regaining of possession.

How does delaying, denying and dictating happen?

All effective defending techniques (1v1 defending, zonal marking, man-to-man marking, screening, blocking, tracking and recovering, intercepting) contribute to success in this phase of defending.

Emergency defending

Emergency defending is a method of protecting the goal when it is at its most vulnerable and when all other defensive options have failed.

What skills are needed for effective emergency defending?

Goalkeeping is the main method of goal protection with England goalkeepers expected to demonstrate a wide range of effective goalkeeping skills and desire to defend the goal.

Emergency defending skills for outfield players include blocking and intercepting shots, crosses and forward passes, defending one versus one, reacting to rebounds and making clearances.

Emergency defending also includes aspects of the other areas of effective defending including: recovering to an organised defensive shape, dictating the direction of opposition attacks and pressing, marking and tracking opponents.

All aspects of the out of possession philosophy take into consideration the state of the game, the environment and the pre-determined game plan.

The fluid nature of the game means each aspect of the out-of-possession philosophy is closely linked.

Possession may be regained at any stage prompting a transition to the attacking philosophy.

England DNA Playing Philosophy - Transition

Transition is the process of recognition and response in the first few moments following the regaining or loss of possession.

Responding quickly and intelligently to a changeover in possession, will allow England teams to exploit attacking opportunities and effectively re-organise defensively when out of possession.

What skills are needed for effective transition?

Recognising the state of the game and responding with instinctive, intelligent and positive decisions is the startpoint for effective transitional play.

Once the player in possession (or the player closest to the ball in defensive transition) makes a decision, the supporting units and the rest of the team must support the initial movement for transition to be effective.

The goalkeeper plays a key role in transition by exploiting opportunities to begin attacking moves as well as positioning, organising and communicating effectively during defensive transition.



ENGLAND DNA AGE-PHASE PRIORITIES

The priorities outlined here are a set of guiding principles for coaches to focus on in each of the age-phases. Coaching programmes will also include a balance of other themes to support these.



Headline priorities:
England DNA Playing Philosophy

IN POSSESSION

Aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.

OUT OF POSSESSION

Aim to regain possession intelligently and as early and as efficiently as possible. All aspects of the out of possession philosophy will take into consideration the state of the game, the environment and the predetermined game plan.

TRANSITION

Sense changing moments in the game, both in and out of possession, reacting instinctively and intelligently.



5-11 FOUNDATION PHASE

IN POSSESSION Aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.	Stay on the ball, master the ball	Excite with the ball and seek creative solutions	Connect and combine creatively with others
	Develop a mastery of the ball and the confidence to try new things.	Be exciting and positive in possession, playing with individuality and with elements of disguise and surprise.	Combine creatively and intelligently with others to create and score goals.

OUT OF POSSESSION Aim to regain possession intelligently and as early and as efficiently as possible. All aspects of the out of possession philosophy will take into consideration the state of the game, the environment and the predetermined game plan.	Positive and enthusiastic defending	Intelligent defending	Master a variety of defensive techniques and roles
	Enjoy winning the ball back, be difficult to beat 1v1 and look to start attacks when you get the ball.	Be positive and confident in your positioning and ability to win the ball. Be alert when the opposition have possession.	Enjoy defending in a variety of roles and develop a range of techniques to regain possession.

TRANSITION Sense changing moments in the game, both in and out of possession, reacting instinctively and intelligently.	Instinctive decision making	Positive and intelligent attacking reactions	Positive and intelligent defensive reactions
	React quickly and positively when the ball is won or lost and have a range of individual options and actions.	Have a positive attitude when possession regained, travelling quickly with and without the ball. Take every opportunity to attack, create and score goals.	Try to win the ball back quickly and prevent opponents starting attacks. Be proactive when the ball is lost and have confidence in your ability to defend.

12-16 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE

IN POSSESSION Aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.	Stay on the ball, master the ball	Excite with the ball and seek creative solutions	Connect and combine creatively with others
	Look to receive the ball in all areas of the pitch and be prepared to stay in possession.	Seek creative solutions to game situations, particularly when outnumbered or in congested areas.	Stay connected with the ball and your teammates to retain possession open up compact defences and score goals.

OUT OF POSSESSION Aim to regain possession intelligently and as early and as efficiently as possible. All aspects of the out of possession philosophy will take into consideration the state of the game, the environment and the predetermined game plan.	Positive and enthusiastic defending	Intelligent defending	Master a variety of defensive techniques and roles
	Be prepared to defend 1v1 and be confident without cover or support.	Outwit your opponent with excellent patience, timing and intercepting skills.	Win the ball cleanly, regaining and retaining possession in the same action to start attacks.

TRANSITION Sense changing moments in the game, both in and out of possession, reacting instinctively and intelligently.	Instinctive decision making	Positive and intelligent attacking reactions	Positive and intelligent defensive reactions
	Dominate transition: react quickly and positively to the first individual action when both attacking and defending.	React instinctively and intelligently when possession is regained, recognising opportunities to disorganise the opposition. Manage the game when opportunities to attack are limited.	Prevent progression by disrupting or destroying momentum, forcing errors and protecting the goal.

17-21 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

IN POSSESSION Aim to dominate possession intelligently, selecting the right moments to progress the play and penetrate the opposition.	Stay on the ball, master the ball	Excite with the ball and seek creative solutions	Connect and combine creatively with others
	Retain possession with intent: both individually and as a team.	Open up compact defences with outstanding individuality and teamwork.	Use clever combinations to create and score goals.

OUT OF POSSESSION Aim to regain possession intelligently and as early and as efficiently as possible. All aspects of the out of possession philosophy will take into consideration the state of the game, the environment and the predetermined game plan.	Positive and enthusiastic defending	Intelligent defending	Master a variety of defensive techniques and roles
	Dominate individual defending scenarios to regain quickly and cleanly in order to start attacks.	Defend in an appropriate manner in relation to the state of the game.	Work individually and collectively to dominate defending scenarios and nullify opposition attacks.

TRANSITION Sense changing moments in the game, both in and out of possession, reacting instinctively and intelligently.	Instinctive decision making	Positive and intelligent attacking reactions	Positive and intelligent defensive reactions
	React instinctively to transitions – both individually and as a team – based on the state of the game and predetermined team tactics and strategies.	Recognise opportunities to penetrate the opposition quickly, whilst also understanding when to retain and build possession, control the tempo and change the speed of play.	Recognise, understand and react to potential danger.

GLOSSARY



A

ABCs

Agility, Balance, Coordination, Speed. Key attributes that need to be developed in young players to support future mastery of specialised skills and techniques.

Aerobic

Light to moderate exercise, requiring oxygen in order to be able to sustain activities for an extended period of time and build endurance.

All-in

A practice design with all players working in the same area at the same time, with one ball between 2 or 3 players. Can be directional or multi-directional and well suited to warm up or 'technique' practice.

Anaerobic

Exercise that is short (<2 minutes) and high intensity focusing on strength, speed and power.

B

Ball-rolling time

The amount of time a ball is moving within a training session (as opposed to coach talking). Recommended guideline 70%.

Bootroom

The FA Licensed Coaches Club digital magazine. A highly recommended read for coaches of all levels and age-groups.

C

Carousel

A session structure that has different practices that focus on different things and players go from practice to practice in small groups. Component practices should be linked and support overall learning objective.

Coaching continuum

The spectrum of communication styles from 'Command' to Trial and Error'.

Command style

The coach shows and tells the required solution - "I want you to..."

Conditioned game

Games with additional conditions/incentive overlaid to support learning focus e.g. for attacking combination play, 5 goals for a goal scored with a one touch finish (requires effective combination/ support play to create opportunity).

Constant Practice

Repetition of specific movements to acquire, refine or maintain technique.

D

Directional

Game played with a specified attacking direction and defending direction i.e. not 'score in any goal'.

DNA, England

The playing and coaching philosophy of the England national teams, used and adapted to create the Bury Rangers FC DNA.

F

Floater

A player in a separate colour to teams who can join in play for either side e.g. when in possession. Effective way of dealing with odd player numbers, plus also creating over/underloads to support learning focus.

FUNDamentals

Fun warm-up games that encourage running, jumping, changing direction, catching, kicking, throwing etc. Critical to support development of ABCs, particularly in 5-11 age-group.

Future Game

The FA Technical Guide for Young Player Development, published in 2010, outlines a philosophy and vision for the future of youth development in English football.

G

Guided Discovery

Coach asks or issues a challenge "can you show me....?"

I

In Possession

When the team has the ball, seeking to progress play and penetrate the opposition.

GLOSSARY

Interference

Non-direct opposition within a practice that adds an element of realism and decision making vs unopposed e.g. multiple players dribbling in a small area need to avoid bumping into the others.

Intervention

When a coach responds to something seen within a session and communicates to player/group in relation to what he/she has seen. Should be short and specific and ideally without stopping session for entire group.

K

Kinaesthetically

Learning by doing.

L

Licensed Coaches Club

Organisation aimed at raising standards of coaching through ensuring that coaches keep training and qualifications up to date, and providing access to coaching and learning resources.

LTPD

The FA Long Term Player Development or 4 Corner model outlines the key areas for development as a young player grows in the game. The 4 corners are Physical, Technical, Social and Psychological, and outcomes in each area should each be considered when planning and reviewing training sessions.

M

Matched-up

Equal numbers and or/ability of opposing teams/groups.

Micro Demonstration

Micro Demonstration of the practice within a small space, often by moving the ball by hand, to make sure players clear on the exercise before moving into the full-scale practice.

Mini-soccer

Umbrella term for 5v5 (U7 & U8), 7v7 (U9& U10) and 9v9 (U11 & U12) formats before move to 11v11 at U13.

Motor Skills

The precise movement of muscles with the intent to perform a specific act.

O

Opposed

Part of practice where the player has to deal with opposing players, adds realism but need to make sure that comfortable with technique in unopposed situations first.

Out-of-possession

When the player or team is without the ball, during which time the focus should be on how to regain possession as early and efficiently as possible.

Overload

A greater number of players on one team in a situation e.g. 3v2, generally makes in-possession practices easier and out-of possession practices harder.

P

Patterns of play

A series of pre-determined and coordinated movements within a game e.g. goalkeeper receives ball, full-backs split, goalkeeper throws to full-back who plays inside to central midfielder etc.

Play in, play out

Practice design whereby players 'play' themselves in and out to enable them to change roles. Multiball, can be directional or non-directional. For example a player on the outside of a circle receiving a fifth pass dribbles the ball into the circle to become a receiver, replaced by his partner on the outside.

Pressing

Pressurising the opposition in a strategic and controlled manner with the aim of regaining possession.

Principles of play

The key 'invasion game' themed aspects of Attacking and Defending that underpin football tactics.

Progression

Increasing the challenge or difficulty with a practice e.g. introducing opposition, limiting the number of touches that can be taken.

Q**Q&A**

Coach leads with question to gain response from players – “can you tell me what you can do here?”

R**Random practice**

A player practising a variety of techniques under different and changing conditions where the unpredictable nature of the practice will require players to make decisions.

Repetition circuits

A session structure where players (individual or groups) have a ‘go’ and return to the start to repeat the exercise, giving multiple opportunities to practice.

Respect

FA code of conduct campaign to promote high standards of behaviour in the game from players, coaches and spectators.

S**Skill**

In FA Level 2 terminology this refers to the ‘opposed’ part of the session where players practice their technique with the additional challenge of opposition players.

Small-sided games

‘SSGs’ are practice games played in training with a reduced area and number of players per team. Should be used to support learning focus of the session as well as a key lever for ball rolling time and player enjoyment.

Step

Key variables the coach can manipulate to impact the difficulty level of a practice - Space, Time, Equipment, People.

Streaming

Selection of teams/squads based on ability levels.

Emotive but underpins effective player development through matching potential to level of challenge.

T**Technique**

In FA Level 2 terminology this refers to the ‘unopposed’ part of the session where players have the opportunity to practice and master the learning topic before the challenge of opposition is added.

Transition

The moment of moving from in-possession to out-of-possession, or vice versa. A key focus of England DNA - how does the individual/unit react?

Trial & Error

Player and/or coach decide on the challenge – “try for yourself!”

U**Underload**

A smaller number of players on one team in a situation e.g. 2v3, generally makes in-possession practices easier and out-of possession practices harder.

Unopposed

Part of practice, usually early in the session where the players gets opportunity to learn and master ‘technique’ in a unchallenged environment.

Up the steps

A practice structure where challenge builds in logical manner through the session e.g. unopposed, opposed and game.

V**Variable practice**

Practising variation of the same technique under different conditions. The outcomes and returns are less predictable than constant practices but more closely resemble the game.

Variety practice

A session structure where whole group move from practice to practice within the overall

GLOSSARY

session. Individual practices should relate to the overall learning objective of the session e.g. defending when organised, rather than jump about between topics e.g. heading, dribbling and finishing.

W

Whole-Part-Whole

A session structure that starts with a game and the practices revolve around a focus from the game e.g. combination play and then ends with a game to see what has been transferred or improved.

Y

Youth Award

FA learning pathway which recognises that children's needs from football are different to those of adults, and focuses on providing appropriate environment and practice to cater for the individual needs of the players.

Z

Zonal practice

A practice design where zones are marked within playing areas to help achieve the outcomes, e.g. when 'playing through the thirds' or 'attacking in wide areas'.

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