



Marlborough Youth FC  
in association with  
Marlborough Town FC.

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## MYFC Club Philosophy

### Club Ethos

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

### Club Statement

We want all our players, girls and boys, of all ages:

- To develop as players and as a person, striving to be competitive and enjoy winning, but **not at all costs**. Instead, we want football to be played in the correct spirit and fairness, where ideas and creativity (and therefore mistakes on the pitch) are encouraged, and everybody is welcome to play.
- To develop while having fun and learning to work together, which creates the right environment for them to progress. Progression occurs over months and years, not days and weeks.
- To play football in a positive, inclusive environment where ability is not the only focus. This environment will make our football competitive, and players and teams will, over time, develop towards their potential. This is our goal.
- To have access to a pathway to adult football with Marlborough Town Football Club.

### Coaching Philosophy

We want all our players, girls and boys, of all ages:

- To develop as players and people by learning to support each other, communicate, make friends, and create teamwork.
- To develop as players where coaches acknowledge that players progress at different rates, so all need time and patience to develop. Many factors are at play, including date of birth, social maturity, physical maturity, and psychological maturity.
- To develop based on the FA's 4 Corner Model, which asks coaches to focus equally on the following areas:
  - Social
  - Physical
  - Psychological
  - Technical / Tactical.





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- We provide age-appropriate coaching based on the **FA's England DNA approach**.
  - **Foundation Phase** (Ages 5–11)  
Players are encouraged to stay on the ball, master the ball, be creative, try things and be enthusiastic about winning the ball back.
  - **Youth Development Phase** (Ages 12–16)  
Players are still encouraged to stay on the ball and be creative, but they should now look to start connecting and combining with others to retain possession and penetrate teams.
  - **Professional Development Phase** (Ages 17–21).  
Players work more on playing as a team in and out of possession.

See: <https://www.thefa.com/bootroom/resources/england-dna/the-future-england-player/age-phase-priorities>

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## Required MYFC Coach Approach

### General

- To help develop ALL the players.
- To use positive, age-appropriate language with the players.
- To create positive, inclusive training sessions to develop all the players.

### Match Days

- To use a passive approach during match days
- To recognise that players cannot play by remote control.
- To use training to provide as much guidance in training as they can, and when players of any age run over the white line to remember that it is their match, not the coaches.

***It is their game.***

- To praise players of both teams.
- To use quarter/half-time breaks to relay information to players.
- To work with calmness and measure.
- To avoid 'barking' instructions, sometimes frequently/aggressively.

***This is not what we do.***

- To use vocal support which is entirely encouraging and positive. E.g., to soften errors:  
"Unlucky..."  
"Nearly..."  
"Can see what you were trying..."  
"Not quite..."
- To avoid 'specific' instructions. Be 'general'; e.g.,  
"Who could you be marking?" or "Could you be in a better position?"  
Instead of: "Mark number 10!"

***Let players think for themselves.***



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Therefore:

- We want to coach players to communicate with each other, make their own decisions, and help teammates make decisions without the coaches doing this at a high volume.  
***Self-reliance.***
- Over time, self-reliant footballing decisions, positioning, anticipation, vision, confidence, experience, etc., will accumulate. Football development happens over years. This more passive and inclusive approach will strengthen long-term development.  
***Development over years.***
- Mistakes will happen but players should be praised for trying things to encourage creativity and confidence to try things. Criticising players does not build confidence, and players will improve the more they practice if praised for trying.  
***Mistakes will happen.***
- Coaches set the tone in matches, so shouting and being aggressive will affect the players and their parents. We want a positive environment where players can play without fear. Otherwise, they may feel scared, confused, ridiculed, or embarrassed.  
***Positive tone and language always.***





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## Player Selection

- As a club we would expect players to get equal game time over the season, given they all pay the same fees, and we are focused on the development of ALL our players.
- Players develop by playing football, not sitting on the bench or not being selected at all. All players must receive equal time on the pitch as far as possible in a match, but there is coach discretion as to how this is applied.
- E.g. with stronger opposition, coaches could lean towards more developed players, and with less strong opposition, coaches could lean towards less developed players.
- Overall, we would expect to see **equal game time over a whole season**.
- This said, if players are less available/less willing to play, they **may** receive less match time (although see important u16-18 note below\*).
- We would also expect a rotation of players who start games and those who are substitutes. Not least, this may damage self-esteem and trust in the eyes of the other players.

## **Rotating Positions**

- We would expect all players to get regular experience of playing in different positions on the pitch and are not placed in "fixed" positions.
- This is especially important in the younger age groups, and as such, we would not expect to see any players always playing in the same position each week. You only need to look at a number of famous professional players to see how many started in one position but ended up in a completely different position later on. Everyone should get a regular chance to be a goalkeeper, defender, midfielder and striker.
- Each position brings challenges that all players should have the opportunity to try. Specialism in one particular position would usually only come at around U16 but being adaptable and playing multiple positions will help players who want to play football at a higher level or continue to play football as adults.

## **Streaming of Teams (U12s and upwards)**

- From U12, we recognise that football becomes more competitive with the introduction of league tables. At the discretion of individual age groups, we support the streaming of teams from U12s subject to each team being equally resourced and managed, and each player should receive equal focus in whichever team.



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### **'No Train, No Play'**

- We do not support a strict 'no train, no play' policy, such as when a player is not selected automatically for a match because they missed midweek training.
- This policy is too strict, particularly if players are otherwise committed and absences are not regular.
- It is fine, within reason and over time, to prioritise players who regularly train and are frequently available.
- However, 'no train, no play' is a last resort for regular non-attendance.
- **Note:** Consider why a player is regularly absent. There can be many reasons why players can't train, including having working parents, other sports, school commitments, clashes with sibling activities, or being unable to get transport. As a club, we do not believe players should be disadvantaged due to any of these and similar factors outside the player's control. Consider other options for regular absences or non-availability. A supportive parent discussion to explain the impact on the team and continuity often helps players and parents understand the difficulties and work towards a solution.

### **Coaches' Children**

- We recognise that coaching and assisting coaches is a voluntary role. Therefore, we support coaches who wish or need to play their children more frequently.
- At the same time, try to balance this as much as your discretion (and child approach) permits. E.g., consider missing a week if there needs to be rotation or if it prevents team issues.

### **Important u16-u18 Note\***

- **Up to U15**, this 'Player Selection' section (pages 4-5) is not to be overly strictly applied to the point of player or parent discontent. Speak to exec in this event for further guidance, which will be based on the individual team and player circumstances.
- **For U16-U18**, we recognise the degree of competition and the sizeable increase in player expectations. Therefore, in line with adult football, coaches may more strictly apply less match time at their discretion. **Note:** This said, we still expect players to play a reasonable amount of time in matches they attend and not be brought on for only 10 minutes at the end.



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## **Specific Requirements**

MYFC Coaches are to be aware and encourage/ensure the following:

### **Player Engagement**

- All players must abide by the FA's Code of Conduct, which is provided to all parents and players when they join and available for reference on the MYFC website (welcome pack).
- Players are expected to comply with the coaches' reasonable requirements, including positions and tactics. However, they should be encouraged to be creative, experiment, and not fear making mistakes.
- Coaches are to encourage players to play multiple positions, including goalkeeper, to help them develop over time. Help players understand this is to help their long-term development.

### **Fair Play**

- Players must treat their teammates, opponents, and coaches with respect.
- If a player is not doing this, we would expect coaches to start by talking to the player and then escalate to removing the player from the match.
- If this persists, it may be appropriate to drop the player from matches temporarily.
- (Examples could include swearing, deliberate fouling and talking negatively).

### **Before and After Matches**

- Players should shake hands/fist bump opposition players before a match.
- Players should shake hands/fist bump opposition players and match officials after the match.

### **Match Officials**

- Match officials must be respected at all times.
- Coaches should not shout, argue or act aggressively towards referees or assistant referees.
- This sets a bad example, and players may copy this as they get older.
- They have a hard job and can make mistakes, too.
- There is no match if we don't have them.
- Yellow/red cards may result in a league fine. Players (parents) are responsible for payment.



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## Team Management

### Goalkeepers

- This is a very specialised position and one that all players should try at the young age groups.
- Rotating the goalkeeper to start with has benefits. It
  - helps coaches look for natural ability (observe in training/matches).
  - avoids the position being an issue (sometimes, no one wants to play there).
  - helps players realise it's a difficult role to play (builds respect for those who do keep goal).
  - allows goalkeepers to practice outfield/use their feet (an important part of goalkeeping).
  - ensures that goalkeepers still develop outfield skills (some go back outfield at older ages).

### Selection of Captains

- Up to U12: captains should be rotated around each player so each player experiences the role.
- From U12: captains can be selected by rotation, or we support a season-long team captain at the discretion of the Team Manager.

### Player Awards

- We actively encourage player-of-the-match awards for all our teams, especially up to U12.
- These awards should be based on relative starting points, not just the 'best' player or the one who scores the goals. E.g., if a player who always scores a hat trick scores another one, is this, in fact, expected? If a less established player achieves three tackles and passes to feet, which wasn't expected, then there we have it: Player-of-the-Match.
- Focus on individual targets, which should differ for each player.

### Substitutes

- Managers have discretion over how many substitutes they take to each match.
- However, too many substitutes limit each player's game time, so this should be carefully considered, especially for away games. We believe that 1-2 substitutes at 5v5, 2-3 substitutes at 7v7, 3-4 substitutes at 9v9, and 3-4 substitutes at 11v11 work best to ensure sufficient game time for each player and minimise the number of changes made to the team.
- Remember, each player should receive at least 50% of the time for each match, with equal game time aimed for over a whole season.
- (Note: The 50% is subject to a player's behaviour and attitude on the day).
- We encourage coaches to plan their substitutions to ensure equal game time and avoid emotional decisions during the game.

### Squad Rotation

- Many MYFC teams have large squads to ensure sufficient players on match days. To manage game time fairly, we support squad rotation instead of excessive numbers of substitutes.
- Each player should be rotated to the same number of games on average over the season, assuming player availability is similar to other players.



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## Parents

MYFC Coaches are to be aware and encourage/ensure the following:

Parents **should**:

- Offer praise, encouragement and applause for both sides.
- Stand in the designated area for spectators, behind the respect barrier/cones.
- Praise effort and attitude and not just talent.
- Focus on the effort and attitude and not the result.
- Focus on their child's enjoyment.

Parents **should not**:

- Issue instructions from the touchline or follow their child up and down the touchline.
- Shout at or argue with referees or assistant referees.

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End. SS/AR Updated March 2025