

Coaching Philosophy



DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Kidderminster Harriers Development Centre

Football Coaching Philosophy & Strategy

Aims

1. To play a high pressing game with emphasis on a passing based strategy
2. To develop creative players who have a high level of tactical awareness
3. To re-learn the game approach based on best European practice

Approach

Background:

It is my belief that we need to re-learn our whole approach to coaching football in the UK. For too long we have relied on tactics and techniques from the past that are no longer relevant in the modern game.

We need to look, observe and take note of the leading centres especially around Europe to establish an approach that has a sound basis. This does not mean simply copying the best academies but instead analysing what they do and adapting it to our young players - eg what might work in Spain may not work in the UK but with adaptation we can make the right changes.

The best centres are constantly reviewing and adapting and we can do exactly the same. I am fortunate to have many contacts in Europe and I use this insight and knowledge to try and formulate the best processes for our club.

Creating the Strategy:

As a club we play a 4-3-3 system in our 11 a side teams which is vital for our key principles, namely :

- a) passing based game looking to have a high level of ball retention, patience on the ball and care with the ball
- b) pressing high up the pitch in all positions
- c) developing an attitude of attacking and defensive roles in every position
- d) risks and chance taking in appropriate areas
- e) high levels of inter-player support both on and off the ball
- f) regaining possession within 4 seconds of losing it

Developing the Strategy:

As a club we really value our coaches who including the Head Coach are all voluntary and appreciate their time is precious. To that end we have a robust Continuing Education programme where we can introduce new ideas and develop existing ones. This is also an opportunity for the coaches to get together and share ideas and help each other out.

The mixing of coaches across ages helps create an environment that we are one club with many teams not lots of individual teams. This is particularly crucial as our age groups cover U9 - U16 and within this there are critical crossover points - namely 7 a side to 9 a side and then to 11 a side. By all coaches knowing each other and all working to one strategy we can plan for these age transitions and help the coaches help their players adapt.

Whilst formations are not set in stone, clearly certain ones are encouraged in the younger age groups to assist with moving towards the 433 system at 11 a side.

The End Result:

Whilst it is often heard, it is seldom seen the idea that it is all about performance not results. The reality is that it is about both in appropriate measures. As Johan Cruyff said “Winning without style is ugly and style without winning is pointless” so it takes a balance. What we have established as a club is that to change a way of football that has been learnt in local English leagues takes time.

We instill in our players and parents that this process will take on average 3 years and so we have to ensure patience with the process. Our players and parents have confidence in us as coaches to accept this and all new players and their parents understand this. It took Germany 10 years to get where they are now and whilst we don't have that long, a 3 year time scale is realistic.

Another important aspect is our belief that training is the crucial element and match days are where we test what we have learnt in training. This is the reverse of most centres where the weekend match is the focus. This we feel is a vital aspect to learning to play the right way. Clearly testing the players skill and knowledge is essential and all of our teams play in the highest level leagues outside of academies on match days. It is after all a competitive sport.

We are confident that our players will leave our centre at 16 with a higher level of skill, tactical awareness and footballing intelligence to take them wherever they may go with their football. They will have developed long standing friendships and a high level of team spirit and inter-personal skills which will hold them in good stead for the future.

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