

Under 10's Plan

Introduction

Over the coming weeks I would like to discuss with everyone the approach and roles to be taken. To start this I have developed a rough outline of what I think we should be doing and how to approach the coaching and playing of the game as well as the conduct of players, coaches and parents.

To start I would like to place a few points about the aims we should have for the coaching of these youngsters in order of priority;

- 1) We must ensure at all times that the players enjoy their, and build a, love for rugby
- 2) We must develop the squad of players into a full team in three years (Under 13's) in a style of rugby for Medway
- 3) We must develop the individual strengths/skills/attitude of the players

There is some fundamental beliefs I have towards achieving success in these aims which are;

- a) We must encourage the players and parents to follow the clubs codes of conduct
- b) We must focus on the U10's being one squad of players no matter how we select teams
- c) We must provide clear communications on plans
- d) We must ensure we monitor individual players to assess their strengths and improvement targets

The equity statement and code of conduct is included for reference.

This document will be modified into a version suitable for the web page and parents to read.

Coaching Fundamentals

We know that we have the four key components of rugby which make the basis of all the skills development so our plans will be little different.

- 1) Running
- 2) Defence
- 3) Continuity
- 4) Handling

The way in which I would like to approach the coaching is the utilisation of all coaches in general training areas that we wish players to be competent in and then have focus groups built around either developing specific skills (e.g. forwards, backs and fitness and resistance training) or developing specific players in an area of particular strength, or skill deficiency.

The coaching then comes together around the style of game we wish to develop for the squad.

Style of Game

If I was to summarise the style of game Medway aims to play it would be to utilise the speed and agility of players but still play with physicality. We will coach the players in all the arts of continuity with the aim of providing quick/clean ball to running players. I would be looking to develop a level of hunger in the players to attack the ball at breakdowns instead of standing back.

We must ensure we continue to develop the skills of players so they will pass the ball and seek or create gaps for themselves or others. This becomes a core part of the year, to try and focus on all elements of coaching to develop a level of decision making.

Defensively we should utilise the strengths of players to develop a defensive style that mixes a rush defence approach with sliding coverage. Few teams at this age can get the ball wide quickly around such a defence approach.

We will teach players to always look for groups of three in all situations of the game. All fundamentals of the game can be taught on a series of three. Three players form the basis of any ruck or maul. We must retain three players in backs supporting these as well. It should become natural as the season develops.

Squad Development Programme

Each week we will try to operate to a training plan which we can share before the training sessions to ensure we all understand the plan and aims for the week. As much as we want to provide some variety I have a belief in sticking to a core of training sessions which will develop the key areas we wish to work with, this is certainly a factor at the start of the season.

I would like to incorporate competence in aspects of the training and keep records of performance from training which can go towards awards at year end. Example would be sprint times fastest, most improved etc. These can be done with ball in hand or with weight that must be towed to provide resistance. I would like as much as possible to not only have development targets for the squad but to find development targets for individual players. There is no harm in giving a player homework in the form of practice.

We must develop an attitude in the squad that believes in itself as an underdog as that is what Medway is. We should not focus on wins or losses but as Colin puts it if the players and us can honestly feel that they have given everything in their power to the match and can keep their heads high with pride.

Above all we must teach the entire squad the way in which we play so that it does not matter which players are put together.

Fitness and Resistance Training

In all training sessions we will develop components to ensure levels of fitness grow and also that we focus on some fun elements which can develop strength to ensure we have the confidence and power to contest the ball. Some of the fitness will come in not letting the players get too distracted between sessions through the day.

Another key area for development will be through resistance work to improve strength. This is essential if we are to encourage players to get involved at breakdowns.

Rucking and Mauling

This is an area all players must be competent in knowing;

- a) The differences between the two
- b) The main aims (which is to recover the ball quickly)
- c) The decisions that we need to make as players

I would like to focus in this area as with confidence it will develop a speed and continuity to the game which will be critical.

Handling

This is an area we must ensure we progress through the year. At all times training should include a ball to improve this area. We need to find a way to get the players serious about handling. As you will know I am favourable of the old Auckland squares as a fundamental to catching and passing. But we must also improve the offload in tackles.

Defence

If we are to utilise a faster line of defence we must lift the squad's capability of tackling and this can only be done through improvements in technique as many players lack size or strength.

Forwards Specialist Training

We need to ensure that only players who are competent to be in scrums and lineouts are exposed in this, so competency assessment is key. We should not expose players to unnecessary risks.

I would like to keep the plans at scrums and lineouts to a very simple group of choices. My view at this stage of development is that we must coach good technique for the players to provide a stable platform. With this the players themselves will start to seek broader options in the game as confidence in each other grows. Players do not need to be the same in each so any team we select can have good scrum players and the lineout team is different.

Running

We must develop players to learn to always run towards gaps no matter how small they are, do not target the player. We must start considering building the skills of players in running. We have some naturally gifted runners but they may benefit from some specialised training aimed at improving their stepping and decision making in finding and creating gaps on field.

Backs Specialist Training

As the season develops we should focus on improving the combinations of players in back positions to break the advantage line. We can consider teaching set moves but this has limited benefit if we can not get quick clean ball and players who can utilise their decisions.

Individual Development plans.

As mentioned above I am keen we identify the competencies of players so we can target training as required. For developing players this might mean putting a special group together or focusing on further improving a natural talent displayed.

I would also like to ensure as part of these development plans that we focus on building confidence of players in small steps towards a final goal. An example is not to expose a new player to tackles from the likes of Billy Young as this can dent confidence and cause them to spend many games not getting involved.

I will spend time with parents explaining what we see as the development plan for their child so that they can feel involved especially if it is a confidence issue.

Responsibilities of Coaches (we are a team)

- We are responsible for upholding the codes of conduct of the club (see attached).
- We will all maintain an involvement in decisions of direction for the squad and individual players
- All coaches will assist in the running of training sessions and in the development of the training plans especially in areas of recognised expertise
- All coaches commit to openly discussing any issues they feel exist
- All coaches will support the decisions of the group with others
- Managing fixtures when nominated
- Participate in rotation of refereeing duties
- Responsible for identifying competency of players
- Involvement in team selection processes.
- Most of all we not get too serious as they are kids and the priority is enjoyment before skill development

I will aim to

- Involve all coaches in decisions as much as possible
- Training plans will aim to be shared in advance to ensure an understanding of the weeks aims

Specific roles;

Everyone will have a responsibility to act as a coach for the players in all aspects of the game. We can however recognise some skills and interests which will lend some to want to provide extra advice in specialist areas and we can recognise this, however I do not wish to limit anyones role in the overall process.

Head Coach – Neil Wardle; my job is to provide framework and overall plan for development of the squad of players. I will also liaise with parents (especially development plans) and players.

Manager – Trevor Jefferies; Trevor will have the most time consuming job of all with the provision of all other aspects of managing a team.

Coaches – ALL; We must provide the training and development of the players as required

Specialist Forwards Development – (scrums, lineouts etc)

Specialist Backs Development – (handling, running etc)

Fitness Development

Due to my work role and commitments there is going to be time during the year when I will be unavailable to attend either matches or training, at these times I will ensure somebody is handed the mantle to manage the day. I will aim to ensure it is still part of a planned training programme.

Team Structure

As already mentioned my key focus is that we are a squad, that is one team there is no separation and we must work tirelessly on the attitude of players towards each other. There must be a comradeship in rugby that is critical for success.

Obviously the whole squad will not always be able to play and therefore I feel the following is the best way to approach it.

- 1) As I shared last year, I view players in one of three groups for selection. They are either;
 - a) Strong and skilled players (clearly A),
 - b) Capable players (A or B) and
 - c) Developing players (clearly B). Placing a player in group 3 maybe a safety decision to avoid injury and build confidence.
- 2) The Club away games or development days. The week before these games we will decide how to select the teams. This will involve feedback from the club we are visiting and the decision of either running A and B style teams, or mixed capability.
- 3) At festivals we will decide the teams on the basis of the type of meet it is. If it is clearly an A festival then it would be considered dangerous for some players to attend so we would select accordingly, same goes for B festivals. Where it is not clear we will send mixed squads to ensure suitable rotation and exposure. As much as we can aim to win I am still keen to ensure we develop a stronger squad for the future of squad of fifteen players.
- 4) Kent Festival, will be the strongest squad we can send.

Selection process is to be built around

- 1) Commitment
- 2) Attitude, no matter how good a player, negative attitude can damage the performance of the whole team.
- 3) Competencies and capability
- 4) Performance

We will involve all available coaches in the selection process as much as possible but it will be difficult to achieve consensus on every decision so I may reserve the right to final word.

Team Management at festivals and all other matches is to be shared. I will be wanting to spend most of my time assessing the capabilities of the players.

Training

If we look at the match schedule at present less than fifty percent of the Sundays are available for training and some of these include SDD's and as we know we have little control of these, so I feel it is critical that we hold training during the week to achieve our aims of developing a game plan. My suggestion is to adopt a 7 to 8 programme on every Thursday. There is no doubt we can not make these compulsory however competency is part of selection and those who attended last year improved during the year and as such selection should encourage attendance.

I also feel that there may be some opportunities to operate development camps especially if we consider holiday periods where we can focus on a specific skill we wish to enhance in players. This I would like to explore as it is something that may be difficult to achieve.

Parents

It is obvious there is to be keenest amongst parents and a need to manage expectations. We must support each other to show a coherent coaching view and squad, we are one team. I will aim to involve parents through discussion on their child's capability and our aims for them in a development plan. I also will approach any concerns we have regarding player's attitudes or confidence in this way as well.

Any parents wanting to be involved can discuss this with myself and we can consider how best we can utilise individual skills.

Equity Statement

Medway Rugby Football Club (The club) is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development.

- Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.
- The club respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, abilities, experience, sexuality, nationality or social/economic status.
- The club is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat and intimidation, harassment and abuse
- All club members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity. The club will deal with any incidence of discrimination seriously, according to club's disciplinary procedures.
- The club will take steps, as appropriate, to encourage membership from different groups and diverse communities.
- Membership of the club shall be open to everyone

Code of Conduct

Please read the following codes of conduct carefully. By signing the membership form for yourself and/or your family you agreed to abide by the Clubs code of conduct. Parents, Spectators, Match Officials, Coaches and Players who do not abide by this code may be excluded from the Club.

The Good Parent's Code

Parents are encouraged to:

- a. Be familiar with the coaching and training programme in order that they can ensure their child is fully involved and the coaches are aware of their availability.
- b. Be familiar with the teaching and coaching methods used by observing the coaching and training sessions in which their child participates.
- c. Be aware that the Club has a duty of care to ensure the safety of players and therefore, where appropriate, assist coaches with the supervision of the players, particularly where numbers are large.
- d. Be involved with Club activities and share their expertise.
- e. Share concerns, if they have them, with Club officials.
- f. Be familiar with the Good Coaches' Code contained in the Rugby Continuum. In particular be aware that:
 - coaches should recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching players; and
 - coaches should keep winning and losing in perspective, encouraging players to behave with dignity in all circumstances.
- g. Support coaches in instilling these virtues.

- h. Remember that young people play rugby for their own enjoyment not that of their parents.
- i. Encourage young people to play - do not force them.
- j. Focus on the players' efforts, rather than winning or losing.
- k. Be realistic about the players' abilities; do not push them towards a level that they are not capable of achieving.
- l. Provide positive verbal feedback both in training and during the game.
- m. Remember that persistent, negative messages will adversely affect the players' and referee's performance and attitude.
- n. Always support the Club in their efforts to eradicate loud, coarse and abusive behaviour from the game.
- o. Remember young people learn much by example.
- p. Always show appreciation of good play by all players both from their own Club and the opposition.
- q. Respect decisions made by the match officials, even if they appear to make a mistake, and encourage the players to do likewise.

The Good Spectator's Code

Spectators are encouraged to:

- a. Act as positive role models to all players.
- b. Be familiar with, and abide by, the RFU Child Protection Guidance in relation to verbal and emotional abuse.
- c. Respect guidance from the Club with regard to spectator behaviour.
- d. Remember children play sport primarily for their own enjoyment, not for that of the spectators.
- e. Acknowledge good individual and team performance from all players irrespective of the team in which they play.
- f. Respect match officials' decisions, even if they appear to make a mistake – remember, they are volunteers providing an opportunity for players to play rugby.
- g. (Never verbally abuse players, coaches, match officials or fellow spectators: such behaviour can create a negative environment for players and their behaviour will often reflect this.
- h. Acknowledge effort and good performance rather than 'to win at all costs'.
- i. Verbally encourage all players in a positive manner, shouting 'for', not 'at', the players.
- j. Encourage all players irrespective of their ability - never ridicule any individual player, regardless of the team in which they play.

The Good Match Official's Guide

Match Officials should:

- a. Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating players.
- b. Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner during games.
- c. Emphasise the spirit of the game.
- d. Appreciate the needs of the players before the needs of the sport.
- e. Understand the physical and behavioural development of players.
- f. Be a positive role model. Set an example, and as such, comments should be positive and supportive.
- g. Look to self-improvement e.g. participation in training courses.
- h. Recognise that the safety of players is paramount.

- i. Explain decisions - all players are still learning and parents will understand the game better.
- j. Always penalise foul play.
- k. Play advantage whenever possible in order to let the game flow.
- l. Show empathy for the age and ability of players.
- m. Be consistent and objective.
- n. Be familiar with the Good Spectators Code and ensure that verbal abuse from players, coaches or spectators is not tolerated and is dealt with by club officials immediately.
- o. Be aware of, and abide by, the RFU Child Protection Guidance policies and procedures.
- p. Officiate to the rules laid down in the Rugby Continuum and keep themselves updated on rule changes.
- q. Check that the home Club has provided a qualified first aider, ambulance access has not been obstructed and that appropriate equipment is available along with someone trained in its use before starting play.
- r. Before training sessions and matches check that studs and other clothing are in accordance with the IRB Laws of the Game.

The Good Coach's Guide

Coaches at MRFC are encouraged to:

- a. Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when coaching players.
- b. Understand that most learning is achieved through doing.
- c. Appreciate the needs of the players before the needs of the sport.
- d. Be a positive role model - think what this implies.
- e. Keep winning and losing in perspective - encourage players to behave with dignity in all circumstances.
- f. Respect all referees and the decisions they make, even if they appear to make a mistake, (remember it could be you refereeing next week) and ensure that the players recognise that they must do the same.
- g. Provide positive verbal feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner to all players, both during coaching sessions and matches.
- h. Provide rugby experiences which are matched to the players' ages and abilities, as well as their physical and behavioural development.
- i. Ensure all players are coached in a safe environment, with adequate first aid readily to hand.
- j. Avoid the overplaying of the best players by using a squad system which gives everybody a satisfactory amount of playing time.
- k. Never allow a player to train or play when injured.
- l. Ensure good supervision of players, both on and off the field.
- m. Recognise that players should never be exposed to extremes of heat, cold or unacceptable risk of injury.
- n. Develop an awareness of nutrition as part of an overall education in lifestyle management.
- o. Recognise that it is illegal for players under 18 to drink alcohol or for those under 16 to smoke. Coaches should actively discourage both.
- p. Ensure that their knowledge and coaching strategies are up to date and in line with RFU philosophy.
- q. Be aware of, and abide by, the RFU recommended procedures for taking young people on residential tours at home and abroad.
- r. Be aware of and abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the Policy and Procedures for the Welfare of Young People in Rugby Union.

- s. Coach to the rules laid down in the Rugby Continuum and keep themselves updated on rule changes.

The Good Player's Guide

Players at MRFC are encouraged to:

- a. Recognise and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, parents, match officials and administrators in providing the opportunity to play the game and enjoy the rugby environment.
- b. Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to adults and team mates.
- c. Recognise that every player has a right to expect their involvement in rugby to be safe and free from all types of abuse.
- d. Understand that if an individual or group of players feel they are not being treated in a manner that is acceptable, then they should tell an adult either at the Club or outside of the game.
- e. Play because they want to do so, not to please coaches or parents.
- f. Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- g. Be attentive at all training and coaching sessions.
- h. Work equally hard for themselves and their team - both will then benefit.
- i. Recognise good play by all players on their team and by their opponents.
- j. Be a sportsman - win with dignity, lose with grace.
- k. Play to the IRB Laws of the Game and accept, without question, all referees' decisions even if they appear to make a mistake.
- l. Control their emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of team mates, opponents, coaches, match officials or spectators is not acceptable.
- m. Treat all players, as they would like to be treated themselves. Do not interfere with, bully or take advantage of any player.