



Sutton Coldfield Hockey Club - Junior Ethos and Coaching Philosophy

Our Club Ethos

- First and foremost, we want to give everyone involved with the club, of whatever background, the feeling of belonging to our Sutton Coldfield 'hockey family' – 'The Mighty Pinks' and for our juniors the "Mini Mighty Pinks"
- Aspire to be inclusive and create a fun, enjoyable and safe environment.
- Recognise the importance of being a local but aspirational club which strives to develop and encourage all members to reach their potential as a player and an individual, adapting to their needs, ability and aspirations.
- Actively recruit, cherish and support our coaches, umpires and volunteers, without whom we would not have a club.

Coaching Philosophy

We want to deliver great coaching to all in a way that stimulates them to become lifelong hockey players with a fundamental life skill that will help them meet likeminded people wherever they may find themselves in the world.

We must ensure that they respect each other, our oppositions, match officials, coaches, spectators, understand the values of fair play and whilst always having a desire to win appreciate how to lose with sportsmanship.

We should recognise the individual in everyone, consider the ability and learning styles of each player and ensure our sessions are inclusive and provide learning for all. We must cater for the entire ability spectrum ensuring we stretch and develop every player and enable them to get where they want to get to.

We will encourage our juniors to spend as much time as possible developing their skills, we will offer all Juniors at least two pitch sessions per week, our core Sunday session and an optional midweek session, in addition we will promote self-practice and provide materials via our Mini Mighty Pinks TV platform to help them learn in alternative ways.

Coaching Principals.

The Mighty Pinks coaching approach is now being developed alongside those ideas promoted by England Hockey (e.g. RARE, Golden Thread etc), it is therefore our aim to ensure we support all our coaches with the opportunity to develop and attend appropriate coach education activity. We believe by equipping our coaches, volunteers and young leaders with the relevant knowledge so they can support development in individuals and teams based on recommended best practice.

We always want to promote hockey as a fun sport, such that every child attends each week with a desire to learn and they arrive and leave with a smile on their face!! Session design needs to always

remember this principal, different age groups have trialled things like Game, Part, Game to help with added enjoyment and gaining immediate focus in sessions.

We whole heartedly support the ideas of allowing children to develop through their own learning and our role is therefore to provide the right environment to achieve this, as juniors this will involve a blend of core skills, scenario drills, and plenty of game related practice, we will actively discourage coaches that spend all their time telling children what to do in every scenario. This is not an effective long term learning environment; we want our players to learn how to make effective decisions by themselves.

Our feedback should be constructive and delivered in measured ways, not by shouting or constant instruction at players as they are in-game. Players will become better in the long term if they are able to think for themselves as they play. As part of the "Parents in Sport" initiatives we have provided guidance to help parents understand the role of the coach, their role as parents and what good looks like (probably a bit chaotic!) such that they understand why a coach may not be providing continuous instruction like others may be!

Our club is built on a huge volunteer workforce where we actively promote our senior members to engage in coaching and umpiring, we help parents to become part of their child's journey as coaches or volunteers and most importantly offer we opportunity to our younger members to coach through our young leader opportunities (often linked to DofE schemes), we will also be promoting greater involvement for our younger members in umpiring as part of a newer initiative (learning rules proved popular in our weekly on-line Covid sessions!), we see it as a responsibility of our club to consider how we can develop the next generation of great coaches and umpires.

We should consistently seek feedback of players and ensure they have opportunities to identify their own development needs, we have worked on individual player assessment options to allow them to do self-analysis. We should ensure that our juniors understand that some things need lots of practice and maybe repeated over many weeks. This is to develop their muscle memory such that they can exhibit outstanding core skills as a basis for onward development.

We wish to be at the forefront of innovative thinking and have over the last 12 months invested in the VEO video technology platform to record sessions and games so that players and coaches can continue the learning process away from the pitch. The response from players has been outstanding with clear examples of how young players have worked together to consider how to improve team performance by reviewing game footage together or alternatively themselves via their own self-analysis.

We additionally provide access to Sportplan to enable all our coaches to develop ideas and plan sessions effectively, this is well supported by the materials available via hockeyhub. A well-planned session will provide enjoyment for both the coach and players as it will have considered both the core aims of the session but also how to change it when things either aren't working and need more or less challenge.

Coaching Session Design.

Our aim is to ensure each session is well planned, is fun, provides a range of activities that help with our young players developing their skills and game understanding. We want each session to be an opportunity for juniors to learn.

We recognise the effort the coaches put into the session will directly impact the enjoyment and energy that the juniors will put in. We must be good role models in all that we do, creating the positive fun environment that that supports learning. Our use of open language will play a key part in encouraging the juniors to identify the solutions to the challenges presented

One of the core design aims should be that everyone gets to spend as much time with a ball as possible, this ties to our simple philosophy of getting players onto the pitch so they can experience as much contact time as possible.

We need to think actively about how we encourage this by limiting drills with queues or players being allowed to be passive in conditioned games.

It is the responsibility of our lead coaches to design and communicate the session to the assistant coaches and young leaders effectively. Most people are volunteers so this must be held in mind when we work as a team and demands put on people.

We have a club subscription to Sportplan to ensure all coaches have a good library of ideas, in addition to those via England Hockey and what they observe with other coaches. We ask coaches to plan their sessions such that they have a clear structure, our commitment to providing coach education for all coaches is a key part of facilitating their own skills in session design.

We all recognise the benefits of juniors learning the core technical skills such that they can execute these at the relevant game pace and at the right times. We must however provide creative ways to develop those skills, promote their active use whilst recognising the need to explore and try new things. Hockey at all levels will see players make good and bad choices, succeed and fail in execution, this must all be accepted and recognised in our responses, so we create a no fear culture of brave and creative players willing to always be part of something greater than themselves.

We aim to provide as much competitive game time as possible whilst still encouraging the technical development aspects. The improvements in the competitive framework (local, regional and national) for Junior hockey is very welcomed and an excellent step forward by England Hockey in ensuring we can provide the right level of competitiveness to challenge our players.

In essence, our sessions should reflect our ethos, be fun, enjoyable and safe, they should encourage creativity, bravery and openness, but they should also allow everyone to develop based on their own individual potential. Our success may be measured by some in how many players achieve representative honours at varying levels, for us though we will also be striving to ensure we just produce quite simply the next generation of hockey players for all levels.