



# Bury Rangers Football Club

## Club Ethos & Policies

### Season 2017/18



CHARTER STANDARD  
COMMUNITY CLUB



OFFICIAL SISTER CLUB

## Introduction

The aim of this document is to clearly articulate the ethos of Bury Rangers FC including:

- Playing philosophy: the style of play we aspire to as a football club
- Coaching philosophy
- Training organisation
- Streaming
- Match day management.

This ethos is to be applied across all junior age groups within the Club and is founded upon the answers to three fundamental questions:

1. Who is the club for?
2. Why do kids play football?
3. How do we measure success?

We, as a club, believe that we exist for the 600+ players, who play football for fun and enjoyment. We measure success by our size, the few children who leave our club, and by the development of all players. This guides everything that we do.

**In response to FA's Nick Levett's question: Are we a club or just a collection of teams?**

The FA are in the process of changing the face of grassroots football to address a number of issues within the game. For example: player numbers and pitch sizes are being changed to become more appropriate to the age of the players; match results are becoming 'non-recorded' to enable player development to supersede the importance of the score; specialist youth coaching qualifications are being introduced so the coaches of our young players no longer treat them as mini-adults. Bury Rangers fully endorse the FA approach and are active supporters.

It is important to understand that the FA are not trying to remove or reduce the intrinsic competitiveness of the game – the approach can be summarised by the following quote from the FA's Nick Levett:

*Striving to win?: vital.*

*The score?: not as important*

*The learning process and development of children as footballers and young people?: the most important outcome.*

## Playing Philosophy

The FA's 'The Future Game' document lays out their vision of how the game should be played in the modern era and provides practical guidance on how to develop players in line with the vision. Bury Rangers supports the approach and all Bury teams should try and play in the way outlined below.

The Future Game playing philosophy is broken down into the following principles:

### **In possession:**

- A possession-based approach played through the three-thirds of the pitch
- Quality passing and intelligent movement and support off the ball
- Penetrative, incisive and varied attacking play, allied to good finishing
- Counter-attacking whenever opportunities arise

### Out of possession:

- A tactical approach to defending, in which all players contribute
- A controlled, calculated and assertive approach when and where necessary

Additionally, the playing philosophy actively encourages the individualistic player. Players with varied and unique dribbling skills and the dexterity to go past defenders, particularly in the final-third, are fundamental to success in the future game.

The Future Game playing philosophy reflects many of the styles and approaches demonstrated by high-performing teams at European and world level. It is important to note, however, that The Future Game philosophy isn't a replica of any particular country's philosophy, and is underpinned with England's own DNA in which desire, work-rate and competitiveness are continually encouraged.

In simple terms this means we will try to play like **Barcelona** not **Stoke**, long speculative 'hoofs' downfield from the goalkeeper should be a thing of the past and 'taking a defender on' will be encouraged.

More detail of applying The Future Game playing philosophy can be found in Appendix 1.

## Coaching Philosophy

Fundamental to the Bury Rangers Coaching Philosophy is that we are 'development' driven not 'performance' driven. Coaches are key to the establishment of good behaviour in football and they are expected to be role models for the young players in their care. While it is natural for coaches and players to want to win games, coaches must disassociate themselves from a 'win at all costs' attitude, with the emphasis being placed on enjoyable participation in the game. As well as following the code of conduct our coaches also work with these aims:

- Try to teach players how to think, not what to think
- Give players a chance to learn through self discovery rather than pure instruction
- Develop a player's character to become positive and self supporting
- Create a positive state and relaxed environment
- To encourage a player's knowledge of all positions and be able to play at least two
- Improve an individual's ability to play with two feet
- Improve technical ability and confidence with the ball
- Develop a positive and focused attitude in all players
- To set high standards for players
- Improve speed, agility and running mechanics
- Improve knowledge of the game including positional and team play
- Encourage the concept of not worrying about mistakes but learning from them.

We try to create training and match sessions that hold no fear for children. Children need to become creative and expressive and will only do so if they feel that they can make mistakes without being heavily criticised. If we impose fear into the learning process, players will only do things that they know they can do well and will not expose themselves to new challenges. The FA's strategy is for players to be coached by specialist age-appropriate coaches, with the knowledge and skills to work effectively with specific age-groups. This is being achieved through the introduction of the FA Youth Module courses (of which there are 3 – each 4 days in duration). At the time of writing a very small number of Bury Rangers coaches have attended these courses and consequently it is questionable whether the required standard of coaching is currently being achieved. Bury encourages coaches to attend these courses and will fully fund the cost.

**We will target a coach per age group to have undertaken the Youth Module Level 1, with further development and encouragement for additional age group coaches to pursue youth modules 1 -3.**

## Training Organisation

Mini Football age groups are treated as one unit and not as individual squads. It is vital that Mini Football age groups don't become fragmented - the only "splits" as such should happen at League matches, when League squads are formed to play in matches.

For training sessions the age group trains together on a regular basis - 50% of training sessions will be held with squad players mixed together.

Larger age groups will have to plan carefully how to train perhaps 40 plus players together - but this is easily done with a little advanced planning, co-operation and communication between coaches.

When training together as a group, coaches will work with different players each week. Coaches and Team Managers will get to know and work with all of the players in the age group - not just their own League squad players.

There is no need for tactical training sessions as such, at mini football - the emphasis is on the players' discovery of the game and working matters out for themselves in a fun environment. Team Managers and coaches are there to supervise and to organise fun sessions for the players and not to try and impart match tactics.

At the end of each training session there should be a "team-talk" for all players and parents, where praise is given to players, and information given to parents.

## Streaming

'Streaming' is a method of grouping individuals according to their 'ability' in a particular discipline – this is common within the education system and is designed to enable individuals to progress at a level and pace that is appropriate for them. The opposite of 'streaming' is 'mixed ability' where there is no differentiation between ability levels within a group.

Let's first consider 'streaming' within a squad environment where the teams within the squad are playing matches in a league. The general Bury Rangers guidance is that teams should be 'streamed', the main rationale being that the League is 'streamed' and opposition teams generally 'stream' so in order to have fair matches Bury Rangers should 'stream'. This is fine up to a point but we need to consider what we mean by 'ability'.

As a coach you will be familiar with the FA's 4 corner model: Technical, Physical, Psychological and Social. Young players develop at different rates within the 4 corners and, for example, a technically superior player could be less effective in a match situation than a physically bigger player – who is the 'better' player?

The key to 'streaming' is to consider the individual player and their development needs – is the big player in defence out-muscling the smaller, more technical players improving as a footballer or would they learn more by dropping down a level and being encouraged to try and be more creative in say, a midfield role?

However you define 'ability' in a 'streamed' environment there will always be players on the cusp between teams, with little difference in ability across a number of players. To maximise the development of the cusp players, they should be given the opportunity to regularly play at the higher level. One way of achieving inclusion of the cusp players is to have larger squads and rotate players on a periodic basis so all players have the opportunity to play at the highest level – the 'spare' players playing in the team below. The players moving down can also be challenged by, for example, playing them in an unfamiliar role or challenging them to make a number of successful passes with their weaker foot or other skill based target.

With the Bury Rangers 'football for all' philosophy there can be an unwelcome side-effect of streaming where the lowest team (aka the 'Development Squad') can be weaker than other clubs in their division. Being well beaten on a frequent/regular basis can demoralise players (and coaches!); Coaches need to be aware of this potential issue and have a plan to ensure this doesn't happen. We encourage a system where one player from the top team plays in the lower teams to strengthen that team but also as development activity for the player from the top team.

The other area to consider is 'streaming' in training. The 'Training Organisation' section recommends 50% of training sessions are mixed i.e. not in the 'streamed' teams. Coaches must therefore be able to cope with 'mixed ability' groups of players – ensuring the better technical players are still challenged and the weaker players are challenged at an appropriate level. This is called 'managing the difference' and is covered in detail the FA Youth Module 1 (a great course which all youth coaches should try and attend).

‘Managing the difference’ is a challenge for any coach and when designing a training session consideration should be given to how to make the practice more difficult for those finding it too easy and less difficult for those who may be struggling. These points should be documented in the coaching plan.

The STEP principle can help with ‘managing the difference’:

**S**pace: change the space in which the activity is taking place;

**T**ask: change the nature of the activity;

**E**quipment: change the type, size or colour;

**P**eople: change the people, the numbers and/or ways in which they are involved, and how they interact with each other.

## Match Day Management

See Appendix 3 for more detail on match day routine.

**Players’ arrival time:** 45 min before KO (Coaches should be ready to start warm up)

**Pitch preparation:** Coaches should enlist the help of parents to prepare the pitch (and Respect barriers) for home matches. It is Key to establish assistance from parent/volunteers/spectators to enable time to spend with the players to conduct appropriate pre-match routine.

**Playing Time:**

In league games players will normally be given equal playing time, regardless of the game situation (unless there are any issues with attendance, punctuality or behaviour – these will be discussed with parents beforehand). At the discretion of the coach, players who play in goal for part of a match may be given additional outfield play time to allow equal time for them to develop their skills on the pitch. Permanent goalkeepers will play the whole game. **(Not encouraged full-time goalkeepers at Mini Football – A keen goalkeeper should play 50% outfield to improve skills/awareness/football education)**

In cup matches players will play a minimum of 50% of the game but the coach will have discretion to play some players for longer than others if the situation demands.

**Substitutes:**

Players will take turns to be in the starting line-up.

**Rotation of Playing Positions:**

Players will be asked to play in a variety of positions - again using a rota would represent best practice. There may be exceptions to this for goalkeepers. Players should know at the start of the match when and where they will be playing.

Players should have experience of a **minimum of two positions per season.**

**Attitude of Coaches and Touchline Behaviour:**

Coaches will be required to strictly follow the coaches' code of conduct and must let the players play during matches, with positive encouragement from parents and coaches. Information from the line is in a series of occasional questions from the coaching staff. Patrolling the touchline giving continuous shouted instructions must not happen. Players always try their best. They will learn from their mistakes without being told they have done wrong.

**AS COACHES WE OBSERVE, WE DO NOT PARTICIPATE!!**

## Appendix 1: Applying The Future Game playing philosophy to grassroots football

### With the ball

To develop players capable of playing the game outlined in The Future Game playing philosophy, young grassroots players should be encouraged, when possible, to play out from the back and through midfield, progressing play to create chances with clever and creative play.

Goalkeepers should be comfortable in possession, distributing the ball to defenders who are confident to receive the ball and pass, or run with the ball, into midfield.

#### (Reason Why Goalkeepers need to play 50% of time outfield for skill development)

Players in all areas of the pitch should be encouraged to retain possession by building play through the three-thirds of the pitch. Put simply: this begins by encouraging players to refrain from kicking the ball hopefully from one end of the pitch to the other.

Young players should develop their passing skills focusing on accuracy, variety and incisiveness. Incisive passes see the ball being played through, around, or over, the opposition to create goal-scoring opportunities.

Possession work should be supported with an emphasis on intelligent movement with players encouraged to interchange position to receive the ball. As the game evolves it appears there will be less reliance on traditional positions and young players should be given the opportunity to play in lots of different areas of the pitch and not be restricted by out-dated tactics and formations.

Recognising counter-attacking opportunities is also fundamental. Young players should be given opportunities to learn how to play the game at different speeds, developing an understanding of which approach – patient build-up play or incisive counter-attacking - is most appropriate depending on the state of the game and the organisation of the opposition.

This style of play encourages all players, at different times, to join in with attacking play with an emphasis on variety and creativity. Individual dribbling skills and the ability to go past players using a skill or trick, particularly in the final-third, are to be encouraged. Players demonstrating such individual abilities should be encouraged to develop these unique skills wherever possible.

**The goal is for all players not be afraid of making a mistake or losing the ball but to think positively with the ball.**

### Without the ball

Coaching defending is sometimes neglected at grassroots level. An important part of The Future Game vision is for players at all levels to develop their understanding and application of defending skills.

Players should be encouraged to regain the ball skilfully and intelligently, rather than simply chasing after the ball; this includes all players on the pitch and not just those in more defensive minded positions.

Players should be encouraged to develop their understanding of when to attempt to regain the ball early (when the opposition do not have controlled possession) and, alternatively, when to recover, drop-off, and work together to prevent the opposition from executing attacks (when the opposition have good possession).

Young players should also be given the opportunity to learn how to function in man-marking and zonal defensive structures.

## Appendix 2: FA Respect Coaches' code of conduct

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of behaviour in the game.

In The FA's survey of over 37,000 grassroots participants, behaviour was the biggest concern in the game. This included both the abuse of match officials and the unacceptable behaviour by over competitive parents, spectators and coaches on the sidelines.

The FA's Respect programme is aimed at tackling unacceptable behaviour across the whole game.

Play your part and observe The FA's Respect Code of Conduct for coaches, team managers and club officials at all times.

I will:

- Show respect to others involved in the game including match officials, opposition players, coaches, managers, officials and spectators
- Adhere to the Laws of the Game
- Display and promote high standards of behaviour
- Always respect the match officials' decisions
- Never enter the field of play without the referee's permission
- Never engage in public criticism of the match officials
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour.

When working with players, I will:

- Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything, including winning
- Explain exactly what I expect of players and what they can expect from me
- Ensure the parents/carers of all players under the age of 18 understand these expectations
- Refrain from, and refuse to tolerate any form of bullying
- Develop mutual trust and respect with every player to build their self-esteem
- Encourage each player to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance
- Ensure all activities I organise are appropriate for the players' ability level, experience, age and maturity
- Co-operate fully with others in football (e.g. officials, doctors, physiotherapists, welfare officers) for each player's best interests.

**I understand that breaches of the code may result in action being taken by my County FA and /or The FA.**

## Appendix 3: Match Day Preparation

It is important to have a structured pre-match routine. The example below is taken from is an excellent article in issue 2 of The FA's Boot Room periodical – here is the summary and the full article can be found at:

<http://fa.edocs.co.uk/ebooks/bootroom2/files/assets/seo/page66.html>

### Countdown to kick-off, reminders:

The night before: Prepare playing rota, substitutions and playing formations

Match day should be just another part of a player's learning journey; an opportunity to link the training and games programme, with players testing, experimenting and trying new skills, strategies and tactics.	60 mins before	Organise all kit and equipment
	45 mins before	Players are given time to socialise with their teammates. Coach can talk with parents.
	30 mins before	Re-cap the team focus from recent training and matches. The playing rota and positions are communicated. Roles and responsibility cards are distributed
	25 mins before	Players go through a dynamic warm-up and finish with some static stretches.
	15 mins before	Keep- ball session. During short drinks breaks, the players get into pairs and discuss the previous game, picking up ideas from each other.
	5 mins before	Players set three 'team targets' for the match: in possession, out of possession and one other.

**First half:** Touchline feedback and reminders should focus on the individual positional responsibilities and team goals. Use lots of positive reinforcement, highlighting the action the player has done well.

**Half-time:** Refer back to the three team targets outlined at the beginning of the game. Reset the targets if necessary.

**Second half and post- game:** Highlight and stress two positive aspects of the performance. An email highlighting one key development area may be sent. Players encouraged to individually review their performance ahead of the next session or game.