

Oldham Athletic AFC Development Centre

CORE IDENTITY AND
FOOTBALLING
PHILOSOPHY





OUR SHARED CORE VALUES

DEDICATION

The AFCDC will support players and create an attitude through training and games which will support hard work and dedication. This will support the players and members who put in the necessary effort in order to provide the AFCDC and individuals with success.

TEAMWORK

The club will foster an attitude which puts the needs of the team first. It is however also the responsibility of all players, coaches and parents to support each other at the club in all matters to ensure that there is a true club attitude at the AFCDC. The players fun and enjoyment is to remain central at all levels.

DEVELOPMENT

The AFCDC aims to inspire all players, coaches and staff to develop their skills and talents to their best levels. It is still the responsibility of the individual to put themselves in the position to develop their own talents and skills to the top of their levels. The AFCDC is there to guide all individuals to reach their best individual levels.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

To create a centre that can attract talented and motivated players that will benefit from high quality coaching and a games programme in a great learning environment.

To develop the players through a planned syllabus of coaching in order to prepare the players to make that step up into a Professional Academy Football or a reputable post 16 education course.

The Oldham Athletic AFCDC looks to create modern footballers who are both technically and tactically astute, whilst also promote great social and psychological attributes that will support them in a lifelong enjoyment of sport.

At all times the Oldham Athletic AFCDC is there to promote and safeguard it's players in their pursuit of playing football at their highest possible levels.



The Footballing Philosophy

Oldham Athletic Development Centre are a club that are focussed on producing creative and rounded footballers.

In player formative years we will often rotate players around different positions in order to allow them to develop their skills and talents. Defenders will tackle more, midfielders pass more, strikers shoot more. Its important that we nurture all players to develop all their skills and talents to ensure that they become rounded Footballers.

Coaches will often challenge players to try and adapt to new positions and formations in order to ensure that we are constantly challenging their players. Oldham Athletic AFCDC will also focus on development of the players ahead of the results in the game and competition. We will however look to ensure that we remain competitive in games and competitions.

Coaches will focus training sessions on developing players technical skills and abilities during each session, this will involve the entire team all supporting each other developing their particular technique (Passing/ Defending when organised etc). Where players show good development in their age groups, coaches will provide the opportunity to play up a year in order to further develop their talents and also present new challenges to the player.

We are looking at creating smarter and self motivated footballers, this involves them making decisions themselves on the pitch.



THE FOOTBALLING PHILOSOPHY



Oldham Athletic AFCDC's training and game's programme will follow the Frade's research into Tactical Periodization and the belief system around creating a team identity and process around the four main moments of the game:

- Offensive Organisation
- Defensive Organisation
- Transition Attack to Defence
- Transition Defence to Attack

This involves creating Game Principles which relate to the players and team as the beginning of the interaction, due to the complexity of the game it is impossible to second guess what happens next after the first interactions. As the game is fluid so must we understand that players are transitioning from one Game Principle to another, we have an identity of how we wish to play however the players then may be presented with decisions to make which we must allow for game expression and on field decision making:

We must bear in mind that our Footballing philosophy does not restrict our players from being creative or finding news ways to solve problems on the pitch. A player should be free to make a decision on the pitch and solve the problem in new ways without fear of "going against the coaches principles", this allowing players to make decisions on the pitch will ultimately create faster and smarter footballers.

The coach must therefore give the players all the skills and tools in order to help support the player in becoming an athlete in both all four corners of the Football Associations Future England Player model.

- Physically – players must be fitter, stronger and more resilient. This includes strength and conditioning work around injury prevention. This also links to the clubs aims for athletes to be empowered to make healthy but appropriate options on how best to maintain their body. Including but not limited to - Agility, balance, coordination / Speed/Speed endurance / Flexibility / Power / Strength / Nutrition and lifestyle / Physical resilience / Recovery
- Technically – players must look to be proficient in all areas of their technical game including but not limited to - Receiving skills / Turning skills / Travelling with the ball / Passing over varying distances / Attacking and defending skills / Finishing skills / Aerial ability
- Tactically – educating our players on their footballing knowledge and creation of a "footballing brain" with the aim of producing players who can - Recognise and adapt to the state of the game / Achieve winning performances by maximising strengths and exploiting weaknesses / Understand and apply individual, unit and team roles and responsibilities / Adopt varied playing styles and formations / Perform effectively against varied playing styles and formations / Deal with varied environmental conditions
- Socially – we must support players to have a healthy approach towards their teammates, in both supporting their development but also respect, fairplay and honesty in the game. We must also support the athletes to take accountability for themselves whilst providing them the tools for model behavior.
- Psychologically – we must support players to be self-motivated athletes with great values in – Confidence / Creativity / Concentration / Communication / Control / Commitment



THE PHILOSOPHY AND THE PLAYER

Supporting the players development is key to creating the game model and ensuring that the players “buy-in” to the style of play. However it is clear that to become an effective coach that the coach themselves must understand what their role is. In my opinion a coaches role within a team is to:

- Create the Game Model to which the team will play to in the first instance of the game
- Empower and pass responsibility for personal development and advancement to the players
- Motivate the players to become the best versions of themselves every day
- Support the players in their development of all four corners – Physical/ Technical/ Social/ Psychological
- Provide a confident voice that will support the player and the team in all moments of the game

A good coach can make a small difference to a teams development as they seek to empower their players to take responsibility for their game. A poor coach though can make a big difference to a teams development, limiting their development and removing creativity from the individuals. In my experience good coaches empower players and allow them to develop, poor coaches become too involved in the game and restrict the players by playing the game for them.

Example in a 11 v 11 Youth Team Match – U13s

As a coach understanding when to speak and when to allow the player to make a decision is important. When we transition from defence to attack, the coach may believe that the counter attack could be possible and that a switch of play is probable.

The coach calls out for a switch to the player.

However does the player feel they can make that switch pass, do they feel confident in the game right now, do they have the technical ability to hit that pass, have they seen something else that they believe would be the right movement or would they made that switch of play anyway?

If the pass gets intercepted, whose mistake is this? If the player decides to go with another movement are they disobeying the coach? If they make the switch, does the coach believe that this only happened because of them?

The coach should note what they saw, consider the players angles and maybe ask the question at half time/ full time/ or at training in recreating the game moment to see if the player can make that switch or is aware of the movement of the players on the opposite flank. Therefore the coach then supports the player in guiding them to make that decision in the future.

The coach is there to guide the team through the game but ultimately the players make the decisions on the pitch, if a player makes a poor decision in my experience the player knows this instantly and wants to cut out these mistakes. Telling the player they made a mistake is rarely helpful, instead a good coach should look to support the player and ask them why they made the decision, what other options there were and create training sessions which help improve the players understanding of how to deal with these moments better in the next game.