



THEPRIDEOFKNUTSFORD

# Approach to Football

*A Parent's Guide*

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Youth Football**

Football is a fantastic sport for children of any ability to experience. Not only is it fun, but football also provides significant further benefits to children and society as a whole. The health benefits are clear to see but also, and perhaps more importantly, football enables children to develop their life skills (e.g. discipline, communication, dealing with success and failure, decision-making etc).

With a few notable exceptions, such as George Best or Wayne Rooney, it is generally accepted that British footballers' are not the most skilful in the world. Those that have emerged have developed largely in spite of the coaching they received rather than because of it.

The influx of players into the Premier League from abroad in the past ten years has brought into sharp focus the different skill levels of players from different backgrounds. More recently, the addition of foreign managers and coaches has brought this into even starker relief. We can see that players with the most outstanding levels of technical ability tend to have learned their skills in countries where they have a very different approach to their development.

Also, surveys tell us that the primary reason for children to drop out of football is pressure: pressure from both parents and coaches. Pressure removes the fun; encouraging and supporting is great, but everyone involved needs to know where to draw the line.

The Football Association (FA) has created the policies and encourages the practices to ensure football is now played in an environment that promotes the development of young footballers in such a way that they maximise their potential in the long term, enjoy themselves throughout and continue to play the game into adulthood.

Egerton Football Club (the "Club") is committed to adopting this best practice to the benefit of all children in our community. We aim to help your child become the best footballer that they are capable of becoming – whilst enjoying themselves as much as possible along the way.

### **1.2. Purpose of this Document**

This document is intended to serve as a guide for parents and their children to Egerton Football Club. The document introduces the Club, describes our ethos and objectives and outlines how the Club will approach the development of your son's or daughter's football through each of the age groups. It also sets out some of the expectations the Club has of its members and their supporters.

### **1.3. References**

Further information about the issues surrounding a child's participation in football may be obtained from the FA. In particular, we strongly recommend that all parents with access to the Internet should complete the on-line Soccer Parent Course, a free on-line course from FA Learning (see [www.thefa.com/TheFA/FALearning/Soccer+Parent/](http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/FALearning/Soccer+Parent/)). You will find it enlightening and interesting – and it will perhaps help put some of the things you see the Club doing into context.

In addition, the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) underpins the Club's approach. The LTAD model was designed to help prepare players to reach elite levels but is equally valid for preparing young people for a healthy lifelong participation in sport. (For more information on LTAD concepts and principles see [www.sportscoachuk.org/improve/ltad](http://www.sportscoachuk.org/improve/ltad).)

### **1.4. Feedback**

Any suggestions for improvement of this document or comments in general should be addressed to Andy Pass at the Club ([andy.pass@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:andy.pass@egertonfc.org.uk)).

## **2. Background**

### **2.1. Egerton Youth Club**

The facility that we know as Egerton Youth Club (“Youth Club”) exists due to the generosity of Lord Egerton, who bequeathed the site to a Charitable Trust. The purpose of the Trust is to “help and educate boys and girls through their leisure time activities so as to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacity that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society and that their conditions of life may be improved”.

In addition to football, other activities provided by the Youth Club include:

- badminton
- gymnastics
- table tennis
- muay thai boxing
- rugby
- junior club
- Duke of Edinburgh awards.

The Committee of the Youth Club is always willing to add to this list of activities. All it takes is a few children interested in a specific pastime, hopefully with one or two willing volunteers, and a new section of the Youth Club can be formed.

To be able to enjoy any of the facilities of the Youth Club, children must enrol and an annual fee paid. These membership fees fund the maintenance of the Youth Club’s facilities and its operation.

### **2.2. Egerton Football Club**

#### **2.2.1. Overview**

Whilst football has always been one of the main activities at the Youth Club, each team has, until recently, been run on almost entirely independent lines, with each manager responsible for every aspect of running a team. This covered everything from coaching the team to fundraising for kits and equipment.

Until Egerton Football Club was formed in 2002 to promote and co-ordinate all football-related activities at the Youth Club, each and every team even played in different coloured kits! The last few years have seen a lot of changes.

Egerton Football Club was founded to provide a fun, friendly and safe environment in which boys and girls within the local community are able to develop their talents by practising and playing football. In addition, the Club set itself the goal to be recognised as a high quality, multi-team set up with excellent training, playing and social opportunities for all boys and girls within the area.

#### **2.2.2. Key Facts**

Egerton Football Club:

- is affiliated to Egerton Youth Club and is responsible for all football activities within the Youth Club
- has a membership of over 350 young people from the area
- runs a Saturday Club each week in which over 100 children participate, aged 4 – 12,
- operates 17 teams under both the Egerton and Tatton names from under 8 through to under 17 in the Mid-Cheshire Youth League

- has recently established a girls football section, with 2 teams already formed at U10 and U12 age groups
- plays in yellow and green
- only operates through the efforts of volunteers.

### **2.2.3. Finance**

The Club's only sources of income currently are through fund raising activities and sponsorship by commercial organisations. The Club uses these funds to provide kits to all team members, to upgrade the goals and other equipment required, to insure the children and to pay the League affiliation fees of all teams.

It is hoped that everyone with children playing football at the Club is willing and able to support the fund-raising activities that take place throughout the year: The two main fund-raisers are currently an Annual Ball (in October) and a Sportsmen's Dinner (in May). They are a wonderful way to support the Club financially – whilst thoroughly enjoying yourself doing it!

The Club also welcomes offers of kit sponsorship. We have been fortunate to date in attracting sponsorship from a wide spectrum of organisations – from multi-national conglomerates to local companies and individuals. If you know of any organisation that might like to form an association with the Club, please contact Andy Pass.

The Club is exploring the possibility of introducing Gift Aid as soon as practical. If successful, it will enable the income of the Club to be increased by over 20% without costing the players or parents anything other than a signature.

### **2.2.4. Facilities**

Egerton Youth Club has exceptional facilities in Mereheath Lane, the envy of most clubs in Cheshire. The grounds provide three mini-soccer pitches and four 11-a-side pitches (two of which are three-quarter size and two are full-size). The Youth Club also has a large hall, changing rooms and a cafeteria.

However, these facilities are under enormous pressure from continual usage, not only from the Club, but also the wider community of User Groups. The Club is in the process of working with the Youth Club and the FA to upgrade these facilities. Our plans will improve car-parking provision, build new changing rooms, install a full-size floodlit third-generation pitch and extend the cafeteria area. This is a very exciting development requiring major investment but which, when completed, will provide our footballers with even greater opportunities.

### **2.2.5. Club Allegiance**

Historically, players have come along to Egerton and joined a team at the relevant age group largely by chance. It often simply depended on who happened to be at the Club on a day when somebody made an enquiry. From then on, with each team run quite independently from the others, the children would remain with that squad, with little opportunity to move between the squads at any age group. That is not to say that the children did not develop well. Just that the two squads developed separately rather than together.

In recent years, this has begun to improve, particularly at the U8s age group when the squads are first selected.

The Club intends to improve the basis of squad allocation at all age groups. New players will be invited to join a specific team taking into account the many factors involved, including the relative strengths of the various teams at that age group, any existing school relationships or friendships that the new player may have, as well as his/her ability and experience.

One of the keys to this approach is that players should be encouraged to feel a part of Egerton Football Club first, and a member of their team second. To this end, Club-wide events have been organised since the Club was formed in 2002, but to date, these have largely been aimed

at the parents rather than the children. The Balls and Sportsmans Dinners have been very successful but there is a need to move this on to another level.

The managers and coaches have begun to work more closely together. This began with attending Coaching courses together and now involves occasional social functions. It should be fun for them too!

In order to engender this feeling of Club membership, there are a number of initiatives being introduced in the 2005/06 season, leading into the next season, including:

- Club Awards evening for all players in all teams
- squads of the same age group coming closer together, with shared pre-season training, moving towards training on adjoining pitches at the same time
- easier transfer of players between teams
- regular tours for certain age groups. For example, the Club has developed a relationship with a club in Paris at U13s level and Portugal at the U16s level.

New ideas and initiatives are always welcome.

#### **2.2.6. Team Names**

Egerton Football Club operates youth football teams in the age groups Under 8s through to Under 17s, and has (when demand is sufficient) run an Under 21s team. The Under 8s through to Under 17s operate in the Mid-Cheshire Youth League, with the under 21s competing in the Altrincham and District League.

Teams have been operated under the formal names of Egerton, Egerton Tatton and Egerton Lions. Managers, players and parents of Egerton Tatton all tend to refer to their teams as "Tatton".

The reason for the names is because the Mid-Cheshire League (the "League") will only allow one team from any one club at each age group. The teams are required to have different names but the choice of Egerton and Egerton Tatton is entirely accidental.

The problem with the current situation is players at Egerton FC can be made to feel that they play for completely different clubs. The Club intends to change this misconception and has begun breaking down some of these barriers with actions such as introducing the same kit for all teams. The Club is also seeking to change the names of these clubs to further this process.

#### **2.2.7. Coaching**

Coaching takes place for all the teams in midweek evenings either at the Club, whilst there is sufficient daylight, or at Knutsford Leisure Centre during the winter. Each age group trains at an agreed time for 60 or 90 minutes. A Club training schedule is published for each season.

All team managers at the Club have achieved FA Level 1 Coaching Certification or equivalent (and passed the Child Protection and Basic First Aid Courses). The Club also appoints professional coaches with further qualifications and an enormous amount of experience of youth football and knowledge of the best practices from professional club's Academies and progressive organisations across the world. The use of such expertise helps to ensure that all players achieve their potential and raises the overall quality of the Club.

#### **2.2.8. Volunteer Selection**

The intentions of most people involved in football involving children and young people are good. However, the Club recognises the responsibility it has to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people participating in football by providing a safe and enjoyable environment at Egerton. Therefore, all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and young people at Egerton Football Club.

For this reason, there are a number of standards that Egerton Football Club expects teams and managers to adopt. These standards assure a quality experience for all, which in turn make the role of a volunteer even more rewarding.

#### **2.2.9. Team Management**

Egerton Football Club would like to give as many children as possible the opportunity to play football. To do that, willing and enthusiastic volunteers are needed to manage a squad of approximately 18 children.

Obviously, the Club expects managers to sign up to this Approach to Football. Thereafter, the key elements of the role are motivation and organisation of their squads and communication with parents. The Club provides professional coaches so that, although a Manager is required to obtain the FA Level 1 Coaching qualification, a Managers' coaching abilities are not the priority. The key requirements are enthusiasm, organisational skills, a willingness to obtain the aforementioned FA Coaching qualification and a desire to see all children enjoying themselves and reaching their potential.

#### **2.2.10. Refereeing**

Referees perform a vital role in the game, and with the growth in the popularity of football the demand for match officials is increasing. Football needs more referees; no referees = no matches.

The minimum age to become a referee is 14. Referees courses are held throughout the year and consist of classroom-based training sessions, followed by a written and oral exam, on the Laws of Association Football. On passing the exams, one becomes a Level 8 referee, if under 16 years of age, or Level 7 referee if over 16 and so are qualified to referee youth football matches. For those that aspire to referee at a higher level, there is then a formal path all the way to FIFA status. Anyone interested in becoming a qualified referee or with such a qualification are encouraged to make themselves known to the Secretary.

#### **2.2.11. Development Panel**

A Development Panel exists to decide on the allocation of players to the respective teams when the U8s squads are formed each summer. This Panel comprises the coaches involved in training the children the season before (in this case at the Saturday Club), the Club's Football Development Officer, and whichever parents have volunteered to become the managers/assistant managers of the teams. The Chairman and Secretary of the Club also sit on the Development Panel.

Parents (hopefully) have become qualified as Managers during the holidays before the season begins. Also, the Club provides a Mentor for all new managers to help them settle in to the role. This Mentor is another manager or Club official with experience of managing a team at the Club.

The Club plans to expand the role of this Development Panel to cover all teams and age groups. In addition, any newcomer to the area wishing to play football should initially approach the Panel.

Thus the Panel for the next season's U10s squads would comprise the managers and coaches of the existing U9s teams, along with the Football Development Officer, Chairman and Secretary.

The purpose of the Panels is to ensure that all players are in the team most suited to them, within the overall purpose of the Club, which is to have two teams playing at each age group. If sufficient demand exists at any age group, it is quite possible to have three teams entered in the League.

#### **2.2.12. Safety**

Maintaining a safe environment is a joint responsibility between the Youth Club, the Club and all others involved. No one involved with the Club can afford to take it lightly and nothing is too trivial when it comes to your child's safety. For example, goal posts are laid down on the ground

after games because children have been injured (thankfully not at Egerton) when playing with unstaked or unsafe goal posts. You may think the manager is being over-fussy – but he/she has been on the Child Protection Course and learned about their obligations.

Everyone attending events at Egerton Football Club should consider it their duty to either highlight to officials or, where appropriate, put right objects and situations where accidents may occur.

### 2.2.13. Officials

In accordance with Egerton Football Club's Constitution, a committee sets Club policy and direction. The committee currently consists of:

|                   |  |              |
|-------------------|--|--------------|
| • Mark Burton     | Football Development Officer                     | 07800 730332 |
| • Brian Cosgrove  | Charter Standard and Football Foundation matters | 07831 835396 |
| • Don McGrath     | Kit and Equipment                                | 07808 590901 |
| • Andy Pass       | Fund Raising and Communication                   | 07703 567768 |
| • Peter Swift     | Chairman   | 07703 574806 |
| • Mike Walker     | Child Protection Officer.                        | 07971 543939 |
| • Richard Wackett | Club Secretary                                   | 07778 004290 |
| • Alison Wates    | Treasurer  | 01565 654492 |

Email may be sent to committee members using an address in the format: [firstname.lastname@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@egertonfc.org.uk) (e.g. [mike.walker@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:mike.walker@egertonfc.org.uk)) or [role@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:role@egertonfc.org.uk) (e.g. [secretary@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@egertonfc.org.uk)). The entire committee may be reached through the address [committee@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:committee@egertonfc.org.uk).

### 2.2.14. Contact Details

A – Egerton Football Club, Mereheath Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6SL

T – 01565 633383

F – 01565 634947

E – [office@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:office@egertonfc.org.uk) or [committee@egertonfc.org.uk](mailto:committee@egertonfc.org.uk)

W – [www.egertonfc.org.uk](http://www.egertonfc.org.uk)

## 2.3. FA Charter Standard

The Football Association (FA) is promoting a Charter Standard for Clubs initiative, which aims to:

- provide a nationally recognised quality standard
- improve the quality of provision for boys and girls
- sustain participation for players over a longer period of time
- raise standards.

The Charter Standard lays down a set of guidelines and rules that must be adhered to in order to demonstrate the acceptance and implementation of best practice in Football. The Standard expects policies to be set in a number of areas to:

1. provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which football is played and where children are respected, feel secure, protected from harm and provided with a good start in life
2. ensure that all those involved with Youth Football are fit and suitable people to be involved in dealing with children

3. set the acceptable standards of behaviour of the various parties involved with Youth Football, i.e. players, managers, coaches, other team officials, parents and spectators
4. eliminate discrimination whether by reason of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or ability and to encourage equal opportunities.
5. ensure the safety of all involved
6. ensure that a club is based on a sound financial, administrative and operational footing.

As the Charter Standard provides significant support and guidance to Egerton Football Club's primary objective, it is implementing the FA Charter Standard policies and procedures and aims to achieve the FA Charter Standard during the 2005/06 season. By achieving a Charter Standard Club Award, the Club will be demonstrating to all members, parents and the public, that it is a well-organised, safe club offering opportunities for all. In this way, the Club intends to ensure that best practice is implemented and therefore ensure that children are enjoying their football in a nurturing and safe environment.

Further details of the FA Charter Standard programme are available from the FA.

## 3. Summary of Approach

### 3.1. Overview

The role of Egerton Football Club is to prepare our youngsters for a life in sport. To:

- teach fundamental movement and sports skills
- build fitness
- develop general football skills
- maximise their performance in competition; and
- endow them with the confidence and skills to move between sports.

The Club aims to enable each and every child to fulfil their potential. This level will be different for each and every child and the pace at which they develop will vary greatly. The Club attempts to create the environment for each child to nurture their skills appropriately.

Because every child is different, Managers and Coaches need some degree of flexibility to respond to the needs of the group of players making up their particular squad. However, in line with the FA Charter Standard, the Club provides a framework within which all teams are required to operate.

### 3.2. Club Philosophy

#### 3.2.1. Maximise Participation

Psychologists argue that by the time young people reach secondary school their view of sport, and more importantly their perception of their competence in sport (their self-concept) is already entirely established. When a young person moves into adolescence, they feel that their ability in sport is fixed, regardless of the effort they put in. In other words, by this age you believe you are either good at sport or you are not and at a period in life where peer acceptance is of great importance, it is understandable that those with low sporting self-esteem choose to opt out altogether.

Whilst the Club accepts that not every player will continue playing football into adulthood, it accepts responsibility for building each and every player's self-esteem, ensuring that it does not cause any child to be turned off sport totally and for equipping them to be able to make a more informed choice about participating in sport, based upon real preferences.

#### 3.2.2. Competition

Children have an in-built competitive side to their nature which sport of all kinds tends to bring to the fore. However, we also know that an overemphasis on competition can be detrimental to a child's development. This is the difficult balance the Club, the FA and all sports bodies aim to strike.

Therefore, in line with the LTAD model, the Club's emphasis on competition develops over time, as does the nature of competition itself. Until age 13, what competition there is will be a part of the longer-term development process. Thereafter, much of the training will focus on competition and the emphasis will move from competition within training to training for competition.

Ultimately, success comes from training and performing well over the long-term rather than winning in the short-term.

#### 3.2.3. Work Hard, Play to Win & Have Fun

The Club expects all its members to enjoy *working hard* to improve and to take pleasure in recognising progress.

Whether in training or competition, players should respect their opponents by *playing to win*, and so showing them the best they can do - but it should be done with good grace at all times.

Players can not always directly control who wins, but they can determine how they play, how they train, and how they interact with their team-mates, opponents and the referee.

Playing to win does not mean that winning is the be-all and end-all. In the end, the game is still just that – a game. Players should *have fun* taking part or else a vital part of the experience is missing. If players are not enjoying themselves they are highly likely to give up on sport.

### **3.3. Learning Opportunities**

#### **3.3.1. Football Lessons**

The Club teaches 4 – 13 year olds fundamental movement skills (the generic skills used in many sports) and fundamental football skills (which include fitness, tactics, decision making, as well as the ability to dribble, pass, shoot and tackle).

#### **3.3.2. Further Developmental Opportunities**

The Club provides opportunities for footballers aged 14 and above to develop any interest in coaching and refereeing. Evidence of a young person's interest may have to be demonstrated by attaining a relevant qualification, but the Club will provide the avenues for young people to gain coaching experience through assisting in the Saturday Club and/or the many after-school clubs and to referee matches.

Not only are these qualifications and experiences rewarding in their own right, but all coaches and referees are paid for their services (and so could become an alternative Saturday job).

#### **3.3.3. Champions**

The Club trains its senior players explicitly to maximise their performance in competition with the goal of winning trophies. Such training will include:

- physical conditioning
- technical and tactical preparation
- advanced mental practice
- nutrition.

## 4. Saturday Club

*Fun, physical, football activity*

### 4.1. Overview

The Saturday Club is very much about planting seeds. These seeds may develop quickly into proficient U8 players or they may not flower until U12 or later. The Saturday Club tries to produce players who are technically confident and will be able to use this confidence for a lifetime of enjoyment from the game, not simply to win at U8 or U9 level.

Saturday Club provides the first opportunity for most children to play football at Egerton. It is, therefore, critically important that children enjoy the experience and want to come back for more each week.

The Saturday Club taps the same pool of professional coaches that train the Club's teams to ensure that your children receive coaching of the highest quality whilst experiencing life as a young member of both the Club and the Youth Club.

### 4.2. Selection

The Saturday Club is open to both boys and girls of at least four years old and of any ability. Even when children are of an age to join a team, the Saturday Club is a first-class option to develop skills and play football. Children should certainly not feel that their only option is to join a team to be able to play football at Egerton.

### 4.3. Structure

The Saturday Club is structured to enable children of a similar age to play together and also to ensure that, in their early years, each child has the chance to be amongst the eldest in each group. The session your child should attend will depend upon his/her age (and not simply their school year!).

The groups are:

- 9.00am to 11.00am                      8+ years (open age)
- 11.00am to 1.00pm                      6 - 7 year olds
- 1.00pm to 3.00pm                      5 year olds
- 3.00pm to 4.00pm                      4 year olds

Children who have their birthdays during the period of a course will move up an age group (as applicable) at the start of the next block of courses.

### 4.4. Approach

Players from 5 upwards spend the first twenty minutes playing matches. This serves the following purposes, to:

- encourage children/parents to arrive on time
- immediately get them active and moving
- allow unstructured, uncoached free play from which the coaching staff assess the needs of the players for the upcoming session.

After this, the players are coached for a minimum of an hour on a variety of technical and physical topics. The hierarchy of needs is as follows:

- ball mastery (dribbling, turning and tricks)

- body management (balance and co-ordination)
- passing and receiving
- shooting
- team play and basic tactics.

The hierarchy alters for different age groups: team play and tactics is solely for those in the 8+ session; shooting takes priority over passing and receiving for U6s.

From ages 3-5 children are heavily egocentric. Rather than work against this individual technique is encouraged before team understanding. 1 vs 1 skills are emphasised and the need to beat players with feints and tricks is stressed. Foot ladders and hurdles are used regularly to help the correct athletic postures to be adopted and iron out any early problems of incorrect body management.

All this comes under the broad heading of Fun. Children must want to come back next week. For 3-5 year olds this means simplified games, often with stories or names, e.g. dribbling is practiced in "Tigers in the Jungle". For 6+ players, the fun element is provided more and more by competition. Games are still simple but as players develop physically and socially, they become more motivated by the desire to assert themselves over their opponents. Match play whenever possible is 4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5. 4 vs. 4 is the ideal as it is the smallest number of players on the field possible whilst still providing depth and width. The fewer the players, the more touches, dribbles, shots, tackles, passes and saves which adds up to more development and understanding for the player.

Depending on the space available, occasionally 6 vs. 6 or even 7 vs. 7 games are played with the U8 age group. This can be detrimental so we try to shorten game time in this case.

For parents watching, they should assess the session on the following criteria:

- was my child safe and supervised?
- how many touches of the ball has he/she had?
- has it been fun for my child with lots of activity and challenges?
- can the coaches demonstrate the players have a better understanding of the topic or technique?

In the 6-8 month period before players make the transition to U8 mini-soccer, the coaches begin to introduce basic positioning and team shape understanding. This again can restrict the time spent improving and refining technique, so has to be done on a drip feed basis. It is vital that tactics, roles and responsibilities do not weigh down children at this stage. The game to them is, and should be, about their individual performance. This is why new Egerton U8s teams look disorganised and lack awareness of space and team-mates. They are playing on bigger pitches, with more players, and this football environment is slightly alien to their previous training.

## 5. U8 to U10 Teams

### *Learning fundamental football skills*

#### 5.1. Overview

Up to Under 10s, teams play a variant of the game called 'Mini-Soccer' - which is a seven-a-side game, played under simplified laws, and on a smaller pitch. The mini-soccer game is designed to meet the needs of children by recognising that if children are to enjoy and take part in football they need to:

- feel successful
- take an active part in the game
- learn to play as a team
- understand the Laws
- develop football skills
- be able to take part whatever their ability
- develop fitness.

The essential element of mini-soccer is **fun**. It is designed to ensure that children get plenty of "ball-time" in which to develop their skills in a non-competitive environment whilst having all the features of "real" football to children.

Mini-Soccer matches are based on two 7-a-side games and rules dictate that a player is not allowed to play in both games. Therefore, it is essential that - for any given fixture - at least 14 players are available. A maximum squad of 22 players can be registered with the league - although the Club aims to operate with less to ensure that each individual gets sufficient "playing time" and gets sufficient attention during coaching sessions.

It is also worth noting that, when playing mini-soccer, boys and girls may play together. However, there is a growing acceptance that girls thrive in their own teams and this is the path that the Club is following with the development of a thriving girls football section.

Refereeing in the mini-soccer format is usually carried out by parents / helpers / volunteers. There is no necessity for a qualified referee - with the emphasis being on 'friendly competitiveness' rather than competition.

#### 5.2. Mid-Cheshire Youth Football League

Egerton Football Club plays within the Mid-Cheshire Youth Football League (MCYFL). For the first three years, up to and including U10s, this is a "friendly" league with no league table, no champions, in fact we won't be playing all other teams in the league. There is absolutely nothing at stake.

The MCYFL administers the fixtures and enforces the FA's rules. By entering the MCYFL we provide kids with the chance to play matches against other teams across Cheshire without any pressure to win. In so doing we're giving kids the opportunity to play as a team, to understand the laws of the game, develop technical skills and to enjoy playing football. The end result should be that they are better equipped to compete when they get to age 14+ and will continue playing for longer.

#### 5.3. Cup Competitions

There are a number of competitions held at the end of the season, including the Egerton Junior Football Festival. These are competitive in nature and provide a good opportunity to bring together the squads for a particular age group when selecting the teams to enter.

The Club encourages the teams to enter at least one of these competitions. The limiting factor is usually the amount of time available for the manager and assistant managers so the more help they receive from parents, the easier it is for them to enter such competitions.

#### **5.4. Initial Squad Selection**

When forming the new U8s squads each season, the Development Panel will allocate players to each of the squads. The Panel takes into account various factors such as children's schools and friendships, their physical size, dominant side, etc to arrive at a balanced squad. However, it is important that the members of both squads feel part of the overall pool of players for their year. For this reason, the Club encourages both squads to train together.

Players may subsequently be transferred between squads if certain circumstances prevail. However, you may expect that a squad will remain together for three years. The focus of the Club is always centred on the enjoyment of the children, the development of their football skills and full realisation of their potential.

The optimum squad size is 18 players. If demand should exceed the supply of volunteer managers, priority will be given to those children who:

- are members of the Youth Club
- have regularly attended the Saturday Club and achieved the appropriate standard
- live or go to school within the Knutsford post town area
- are ineligible to play for a younger age group.

#### **5.5. Team Selection**

Over the course of a season, a manager will aim to provide every player with reasonably equal:

- time on the pitch
- time in goal, defence, midfield, attack and starts as a substitute.

Whilst operating within the framework provided by the Club, it is important to realise that the managers must have a degree of flexibility to fulfil their role. However, if players or parents are dissatisfied with the way a player is treated or a team is run, they may raise the matter confidentially with any member of the Committee (section 2.2.7). Ideally, they would first voice any concerns with the manager involved.

#### **5.6. Referee Allocation**

For Mini-soccer, the two managers of the opposing teams normally agree referee allocation. It is normal for a manager, coach or parent from each team to referee one of the two games.

#### **5.7. Coaching**

The emphasis of the coaching is still largely technical. As players begin mini-soccer they are met with a series of new special and tactical challenges. As much as possible coaches should help children overcome these challenges by providing them with simplified games in which they will repeatedly have to solve the problems they face in matches; when to dribble, when to pass, and which player should I pass to in certain situations?

If we play 7 vs. 7 in training at this stage and focus on shape and organisation, we sacrifice the technical work vital to developing skilful youth players. Again, children progress at this stage largely through repeated touches of the ball and feeling involved and valued. 7 vs. 7 often allows the stronger players to flourish whilst the developing players become no more than spectators.

Furthermore, we as coaches, are dealing with young people who may have been up at 7am, had a busy school day possibly with an after school club. These players will be at the tail end of their

attention spans, they will not want to stand around and have instructions barked at them about where to be when. Better to play 4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5 and give the players an enjoyable session and work on the technical foundations; good first touch, passing and receiving, tricks and turns.

### **5.8. End Result**

With this approach, the Club expects that by the end of their Mini-Soccer experience, all players will:

- enjoy playing football at Egerton
- be abiding by the laws, rules and spirit of the game
- be able to demonstrate sound basic skills (control, dribbling and passing)
- understand what is required when playing in different positions and to play appropriately for that role.

## **6. U11 to U13 Teams**

*Refining football skills in specific positions*

### **6.1. Overview**

From Under 11s onward, the full 11-a-side game is played with all normal football laws being applied. The size of the pitch and goals, whilst larger than in Mini-Soccer, are not “full-size”.

### **6.2. League**

As teams move into the 11-a-side format, the Mid-Cheshire Youth League becomes a competitive league system, with multiple divisions operating in each age group and promotion and relegation taking place at the end of each season.

At the start of the U11 season, the League will operate a mini-league competition, the results of which will determine the division a team is initially placed in. There are three divisions.

The league will assign qualified referees, and the referee will normally ask someone from each side to call line decisions. The referee will make all offside decisions.

### **6.3. Cup Competitions**

Each season teams will be invited to participate in:

- Cheshire Cup?
- ?

Both of these .....

### **6.4. Squad Selection**

It is hoped that the vast majority of mini-soccer players will want to play the 11-a-side game. However, it should be noted that the maximum squad size for teams playing the 11-a-side game is 18. This is, obviously, less than are available during the mini-soccer years. The process of choosing which players will be carried forward from the mini-soccer format to the full 11-a-side squad can be difficult and painful for all concerned, as it may mean that some players cannot be accommodated. We may also need to recognise that, in spite of everyone’s best efforts, football does not suit a particular child’s talents and strengths.

In any of these circumstances the Development Panel will:

- attempt to reassign players to squads following discussion with Managers and Coaches
- invite parents to discuss and understand any decisions affecting their child
- aim to encourage continued participation in sport.

### **6.5. Team Selection**

Over the course of a season, a manager will aim to provide every player with:

- equal time on the pitch and starts as a substitute
- opportunities to play regularly in a couple of different positions.

Whilst operating within the framework provided by the Club, it is important to realise that the managers must have a degree of flexibility to fulfil their role. However, if players or parents are dissatisfied with the way a player is treated or a team is run, they may raise the matter confidentially with any member of the Committee (section 2.2.7). Ideally, they would first voice any concerns with the manager involved.

## **6.6. Referee Allocation**

A fully qualified referee provided by the League will normally adjudicate 11-a-side matches.

## **6.7. Coaching**

Players are now coached to know positions. With the help of team managers, coaches can help players develop an understanding of two positions which will help both player and manager at U14 level and beyond. The emphasis on shape and (basic) tactics becomes necessary at the transition to 11-a-side football; where should I be at this moment in a game? How does this differ when the opposition has the ball?

Coaches should awaken players to the concept of them being a part of a chain, a midfielder who attacks, loses possession and fails to regain his/her position will cause problems for his/her defence.

Training is often stop-start with the coach interrupting. Good coaches will ask the players questions to keep them learning actively as opposed to passively taking instructions.

Basic technical work should hopefully have been covered in the two previous stages, but should not be abandoned completely for tactics. First touch, dribbling and passing can be accommodated with imaginative warm-ups. It can also be useful, once every 5 or 6 weeks, to have player-centred session with lots of (structured) free play and little coach input. This is a good way of assessing what the players are learning.

This age group can be very difficult with some not adapting well to the new cognitive demands, it is now very important now to talk to the players, ask them questions about what they like and dislike, get them to talk about the problems they encounter on the pitch. Active learners will now flourish quicker at the next stage.

## **6.8. End Result**

With this approach, the Club expects that by the end of their first 3 years of the 11-a-side game, all players will:

- still enjoy playing football at Egerton
- continue to abide by the laws, rules and spirit of the game
- be able to demonstrate an advanced level of technical skills
- have developed an ability to slot into 2 or 3 different positions and fulfil the role fully
- be able to read the game and understand tactics
- have a sound level of general fitness
- be making well-informed decisions both within training and matches scenarios and with regard to their long term aspirations for playing football.

## **7. U14 to U18 Teams**

*Maximising performance in competition*

### **7.1. Overview**

Throughout these age groups, the Club expects to have a number of squads competing at the top of their level. At least one squad should be challenging to become League & Cup winners. The emphasis of the Club and management of these squads will evolve again to reflect these aims.

In addition, if there are a group of players that are committed to playing at a more recreational level the Club will support them equally.

### **7.2. League**

### **7.3. Cup Competitions**

*What cups do we enter? Which is the big prize?*

### **7.4. Squad Selection**

From U14s on the streaming of players based on ability and positions in a team will become more apparent. The Development Panel will identify an "A" team in each age group and invite players to join that squad. In addition, the Club aims to operate teams for everyone else, subject to player numbers. Of course, the Club will accommodate any player with valid reasons for not wanting to play at the level designated by the Panel.

This selection process will occur each year and any player wishing to play at the highest level will always have that option to do so.

### **7.5. Team Selection**

Selection of the team will now be a manager's prerogative and may consider factors such as players' ability, attitude, commitment and the tactics of the team etc. The manager will set out the basis for selection at the start of the season, almost as a form of recruitment process.

If players or parents are dissatisfied with the way a player is treated or a team is run, they may raise the matter confidentially with any member of the Committee (section 2.2.7). Ideally, they would first voice any concerns with the manager involved.

### **7.6. Coaching**

The focus now for the coach is getting the team to win games. Training should be physically intense with players regularly put under highly pressurised situations, which require fast, sound decision-making. Players who now know what is required of them individually are helped to understand how they "fit" into the wider picture.

Technical practice is still provided but should be done as much as possible under game-like conditions; shooting work must involve defenders.

This is the final stage of the development pyramid and is the only time when winning needs and should be the outcome of matches.

## **7.7. End Result**

With this approach, the Club expects that by the end of their career in youth football at Egerton, all players will:

- still enjoy playing football
- continue to abide by the laws, rules and spirit of the game
- be able to demonstrate an advanced level of technical skills
- have learnt to regard poor performance as an opportunity to learn more about themselves and to make necessary changes in both their physical and mental preparations for competitions, and generally have strengthened psychologically
- have learnt how to rest (it's not possible to reach supreme performance levels unless fierce exertions are balanced with restoration and recovery)
- have won competitions
- have developed an ability to slot into 2 or 3 different positions and fulfil the role fully
- be able to read the game and understand advanced tactics
- have a good level of physical conditioning
- find the experience gained as a competitor invaluable
- have a desire to continue playing football or any other sport and to get involved in administration, coaching or officiating in the future.

## **8. Your Role & Responsibilities**

### **8.1. Exemplary Behaviour**

The Club cannot emphasise enough the importance it places on the conduct of everyone involved with football at Egerton. The Club's Code of Conduct must be followed at all times. Any contravention may result in the expulsion of parent and player.

Whilst this may seem a little heavy-handed, the Club believes that the Code is not onerous. Simply, the Club wants to see an environment more akin to a schoolyard or cubs meeting rather than a Premiership game.

### **8.2. Pitch Set-Up & Clearance**

All equipment to stage a match is also supplied by the Youth Club and is stored in the Youth Club "Shed", including:

- flags
- poles
- touch line rope
- nets
- goal posts
- pegs for touch line rope and nets.

Please assist your team by stepping forward to set-up a pitch for a match and also to put away tidily the equipment where it belongs. Your support in this will be of great help to ease the burden of the team's manager.

### **8.3. Club Membership**

Any player that plays football at Egerton Football Club must be:

- a member of Egerton Youth Club
- a member of Egerton Football Club.

Registration forms for both of the above are available from the Club office. An annual fee is payable for Youth Club membership (currently £25).

In addition, everyone playing in a Club team must be registered with the Mid-Cheshire Youth League or Altrincham and District League as appropriate. League registrations must be accompanied by 2 signed passport photos and the fee (currently £2 for mini soccer or £3 for 11-a-side).

Memberships must be renewed annually and are due before the start of a new season in September. Please ensure that your child is not playing football without being a fully paid-up member.

### **8.4. Club Kits**

Responsible for condition of child's kit

Care of club kit – not a leisure accessory

### **8.5. Fines**

The Mid-Cheshire Youth League and the FA are both able to impose fines for various breaches of rules or etiquette, including player bookings and disciplinary problems. Please ensure that any fine imposed is paid promptly.

## **Appendices**

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## Manager's Contact Details

### Egerton Teams

| Age Group | Name           | Phone        | Email                            |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 8         | David Lowery   | 01477 544583 | david.lowery1@btinternet.com     |
| 9         | Brian Cosgrove | 01565 631958 | brian.cosgrove@egertonfc.org.uk  |
| 10        | Carl Lee       | 01565 653555 | mcfc63@aol.com                   |
| 11        | Rick Mountney  | 01565 873252 | rick@mountney.demon.co.uk        |
| 12        | Glyn Davies    | 01565 652336 | a.glyn.davies@virgin.net         |
| 13        | Stuart Arnell  | 01565 634254 | stuart_arnell@btconnect.com      |
| 14        | Bob Spilsbury  | 01565 872045 |                                  |
| 15        | Dave Green     | 01565 650711 | member@grasshopper.wanadoo.co.uk |
| 16        |                |              |                                  |
| 17        | Pete Swift     | 01565 722680 | pete.swift@egertonfc.org.uk      |

### Tatton Teams

| Age Group | Name            | Phone        | Email                            |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 8         |                 |              |                                  |
| 9         | Mark Witter     | 01606 888387 | markwitter@thisisventure.co.uk   |
| 10        | Cliff Wyatt     | 01565 654764 | cliff.wyatt@eurorscg.com         |
| 11        | Paul Brown      | 07957 282223 | PaulBROWN6@compuserve.com        |
| 12        | Richard Wackett | 01565 653179 | richard.wackett@egertonfc.org.uk |
| 13        | Alan Schofield  | 01565 880226 | SchofieCar@aol.com               |
| 14        | Stuart Ballance | 01565 651397 |                                  |
| 15        | Phil Ballance   | 01565 653521 | pandj@ballance.fsworld.co.uk     |
| 16        | Alun Williams   | 01565 650870 |                                  |
| 17        | Peter Ford      | 01565 633181 | peter.ford_home@btopenworld.com  |

Please inform the Secretary promptly of any change in these details.

## Useful Web Sites

### Football

Useful information relating to football in general can be found on the FA Web site:

[www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

or, for more local information, The Cheshire County FA web-site:

[www.cdfa.co.uk](http://www.cdfa.co.uk)

### Leagues

Information relating to the Mid-Cheshire Youth League is supplied to all registered managers at the start of each season, in the Mid-Cheshire Youth League Handbook. Details are also available through the Mid-Cheshire Youth League Web site:

[www.net2uk.net/soccerkids](http://www.net2uk.net/soccerkids)

### Child Protection

The NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).

Child Protection in Sport Unit: [www.sportprotects.org.uk](http://www.sportprotects.org.uk).

### Coaching

Sport coach UK: [www.sportscoachuk.org](http://www.sportscoachuk.org).

### Miscellaneous

Football Foundation: [www.footballfoundation.org.uk](http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk).

Referees Association: [www.footballreferee.org](http://www.footballreferee.org).

Soccer Parent: [soccerparents.thefa.com](http://soccerparents.thefa.com).

## Complaints Procedure

In the event that any person associated with the Club feels that he or she has suffered discrimination in any way or that the Club's Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken they should follow the procedures below.

1. They should report the matter to the Club Chairman or another member of the Committee. The report should include:
  - i. details of what, when, and where the occurrence took place.
  - ii. any witness statement and names.
  - iii. names of any others who have been treated in a similar way.
  - iv. details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made.
  - v. A preference for a solution to the incident.
2. The Club's Management Committee will sit for any hearings that are requested.
3. The Club's Management Committee will have the power to:
  - i. warn as to future conduct; or
  - ii. suspend from membership and/or all Club activities and facilities; or
  - iii. permanently exclude from membership and/or all Club activities and facilitiesany person found to have broken the Club's Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct.