



Ashton on Mersey FC
Club Vision & Coaching Philosophy
Ages 4-16



Who we are

AoM FC – Who we are



- Wellfield Soccer Skills Centre was formed in 1994 by Tony Lowe & Ed Salmon as a soccer skills centre.
- This was converted into a junior football club in 1997 and Ashton on Mersey Junior Football Club was born.
- In 2018, we dropped the 'Junior' from the club name to reflect our ambitions to create football opportunities for adults. However, this document is about the coaching philosophy employed up to age 16.

AoM FC – Who we are



- We provide fun footballing opportunities to over 300 children every season and growing rapidly.
- Have helped many players connect to professional clubs but we also create opportunities across the whole of the ability spectrum.
- We are an integral part of the local community operating from Wellfield Junior School, Ashton Park, AoM Cricket Club, Weathercock farm and Dainewell Park



The aim of the club

AoM FC – The aim of the club



Ashton on Mersey Football Club will endeavour to:

- Develop volunteer coaches and improve the football skills of players.
- Introduce people into football, regardless of ability, gender, religion or ethnic background.
- Provide a place where players can develop social and life skills whilst gaining confidence.
- Provide a safe environment so all players, irrespective of ability, can flourish in an enjoyable setting.
- Provide a place where players can develop social and life skills whilst gaining confidence.
- To be an integral part of the local community.

AoM FC – The aim of the club



Ashton on Mersey Football Club will ensure that every team has a coach who:

- Has attained the FA Level1 Award in coaching football, as a minimum
- Has completed the FA Basic Emergency First Aid course in the last 3 years
- Has attended an FA Safeguarding Children workshop in the last 3 years
- Has been assessed by the club to ensure they share the same values.

Ashton on Mersey Football Club will also ensure:

- Every coach has undertaken an enhanced Criminal Records Check (CRC)
- Every volunteer has undertaken an enhanced Criminal Records Check (CRC)



The role of the coach

AoM FC – The role of the coach



All coaches at AoM FC should:

- Treat all children, young people and adults with fairness and respect.
- Create open environments where young people feel safe to talk to them if they have any concerns.
- Treat all players equally and distribute attention evenly.
- Value children's and young people's opinions.
- Understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and belief that need to be treated with respect.
- Act as a role model to the players under their care.



Coach Recruitment

AoM FC – Coach Recruitment



The club cannot function without volunteer coaches so it's vital that the club continues to attract volunteers (usually parents) each year.

The coach will become a role model for the children in their training group so it's essential that they also buy in to the club's philosophy, so the club will.

- Provide prospective coaches with a copy of this document.
- Invite the prospective coaches to an interview with committee members so the coach has the opportunity to ask any questions and vice-versa.
- Get a commitment from the coach that they will undertake their FA Level 1 course within 6 months (the club will pay for this).



Coach Development

AoM FC – Coach Development



To help develop coaches, the club will:

- Fund the cost of an FA Level 1 course.
- Provide access to session plans and practice ideas.
- Arrange Continual Professional Development (CPD) sessions.
- If desired, assign a coach from another age group to act as a mentor.
- Consider funding or part-funding the coach's FA Level 2 course.

In return we ask that all coaches take responsibility for their own development and maintain (free) membership of the FA Licensed Coaches Club.



The role of the parent / spectator

AoM FC – The role of the spectator



- Remember that children play for FUN
- Applaud effort and good play as well as success
- Always respect the match officials' decisions
- Remain outside the field of play and within the Designated Spectators' Area (where provided)
- **Let the coach do their job and not confuse the players by telling them what to do**
- Encourage the players to respect the opposition, referee and match officials
- Avoid criticising a player for making a mistake – mistakes are part of learning
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour.



Player Development

AoM FC – Player Development



**TECHNICAL /
TACTICAL**

PSYCHOLOGICAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL

**We aim to help all
players develop in all
of these areas.**

(Linked to The FA four-corner model)

AoM FC – Player Development



TECHNICAL /
TACTICAL

Technical (Ball Mastery)

- Passing & Receiving the ball over a range of distances.
- Travelling with the ball
- Attacking and defending skills
- Finishing skills
- Aerial ability

Tactical

- Recognise & adapt to the state of the game
- Achieve winning performances by maximising strengths and exploiting weaknesses.
- Adopt varied playing styles and formations and perform effectively against them.
- Deal with varied conditions.

AoM FC – Player Development



PSYCHOLOGICAL

Psychological

- Confidence
- Creativity
- Concentration
- Communication
- Control
- Commitment

AoM FC – Player Development



PHYSICAL

Physical

- Agility, Balance & Co-ordination (ABC)
- Speed / Speed endurance
- Flexibility
- Power
- Strength
- Nutrition & Lifestyle
- Physical Resilience
- Recovery

AoM FC – Player Development



SOCIAL

Social

- Behaviour
- Reflection
- Teamwork
- Relationships
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Independence



The different phases

AoM FC – The different phases



**AGES 4-5
EARLY
FOUNDATION
PHASE**

**AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE**

**AGES 12-16
YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
PHASE**



Early Foundation Phase: Ages 4-5

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 4-11
EARLY
FOUNDATION
PHASE

Kids of this age are egocentric and their focus is typically around themselves.

The aim at this age is to introduce them to football, help them to fall in love with the sport and develop basic skills. So, in this phase, we place the emphasis on the following:

- Fun!
- Lots of touches on the ball.
- An understanding of the rules of the game.
- An understanding of the difference between passing and shooting.

AoM FC – Early Foundation Phase



AGES 4-5
EARLY
FOUNDATION
PHASE

AoM FC has adopted the following policy in this phase:

Under 5s

- The under 5s will train together and develop as a mixed ability squad. We will also be looking to attract & develop volunteer (usually parent) coaches.

Under 6s

- The under 6s will train together and develop as a mixed ability squad. We will look to put the volunteer coaches through their FA Level 1 course and more responsibility passed to them



Foundation Phase: Ages 6-11

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



**AGES 4-11
EARLY
FOUNDATION
&
FOUNDATION
PHASE**

We aim to coach our players to:

In possession

- Develop a mastery of the ball and the confidence to try new things
- Be exciting and positive in possession, playing with individuality and elements of surprise
- Combine creatively and intelligently with others to create and score goals

Out of possession

- Enjoy winning the ball back, be difficult to beat 1v1 and look to start attacks when you get the ball
- Be positive and confident in your positioning and your ability to win the ball. Be alert
- Enjoy defending in a variety of roles and develop a range of techniques to regain possession

Transition

- React quickly and positive when the ball is won or lost and have a range of individual options and actions.
- Have a positive attitude when possession is regained, travelling quickly with and without the ball. Take every opportunity to attack and score.
- Try to win the ball back and prevent opponents from starting attacks

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE

- 95% of neural development is complete by age 11 so it's vital that children master the basics during this phase. The period between ages 5 & 11 is known as the **'Golden Age of Learning'**
- If a child hasn't got good agility, balance and co-ordination (ABCs) by age 11, it's unlikely that they will ever develop into a great footballer. Developing these attributes is perhaps more important than football experience.
 - We recommend that children also partake in other sports to help develop this.
- Sessions will involve lots of repetition, competition and challenging problem-solving scenarios to create repeated patterns of movement & strong neural pathways
- The emphasis is on player development and not results; it should be noted that the FA forbids the publishing of league tables until Under 12 in any case.
- We ask parents not to coach from the sidelines and to not criticise, only to applaud good play. Children in the Foundation phase can get confused about who to listen to, parents or this coach.

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE

- In the foundation phase, we primarily concentrate on the in-possession phase but through carefully crafted practices, players have exposure to the out-of-possession and transition phases.
- In training, players are exposed to plenty of Small-Sided Games (SSGs) such as 4v4, 2v2, 4v2, Futsal etc.
 - This will challenge the players decision making; task them with solving a range of problems; whilst gaining the opportunity to freely apply their individuality in a range of roles, dealing with varying time, space and pressure.
- By engaging in a range of SSGs, players also start to discuss, learn and apply different tactics and strategies.

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE

- The ability of children in this age group is heavily influenced by their birth month and the child's physical size.
 - The FA did a study and discovered that 57% of children in academies were born in the first 3 months of the school year. Only 14% were born in the last 3 months.
- Both physical maturity and ability changes rapidly at this age. The 'best' and 'worst' players can easily swap places within a few months.
 - It is almost guaranteed that the best players at age 7 will not be the best players at age 11.
- It isn't helpful, therefore, to stream players by ability in this phase.
 - Whilst children (and parents) are often happy to move up a team, it can be extremely detrimental to children's confidence who are asked to move down.

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE

AoM FC has adopted the following policy in this phase:

Under 7 & Under 8s

- At this age, the children begin to play organised 5v5 matches so are split into mixed ability squads of (ideally) 7 players. The children and coaches will train together but will be split into playing squads for matches.
- The make-up of these playing squads will change on a regular basis as agreed between the coaches and Football Development Officer
- The emphasis is on player development so there needs to be an understanding amongst parents and coaches that we may lose games to clubs who are streaming teams; we are taking a longer-term view.
- All players rotate positions and should also receive equal game time.
- Parents should not coach from the sidelines.

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE

AoM FC has adopted the following policy in this phase:

Under 9s and Under 10s

- At this age, the children begin to play organised 7v7 matches so are split into mixed ability squads of (ideally) 10 players. The children and coaches will train together but will be split into playing squads for matches.
- The make-up of these playing squads will be reviewed at the half-way point of the season as agreed between the coaches and Football Development Officer.
- The emphasis is on player development so there needs to be an understanding amongst parents and coaches that we may lose games to clubs who are streaming teams; we are taking a longer-term view.
- All players rotate positions and should also receive equal game time.
- Parents should not coach from the sidelines.

AoM FC – Foundation Phase



AGES 6-11
FOUNDATION
PHASE

AoM FC has adopted the following policy in this phase:

Under 11s

- This is the last year of 'non-competitive' football, i.e. no published league tables, the format moves to 9v9.
 - The retreat rule is removed and the offside rule now comes into operation
- We therefore see this as a 'transition' year and do start to stream players in terms of current ability and/or physical maturity. Squads should be around 12 or 13 players.
- However, we encourage squads to continue training together, still use SSGs but start to introduce the concept of tactical thinking to the children.
- Regular meetings to take place amongst the squads and the FDO and squads will be reviewed by the coaches and the FDO at the end of the year.
- Players should still rotate positions and receive equal game time.
- Parents should not coach from the sidelines.



Youth Development Phase: Ages 12-16

AoM FC – Youth Development Phase



AGES 12-16 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE

We aim to coach our
players to:

In possession

- Look to receive the ball in all areas of the pitch and be prepared to stay in possession.
- Seek creative solutions to game situations particularly when outnumbered or in congested areas.
- Stay connected with the ball and your teammates to retain possession, open up compact defences and score goals.

Out of possession

- Be prepared to defend 1v1 and be confident without cover or support.
- Outwit your opponent with excellent patience, timing and intercepting skills.
- Win the ball cleanly, regaining and retaining possession in the same action to start attacks.

Transition

- Dominate transition: react quickly and positively to the first individual action when both attacking and defending
- React instinctively and intelligently when possession is regained, recognising opportunities to disorganise the opposition.
- Prevent progression by disrupting momentum, forcing errors and protecting the goal.

AoM FC – Youth Development Phase



AGES 12-16 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE

- As children start secondary school, their world becomes a lot bigger and their physical and emotional maturity develops rapidly.
- We recognise that children go through puberty during this age and the difference in physical size between players can become much more pronounced.
- Players will begin to specialise in set positions but care should be taken by coaches as puberty will undoubtedly have an influence on this.
- We start to build upon the technical aspects learnt in the foundation phase and now begin to introduce more tactical elements to the game.
- The physical corner also becomes important and players should be encouraged to consider nutrition and other exercise away from club training.
- We also recognise that hormonal changes can lead to flare-ups on the pitch. What is expected of players in terms of behaviour needs to be regularly reinforced.
- Parents should not coach from the sidelines.

AoM FC – Youth Development Phase



AGES 12-16
YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
PHASE

AoM FC has adopted the following policy in this phase:

Under 12s

- The format remains at 9v9 but this year sees a transition into competitive football with published league tables.
- Squads should be around 12-13 players.
- Teams, having been reviewed after Under 11, will again be streamed with the squads being reviewed by the coaches and the FDO at the end of the season. Teams will still be required to undertake mixed training sessions on a regular basis.
- No changes to teams will be made mid-season except in the case of players leaving or with agreement of all coaches.
- At this age, we expect children to start developing a sense of responsibility for their own football development, committing to training and showing effort.
 - Minimum, rather than equal game-time will be introduced. Additional game-time can be earned by putting effort in training.
- The coach will determine the team and respect must be given to their choices.
- Parents should not coach from the sidelines.

AoM FC – Youth Development Phase



AGES 12-16
YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
PHASE

AoM FC has adopted the following policy in this phase:

Under 13s – U16s

- The format changes into 11v11 as per the adult game.
- Squads should be around 16 players.
- Teams will now be streamed by ability with the coaches and FDO reviewing the squads at the end of the season.
- No changes to teams will be made mid-season except in the case of players leaving or with agreement of all coaches.
- Minimum, rather than equal game-time will apply.
 - Additional game-time can be earned by putting effort in training.
- The coach will determine the team and respect must be given to their choices.
- Parents should not coach from the sidelines.

Notes



- This document is effective from the 2018/19 season and will be fully implemented with every new Under 7 group from this point forward.
- The club committee recognises that this represents a change in our vision and philosophy.
 - We also recognise that it will be difficult for the older age groups to change things 'mid-stream'.
 - However, we will support any age groups or teams within an age group that wish to move to the new way of working.
- In future, we will ask all coaches for teams U12 and below to undertake mixed training on a regular basis across the age group, as well as meeting regularly to review the progress and balance of teams.