We only do positive.

Handbook

By Gareth Southgate



LEAD BY EXAMPLE

CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

BUILD A POSITIVE TEAM AROUND YOU

UNDERSTAND YOUR PLAYERS

'ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE'

GARETH'S FOREWORD

Dear youth football coaches.

In your position, you're likely to be one of the most important role models in a young person's life. Your role in helping children to develop as footballers and young people should never be underestimated. The way you act, the way you behave and the time you commit plays a massive part in their lives.

At this point, I'd like to recognise and thank you for your commitment. For the countless hours spent travelling between matches, stood on the side lines in the pouring rain, offering advice and guidance, pumping up footballs, putting the nets up, filing reports and so on.

At youth level our first and foremost aim should always be that everybody enjoys their football. The majority of players are at school all week and choose to play to spend time outdoors, to get some fresh air and to enjoy themselves. Sometimes they're happy to learn, sometimes they just want to kick a ball around. Everybody should get to play, enjoy the game, have fun with their friends and grow their love of the sport.

The Football Association's Respect campaign champions positive values and behaviours such as fairness, integrity, inclusion and leadership. Our mantra is 'We Only Do Positive' which highlights the impact of positive encouragement in the game. When trying to help young people to improve and reach their full potential, it's more important to find things people do well and highlight those, than it is to find fault in performances.

Research shows us that 90% of players perform better with positive encouragement*. Being positive about a young person's actions or behaviours has a much better effect on their development than being negative towards them, which can be something they associate with other parts of their lives and have a real detrimental impact.

In my own career, I have learnt from every coach I have worked with and having worked with youth players at every level, and as a parent myself, I view a coaches' job as both a responsibility and an outstanding privilege to be able to influence young people's development.

Best wishes,



Gareth Southgate

*conducted by Critical Research Ltd. In July 2018.



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CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

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The first aim should be that everybody enjoys playing the game. Enable your players to try things without fear of failure. They should be able to express themselves and their personality, to have fun with their friends and grow their love of football.

Whilst you want to encourage them to be as good as they can possibly be, it has to be acceptable to lose.

Highlight the things people do well, rather than criticise mistakes or losses. People respond to positive affirmation rather than criticism, so deliver criticism in a way that is constructive and helpful. A high ratio of positive to negative comments is recommended, in order to have the right impact. Very often the balance that people receive is the other way around.



Principle IN PRACTICE



"Coaches, parents and players all have to work together to create the right environment. We want everyone to understand how they can help to make Ise Lodge Kestrels YFC a successful and respectful club that people enjoy being part of. At the start of the season, we hold a parents evening and introduce our team philosophy booklet which outlines our four key ambitions:

1) Be the most respectful team
2) Provide opportunity for all
3) Accept mistakes
4) Try to win, but never at the expense of the previous points

We have had some examples of young players at the club becoming extremely anxious, both at and away from football, which has impacted their personal confidence. For these players, we make sure that training sessions are a comfortable, trustworthy environment with no pressure placed on them to perform.

We also spoke with their friends in the team and created a 'buddy' system. Their 'buddy' will meet them at the club entrance and partner with them during drills to ensure the player never feels isolated or alone. This method has ensured players continue to attend regularly, enjoy their football and also helps to develop true friendships."



Shaun Waite
Coach of Ise Lodge Kestrels

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LEAD BY POSITIVE EXAMPLE

By Gareth Southgate

Young people are still finding their way in life and are impressionable, so it's important that any coach working with any age group of players is able to lead by positive example.

Everyone reacts slightly differently in different moments, but it's important to demonstrate high standards of behaviour in your own interactions. Be thoughtful and in control of your emotions when communicating with players because the message you think you've given and the message being received can often be misconstrued. If that is a negative message, it can have a detrimental impact on a young person.

For example, a test is when you've been beaten, and how you deal with that. Be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Or if a refereeing decision goes against you, consider that the way you react will set the tone for the behaviour of your team, as well as parents watching on.



Principle IN PRACTICE



"As a football coach, you are a role model, so I strongly believe it is crucial to lead by positive example to the younger generation. In my role as manager at Guru Nanak FC, I have standards and principles that I stick to and encourage everyone to follow.

The principles include punctuality, I arrive at matches an hour early and ask the team to be there 45 minutes ahead of games. I always respect the officials and never shout at the referee. To highlight the respect between the two teams, I make sure to engage in a conversation with the opposing manager before every match. Win or lose, I will always be the first to shake the opposing team's hands and ensure my team follow suit.

I also play for a ladies team, so at the start of the season I invited the U14s team and their parents to watch my team in action, allowing me to lead by example and make them aware that I practice the principles I put in place. Those who watched, could see us being respectful to the opposing team and not arguing with the referee.

During the following match for the Under-14s, a referee made a decision that was not in our favour and instead of arguing and approaching the referee, the player who was fouled and had seen me do the same in my game, simply got up, brushed the mud off her legs and carried on with the determination to win the ball back. Seeing the players put the principles that I set in place made me feel extremely proud."



Parm Gill
Manager for Guru Nanak

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UNDERSTAND YOUR PLAYERS

By Gareth Southgate

As a coach, your job is to help give young people confidence. The more you know about the players you are working with, the more you can help them enjoy their football and perform to the best of their ability.

Think about them as people first, before players. Getting to know about an individual's background, family and their personal circumstance can help you to understand their needs and to better motivate them.

Having a friendly disposition goes a long way in making you approachable. If you can demonstrate you have a real interest in developing and improving your players as people and footballers, it will make them feel important and encourage them to show their best.



Principle IN PRACTICE

"It's extremely important to know what your players have going on in their lives. At training each week, I aim to have a one-to-one with each player to hear from them. If it's a school trip, I want to know more. If it's their birthday that week, I'll make a concerted effort to pay attention to them. My aim is to be a sounding board for the players and it's moments like that when you will get to know the true player and build the trust and relationship between you and them.

I'm currently coaching at Ipswich Valley Rangers Girls, which is an Under-14s team. At that age it's an important stage in the players' lives, so it's imperative to take on board any external situations. You can use your experience and knowledge to help young people and coach them to get the best out of them.

I had noticed a player in the team seemed extremely quiet during recent training sessions. I sat down with her and she informed me she had recently been feeling overwhelmed during training and matches and was having similar issues outside of football. I reassured her that we would take each day as it comes and there was no pressure on playing, it simply depended on how she was feeling and if she felt up to it. I made sure to have regular meetings with the player and her mum to monitor the situation. Since then, the player informed me she was feeling better, both physically and mentally and has only missed a couple of games over the last two seasons. Understanding the player as a person allowed us to deal with the situation and support her in the best possible way."



Darren Scoulding
Coach for Ipswich Valley Rangers Girls

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BUILD A POSITIVE TEAM AROUND YOU

By Gareth Southgate

The people around you all play a part in supporting the environment you are trying to create. They have to respect the way that you are working as a coach, and vice versa. Together, you need to lead in a positive way and be able to lift people when they're down.

In a grassroots club, this might be other coaches or it might be the parents that are watching on the side lines. At a higher level, you may have someone looking after the medical side, or someone who is responsible for the welfare of the players.

It's important that everyone understands the role of other people on the team. Focus on the attributes that each person brings and how they contribute to the collective. A successful coach will be able to work collaboratively to bring the best out of a team.



Principle IN PRACTICE



"To create a successful team on the pitch, it's essential to build a positive team off it. Over the course of my career I've learnt it's important to look at where you can bring other people in to support your leadership and improve the overall experience for your players – and of course every member of the coaching staff needs to be aligned on the positive experience you want to create.

I teach FA courses and in my role I look at team development as a whole. When I started coaching at Haverhill Rovers Girls I decided to bring on board an assistant coach who focuses on individual player development. By combining both of our strengths, we have been able to benefit the team.

We've recently had a player switch to our club as her previous team wasn't working with her on developing her individual skills, which was an area she was looking to improve. Since joining us, she has worked with me on team set pieces and game play and has worked with my assistant to develop her individual ability. Having two coaches with different skill sets for her to work with has meant her confidence has grown rapidly and she has become an integral part of the team.

After a recent match, the players parent approached my assistant coach and I to say how impressed he was at seeing his daughter's game improve since joining the club. He also thanked us for listening to what his child had requested and taking positive action to deliver it, which was brilliant for us to hear as coaches."



Kayleigh Steed
Coach at Haverhill Rovers Girls

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INSTIL AN 'ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE' ATTITUDE

By Gareth Southgate

As a coach of a team, you're an important role model to those players and you have the opportunity to help them along the path of their life in a positive way. There's not much space for a pessimist in the role of a leader. Aim to foster a culture of encouragement and belief, rather than expectation.

For young people, that could involve football but also their lives outside of football. No matter their background, lots of people have achieved something in life even though they had a difficult start.

Under your stewardship, these young people have the opportunity to write their own future. Thinking about what might go wrong can inhibit expression. Why would you limit what they feel they are capable of?



Principle IN PRACTICE

"In life when you look at records that have been broken or things people didn't think could ever be done, you have to tell yourself that anything is possible.

At the 2018 World Cup in Russia, we wanted to attack the tournament and focus on what might be possible. I think in the past with England we have been too worried about what could go wrong. That's been the focus instead of what we can achieve.

We put to one side past records, what other teams have achieved or what might have occurred in previous tournaments. We didn't think about what would happen if we didn't get out the group or what would happen if we didn't win a particular game.

I have been through the most difficult thing, in a professional sense, that I am ever going to experience with that penalty miss, so I know better than most the importance of a defiant mentality.

While we wanted to respect our opponents, we were always thinking how we could win every game, how we could perform as well as we possibly could and we were thinking about enjoying the experience.

Fortunately with our young squad, that attitude of fearlessness was forthcoming and something we were able to cultivate. I was very confident in their ability before the tournament and the energy, belief, excitement and enjoyment that young players bring, helped us to perform.

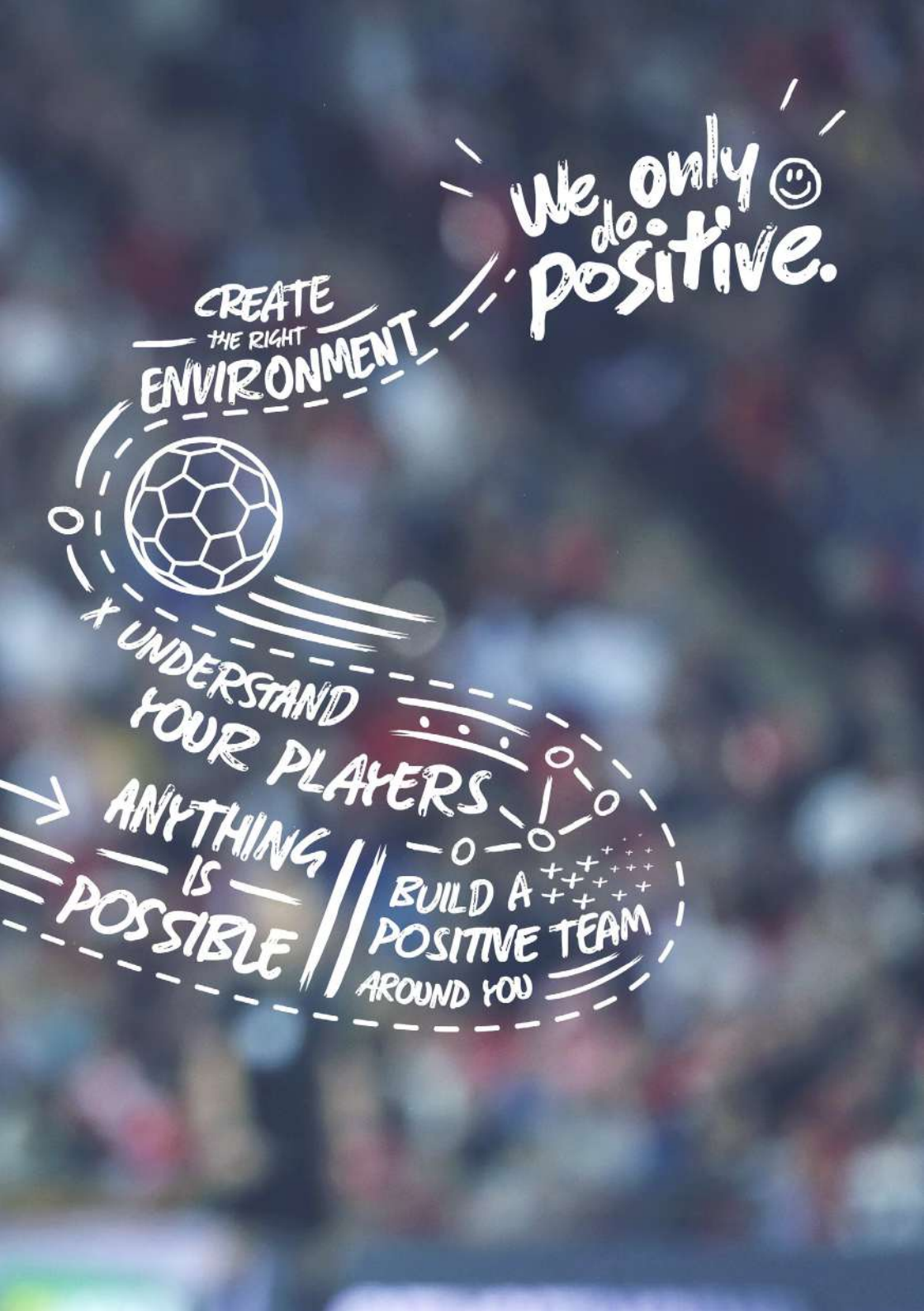
I said before the tournament success would be that we have come back from Russia proud of what we have done. Though we would have liked to have gone further, we were proud of our performances and how we represented ourselves which is credit to the squad, the staff and the supporters for being part of that 'anything is possible' mind-set."



Gareth Southgate
England Manager

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LEAD
BY EXAMPLE


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RESPECT

FOR ALL