



Maidstone Hockey Club

Junior Coaching Programme 2009/10

Maidstone Hockey Club is committed to the improvement of the quality and consistency of its coaching, and in order to do so is introducing a programme that aims to provide a framework for that coaching, whether being delivered at under 5 or under 18 or anywhere in between. This programme is not written in tablets of stone, but contains information that can be tailored to every group's needs, while at the same time ensuring that the Club offers training to all its members on a common basis.

The background is to establish a common platform of training and development for all players, irrespective of age and ability. This work has focused on the core skills needed to play hockey and concentrates on key principles that, if delivered and coached effectively, will significantly improve the ability and performance of all participants.

It is also important to recognize how young players develop physical, psychological and emotional characteristics and the impact of these on their ability to learn new skills, perform them and apply them in game situations. The Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) programme provides some guidance for coaches.

This is based on two key elements. First, England Hockey's Core Skills for Hockey programme, to give the basic skills and tactics to be taught by the coaches. Second, a programme of competitive games for the young players against local clubs in leagues, round robins and tournaments.

As an overall measurement for success we will have made good progress if coaches aspire to the following principles for planning and delivering coaching sessions:

Planning effective coaching sessions

- Review players needs and establish goals for coaching sessions
- Plan realistic timings, sequences and intensity for the sessions
- Plan a good balance of learning and practice
- Plan appropriate technical content for the aim of the session
- Plan appropriate progressions to develop the performance of all participants
- Plan progressive sessions, where skills are developed into game situations
- Develop physical and mental ability as well as hockey skills and techniques

Delivering effective coaching sessions

- emphasise the key learning points for the session
- demand quality from players
- always practice at match pace
- keep the sessions fun and enjoyable
- encourage decision making
- don't interrupt practices too often, allow practices to run and drop coaching points in to individuals or the group
- encourage players to work with different players
- have enough balls for practices to run without stopping for collection regularly
- keep players active and involved – avoid long queues and standing around
- where possible have an independent goalkeeper coach at each session - if not, set the practice so that the GKs can take part by using their feet instead of a stick.

Our ambition for this season is that training sessions should cover the above points. We are looking to significantly improve the overall skill levels of all players in all the core skills, enabling them to compete successfully, something that as a club we do not always do well enough.

Whenever possible we will have individual first team members both Ladies and Men) to help out, thus permitting the demonstration of specific skills to the youngsters. Furthermore, this will help reinforce the links between the adult and junior sections.

Coaches will always be on the look out for players "above average" or with great promise. If they are of the correct age (above 13) they will be brought to the attention of the Hockey Managers for the adults, who will consider then for inclusion in the adult teams. In addition, these players will be encouraged to seek representative honours at sub county and county levels. At present Kent has a hybrid system – U13s & U14s are in the Single System (JDCs & JACs); whilst the rest (U15s and upward) have trials for county level. Each year a new age group is added to the SS (so in 2010/11 we will add the U15s).

To ensure that Junior Members feel that they are part of Maidstone Hockey Club they will be encouraged to attend the end of season "Club Day". This will include some junior games to introduce the adult members of the club to the skills of the Junior section and a presentation of Junior member awards.

Mike Evans
Hockey Manager-Juniors