

## THE UK MINIFOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

### THE FOOTBALL BLUEPRINT

Football is the most widely played sport in the United Kingdom and the most well-known. It is a sport which affects society both in its behaviour and in its moral judgements and we believe that the effective policies, administration and governance of football in the United Kingdom is crucial to our society.

#### Discipline

We believe that football in the UK can learn a lot from the disciplinary measures imposed on the sports of hockey and rugby. We believe that, generally, disciplinary football in the UK is not fit for purpose and that higher standards should be imposed and greater respect for match officials at all levels. We believe that there is a direct correlation between the actions of professional footballers on television, and what happens at the grass-roots level and this has a profoundly negative effect on society. We believe this probably needs urgently addressing. We address the issue in small-sided leagues by encouraging the following:

1. Violence or abuse on the football pitch should be investigated as a crime by the police and not by football authorities.
2. The use of the terms '(governing body) laws' or 'the (governing body) are going to charge etc.' has an effect which gives an impression that the governing body is above the law. We believe that the terminology is wrong and that the phrases 'law' and 'charging' should not be used by governing bodies and should be left to be used in relation to actions taken by the police themselves.
3. We believe that referees should be afforded the respect that they are in rugby union. We would encourage footballers in small-sided leagues to use the terminology 'sir' when addressing the match officials.
4. We would encourage small-sided league operators to use the system of on-field discipline as used by the World Hockey Federation.
5. We believe that players who have shown violent behaviour on the field of play should be banned permanently from partaking in future football events, or at least until they have undertaken a long term, serious rehabilitation process which can be evaluated by an independent body.

We believe that football has a crucial role to play in the development of society.

#### Junior football

We believe that rather than concentrating on slogans and public relations campaigns to eliminate the lack of respect particularly within junior football towards the referee by adult spectators, we consider there should be real action to address this problem.

As a first step, we propose the introduction, as they do on the continent, of junior referees to officiate junior matches. Adults should not officiate junior matches. All junior matches should be officiated by a referee who is also a junior and is perhaps 2 or 3 years older than the



players themselves. We believe in implementing a program of junior refereeing to encourage this. Currently, there is only a referee qualification system for match officials

once the age of 16 is reached. We believe there should be a qualifications system below the age of 16 and the option of refereeing should be made available to younger children as a career or sporting pathway. We believe this would dramatically reduce the incidents of adults on the side-lines swearing and shouting at the match official.

We believe that no child under the age of 14 should play 11-a-side football on a full-size grass pitch. Instead they should always play 5 or 6-a-side football on smaller pitches or on a hard surface and they should only play with a ball the size of which is commensurate to their age so, for instance, younger children would play with a size 2 or 3 ball, and older children would play with a size 4 ball. Size 5 balls should only be played with from the age of 14 onwards. We believe that the harder the surface, the smaller the pitch, the smaller the ball, the quicker they will learn the techniques to control the ball and the more pointless it will be to simply boot it up the field. This would be the modern equivalent of playing in the road with a tennis ball.

We believe that young children playing with a size 5 ball, or a ball which often comes up to their knees inhibits technique, causes them to lose their timing at any early age, and does not encourage finesse or technique.

We believe it is wrong that children are able to have a manager or coach for their local team who has no qualifications whatsoever. We believe it should be compulsory and written in UK law, that coaching football to young children can only be done by suitably qualified people.

We believe that the governance and management of football, particularly junior football, coaching techniques, tactics and development should be undertaken by those who have an intelligence based approach first and foremost and that actual footballing ability by those undertaking governance, management and coaching should be placed as a secondary consideration or even not considered relevant at all. We believe that the over reliance on having 'football people' or ex-good players governing and managing football is a serious error and the approach to appointing governance and management should be more theoretical and based on abilities delivered in a wider life sphere.

