
COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

Alphington FC (Bluetongues) is a football club that was established 2003 and has been generally accepted as a community football club. Back in 2003 the profile of football in Australia was not as high or widespread as it is now. In 2012 the ABS reported that football (soccer) in Australia had the highest participation rate by male children aged 5-14 of any other sport. According to research by Roy Morgan Research (RMR) in 2015, football was the number one sport for participation by female children aged 6-13.

Since Alphington's founding the profile of football in Australia, in particular Victoria, has significantly increased. In 2004 the A-League started, making live professional football more accessible to all, especially as the A-league clubs are not ethnically centred as was the case with the teams competing in the National Soccer League (NSL). In 2008, the W-League started which seems to have had a positive impact on the number of girls playing football.

On a global scale the profile of Australian football has been enhanced with the national team, the Socceroos, qualifying and participating in the FIFA World Cup competitions of 2006, 2010 and 2014; they have also recently qualified for the 2018 World Cup in Russia. The Matildas have also enhanced their profile by reaching the 2010 and 2014 AFC Women's Asian Cup and the 2011 & 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup. All national and international games are shown live through broadcasting within Australia, meaning viewing and awareness of football has significantly increased since the turn of the millennium.

In addition to Australian football the access to the world game is significantly greater than in 2003. Now viewers have access to live games from leagues throughout the world including very high profile leagues such as the English Premier League, the German Bundesliga, the Spanish La Liga, the Italian Serie A and the French Ligue 1 as well as exposure to live games from leagues in South America, the Major Soccer League (MLS) in the USA and

high profile competitions such as the UEFA Champions League, Asian Champions League (AFC), Euro Championships and the Copa America.

Also, children have further exposure to football and international football players via video gaming, in particular the FIFA branded football video game from EA Sports, which now hosts international tournaments such as the FIFA eWorld Cup. Access, via the internet, to an enormous amount of information such as football tutorials from professional bodies and individuals where children can learn how to perform skills and improve fitness and game awareness, has increased exponentially over the last few years.

So what does this all mean? It means expectation is higher than it ever has been.

When Alphington FC was founded it was necessary to have a local place and structure so children could have a 'kick about' under the guidance of informal adult direction. It was also important for there to be a non-ethnic centric place to play football, as many of the football clubs at the time were based around ethnicity. Alphington still holds this value today.

With the exposure of football as a global game in Australia there is expectation from children participating in football to be able to mimic those players and teams they look up to. There is also an expectation from parents that as well as having fun, their child shows improvement throughout a season. While naturally improvement can come through repetitive actions it is necessary to ensure that those actions are the right ones.

It's imperative that children are coached in the right way in a number of areas from football skills to sportsmanship. To do this within a club environment it is essential that the club have a written coaching philosophy; one that will guide coaching across all age levels to ensure that the children, and seniors, are being coached in a consistent way that provides a clear idea of what is required from players, parents and any other individuals associated with the club

Alphington FC does not currently have a written coaching philosophy. In creating one it will not only allow coaches and the club to create a clearer development path for their players, therefore allowing coaches to set more effective, measurable and attainable long and short term goals, it will also provide a basis to attract coaches to the club. Once coaches are in place, the club will be in a more favourable position to attract new players as well as hold on to its current players.

The following sets out a proposed coaching philosophy for Alphington Football Club.

Coaching Philosophy

There are two reasons why children play football: to have fun and to improve. The more a child improves the more fun they have. To improve requires consistent and effective coaching and to achieve this Alphington FC has developed its own coaching philosophy.

Alphington FC's coaching philosophy values performance over result. There is a clear focus on a winning mentality in professional sport, and this winning mentality filters its way down to junior sport. Although scoring more goals than the opposition is the primary aim of football, Alphington's coaching encourages children to focus on their performance during training and match days. Having fun with the ball and hard work pays off - the harder a player works the better they become and the continued improvement results in them enjoying the game more.

Scoring more than the opposition is a consequence of performance. Performance is not a consequence of scoring more than the opposition. Performance is also something within a player's and team's control; the outcome of a game is rarely controllable. Therefore, Alphington FC encourages all coaches to focus on performance and effort. Alphington FC encourages parents to promote performance over result to their children, especially during match day.

Improved performance comes through coaching the right way. Alphington FC's coaching philosophy encompasses football, values and conduct, each one aimed at helping players to enjoy the game of football and to improve their own skills and performance level.

Football

Alphington FC encourages progressive possession football as a coaching philosophy; when in possession of the ball coaches should aim to teach players to move the ball from a defensive position to an attacking position in a positive and dynamic manner.

At junior level all players should be given the opportunity to try different positions to build on their understanding of their game and to develop the core skills involved in defending, transitioning and attacking.

At Alphington FC set systems and formations are not emphasised at junior level. Systems and formations are highly dependent on coaching style and the availability of players to play systems. At junior level the focus is on core skills and game intelligence.

Alphington FC's coaches focus on repetition during training to prepare players to be the best they can for match day. The main areas that coaches work on are:

- Ball skills and techniques
- Team plays
- Defensive and attacking play, with equal importance.

Alphington FC encourages gamified training which encourages the participation of the whole group in activities reducing the amount of time players are inactive waiting 'for their turn'. Gamifying provides the children with a goal during training which encourages a high level of participation and energy leading to improved skills and good match day preparation.

Alphington FC's coaches are to encourage players to learn the basic rules of the game. Coaches should also teach the basic tactics and core ideas around playing the game of football, especially to players that are new to the game.

Alphington FC coaches expect players to give 100% in training - as if they were playing a match. Only by having intensity during training can players be adequately prepared for match day.

Alphington coaches require that all players be at a match on game day at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. Alphington promotes players having an adequate pre-game warm-up in order to:

- Make final preparations for the game
- Ensure that there is a minimal risk of muscular injury as a result of not having an adequate warm-up.

Parents should be encouraged by coaches to influence their children outside of Alphington FC. This can be done by recommending their children play with a football at home and to participate in watching/reading any football related material, from skill based tutorials to different styles of football from leagues around the world.

Values and Conduct

At Alphington FC no coach or player is more important than the team.

At Alphington FC no player, coach, team-manager, committee member, or parent is bigger than the club; all must be unified in contributing to the club vision and philosophies, both on and off the field.

Alphington FC promotes sportsmanship and respect. Respect for coaches. Respect for officials; Respect for team mates; Respect for the opposition; Respect for the club. Respect for the game.

Alphington FC is an all-inclusive club transversing both culture and gender.

Alphington FC coaches focus on positive feedback and encouragement both in training and on matchday. Criticism is also part of developing a player/team; the coaching philosophy at Alphington FC encourages that any necessary criticism of a player/team is constructive and handled in a

manner so that the player/team can learn from the experience and hence improve.

Alphington FC coaches will not swear in front of the children during training or matchday.

Both Alphington FC coaches and players will accept the official's final word during a game.