



## SQUAD PLAYER INFORMATION

### UKFA PHILOSOPHY:

Our goal is crystal clear...[we want to help children develop elite behaviours in terms of their performances & behaviours on & off the pitch.](#)

Please click the link to our new website to find out exactly what this means and how we aim to achieve goal. <https://www.uk-fa.com/about>

### KIT / EQUIPMENT:

All squad players must have the current UKFA kits (from Integrity Sports) so everyone matches & looks professional at training and at games / tournaments.

**Integrity Sports Website** – <https://insportshk.com/ukfa>  
**Password** – ukfa2021

The full **orange** squad kit must be worn on the designated squad training day.

The full **yellow** academy kit must be worn on all other days.

The full **blue** goalkeeper kit must be worn to goalkeeper training only (Thursdays).

All players **must** wear shinpads to all training sessions & matches / tournaments underneath the UKFA socks. If players do not come wearing shinpads they won't be allowed to participate in training or matches / tournaments. Players must remove all jewellery e.g., watches. Bring plenty of water at all times. Players must bring any necessary medications (e.g., inhalers) at all times. **All of this is for safety & there is no exception.**

All players must bring their football to all training sessions, matches / tournaments and it must be the correct size. The wrong size is hugely detrimental to player development:

- U7 players (born 2016+) – size 3 football
- U8 players (born 2015) – size 3 football
- U9 players (born 2014) – size 3 football
- U10 players (born 2013) – size 4 football
- U11 players (born 2012) – size 4 football
- U12 players (born 2011) – size 4 football
- U13/14 players (born 2009-2010) – size 5 football

Coaches will always let the team know ahead of upcoming matches / tournaments which kit to come wearing, but always remember to always bring the other colour shirt as spare.

## TRAINING:

All squad players must train a minimum of 2 days a week (1 of those days must be the designated squad training day). If you can do more than 2 classes a week that's even better.

If your child is going to miss any training due to sickness, injury or any other reason, please let Jon & the team Coach know asap. We understand sickness & injuries happen and we can adjust our training plans if informed, but if we are not told it can affect session plans.

## PLAYERS (these are minimum standards that must be met at all times):

- **Coach & Player Handshake** – The first thing all players must do when arrive at training & matches / tournaments (once they've put their bag down and **before** they go and chat to teammates) is head over to the coach, greet each other with a handshake or first pump and say hello. It is a great sign of respect and it shows the coach the player is ready and focused. Then the coach will let the player know what to do, i.e., which team to join if they are playing a match.
- **Hard work** – give 100% effort all the time (*not just when coaches are watching*).
- **Focus** – Listen to & watch your coach and teammates (*soak up information*).
- **Desire to improve** – If there is something you aren't good at, don't hide it, don't sulk about it – improve it with practice, repetition and effort.
- **Positive attitude** – If you make a mistake, don't worry, sulk or dwell on it – learn from it. Mistakes are part of the development process. If you never make a mistake that means you aren't pushing yourself or trying difficult / new challenges.
- **Help teammates** – Encourage at all times, don't moan or blame. If someone does something "wrong" explain why it was incorrect & show them what they could do next time. Leaders lift others around them. Moaners & blamers are excuse makers.
- **Responsibility** – You are in charge of being prepared for class (not mum, dad or auntie). Ensure you have the correct kit, football, shin pads, footwear and drink. You are in charge of your belongings, put them in a place where you'll remember them. If you leave anything behind, that's your responsibility.
- **You are always representing yourself & UKFA** – Always show great behaviour and respect for venues, teammates, coaches, the opposition and referees. If anyone isn't showing acceptable levels of behaviour and respect, they will get a one warning, any further issues and they will be out of UKFA. We won't allow anyone to affect the UKFA reputation and remember that someone is always watching.
- **Sportsmanship** – At training or matches / tournaments, be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Never gloat, taunt or ridicule. Never refuse to shake hands with the opposite players and coaches and never use profane language or gestures.
- **Practice football in your own time** - either individually or with friends. The more hours you spend with a football the better. It will make a dramatic difference.
- **If you are late** – DO NOT WALK to the pitch, run to the pitch.

## **PARENTS (AT TRAINING & MATCHES / TOURNAMENTS):**

- We want your kids to have responsibilities at a young age, and we hope you want that too. Therefore, please help us by emphasising to your kids that they are in charge of preparing and looking after their football kit and equipment.
- Please ensure the players are at training and matches / tournaments on time.
- At training and matches / tournaments please feel to encourage your kids and their teammates, but please don't instruct / direct them. They should be listening to the coach and their teammates. We don't want mixed messages or too many voices.
- At matches / tournaments please conduct yourself in a manner that you would want your kids to behave. Please do not moan at the referees or organizers. If there is ever an issue with a referee, opposition coach, player or parent, it's the UKFA coach's responsibility to deal with this. It's always nice to win, but the most important thing is individual and team improvement, regardless of the result.

## **ISSUES (THE 24-HOUR RULE)**

Over the course of 1 whole year there's bound to be times where you may not be happy with something we do, whether that's related to training or a decision / player selection. The coach will always be happy to answer any questions or help to explain a decision. But please implement & respect the [24-hour rule](#).

The [24-hour rule](#) is in place, so you have time to take a step back & reflect. Then if there is still an issue, please send a written or verbal message the coach with your question / query. This allows the coach time to send you an in-depth thought-out response, rather than asking them on the spot. There is usually a perfectly good reason for all coaching decisions that perhaps you weren't aware of on the day but allowing us time to explain can quickly clear things up.

Pitch side on the day of matches / tournaments is not the time or the place to raise issues. Tensions are often high to the nature of the game, and coaches have many kids and responsibilities to take care of at the same time. Likewise, at training (before or after class) we have lots of responsibilities so that's not the time to discuss any issues.

If the issue can be resolved at that point then great, but if not then please contact the UKFA owner (Jon) who will look into the matter from both sides and try to resolve.

The [24-hour rule](#) is also there for coaches. We always want individuals & the team to do well & show improvement. Sometimes we may feel frustrated with a situation & want to bring it to your attention, but again we will wait 24 hours, giving us time to reflect on it before deciding what to do.

## **COACHES:**

- We will work incredibly hard to help your child improve as an individual on and off the pitch. We aren't just here to make them better football players, we are here to help them become responsible, respectful and hardworking young adults.

- We will encourage and challenge the kids to push them out of their comfort zone.
- We will aim to create a fast-paced and exciting session where the kids can be creative & express themselves while working as hard as possible.
- If you ever hear or see us being hard on a child, its most likely because we feel they aren't trying their hardest or listening. It won't be because they made a mistake trying their best. We believe in your kids (that's why they are in the squad) therefore nothing is more frustrating for a coach when the players aren't giving it their all.
- If someone isn't trying hard or listening and spoiling the class or wasting time for others, we'll sit them out and its likely they won't play at the weekend.
- We believe honesty is always the best policy and if a player isn't meeting the standards of effort required, we will tell them. This isn't to be mean; this is to help them understand what we expect. If an issue continues, we will raise this with you so together we can try to resolve the matter.

## STYLE OF PLAY:

### Individually (in possession)

- You should be comfortable to receive the ball in all areas, even under pressure, constantly checking your surroundings & shoulder to find space to receive & exploit.
- Show confidence & creativity in 1v1 situations, using ball manipulation & skills to get past the opposition to create overloads.
- Play with your head up, looking for the best option at all times (should I dribble, pass, or shoot?)

### Individually (out of possession)

- You should get back to defend quickly and be goal side of your opponent (the player you are marking). Get back first, then catch your breath.
- If you are the closest to the ball apply pressure on the opponent without diving in or to going to the ground, making it easy for them to get past you. Try to cut the space down and limit passing options for the opponent (ideally sending them backwards).
- Offer cover for your teammates. While watching your own opponent be aware of covering space behind your teammate in case the opposition gets past them.
- Communicate with your teammates, letting them know where they should be and why. Communication should be constant between teammates.

### As a team (in possession)

- Attempt to play out from the back, building play through the 1/3rds (from the goalkeeper, through the defenders, through the midfielders, up to the forwards).
- If space is available exploit it by playing quickly and getting forward.
- If space is unavailable retain possession of the ball, moving it forwards, backwards and wide quickly but patiently between teammates to pull the opposition apart.

### As a team (out possession)

- Everyone retreats quickly back into shape, getting goal side of the opposition, looking at the ball at all times (run backwards).

- If the opposition has control of the ball in non-dangerous areas remain in shape and be patient, defending space and passing options. When the opposition make a mistake (either a bad pass or mis control) pounce as a team with the closet teammate applying heavy pressure to win the ball back.

## **SELECTON CITERIA FOR MATCHES / TOURNAMENTS:**

Just because your child is part of the squad that doesn't mean they will be automatically selected for all matches / tournaments.

To be selected for any games, your child obviously has to be available to play on the day. As soon as we find out about any games, we'll check everyone's availability first before selecting players.

For those kids who are available to play, they will need to show the coach they deserve to be selected for the upcoming game. Coaches will select players based on the following:

- Players who attend all training sessions
- Players who show 100% commitment & effort for themselves and the team and show a positive attitude at training.
- Players who show willingness to try difficult challenges & don't shy away.
- Players who show great focus on the coach & their teammates.
- Players who put the team before themselves and will play in any position for the coach & their teammates.
- Players who show the most improvement, technically, tactically and physically.

If your child isn't selected for an upcoming game its probably because they didn't do all of the above, and the coach will be happy to explain this to you if you have any questions. The coach will let the individual players know what they need to do to be selected in the future.

## **PLAYING TIME AT MATCHES / TOURNAMENTS:**

There is no set formula for this and UKFA do not have an equal playing time rule. We believe that playing time is earnt and a privilege, it's not a right. Playing time will be decided on the day. The starting line-up will be chosen by the coach during the warmup once they see the players getting ready. If players are late, they probably won't start... that wouldn't be fair to those who arrived on time. Players who look awake, focused and prepare the best will most likely start the game. If everyone is looking sharp during the games and are doing the best they can, then naturally equal playing time with be close (while not exact). If any players aren't working hard for the team or trying their best, then their playing time will be less than those who are working hard for themselves and the team.

## **PLAYING POSITIONS / SUBSITUTES:**

Football is a team sport, and the team comes first, above any individual player. If the coach asks someone to play in any position, then we fully expect them to do it to their best

without any questions. Any players demanding to play a certain position or moaning about having to play in a specific position won't play, they will stay as a substitute. When players are a substitute they should be focused on the game and assisting their teammates, communicating any appropriate instructions. Substitutes who are not focused on the game or are asking the coach when they are coming on, simply won't be coming on.

## **MOVING UP, DOWN OR OUT FROM THE SQUAD**

**A lot can change in a year.** Players can improve beyond all recognition and likewise players can plateau or regress if they are not working as hard as others. If we have an "A" and a "B" team, a player's position in those teams is not set for the year...that wouldn't be fair on anyone and can stifle effort and drive and it's not realistic to the world we live in.

If your child starts the season on the "A" or "B" team that's because we feel it's the most suitable team for them at the time. However, if a player from the "B" team is working really hard and progressing, then there's every chance we will trial them in the "A" team and move them up if they deserve it. Likewise, if an "A" team player isn't working hard enough, not showing effort, drive or focus then we may move them down to the "B" team.

If a player is really showing no sign of effort or improvement and they are falling behind the rest of the team, then we may have to remove them from the squad completely. This rarely happens because we will always try to guide and help the players, and we will always warn the player and the parents about the issue and give them a time to improve, but if there is no improvement then we will remove them from the squad if we think that's the best thing to do. There are always non squad players improving, looking for their opportunity, so it's up to the current squad players to make sure we know they belong.

## **RESPECT THE COACHES**

Just like the players, no two coaches are exactly the same. We have different personalities, ways of teaching and communicating but we all have the same goal of helping to improve your kids on & off the pitch. If we raise any concerns, it's only to help the kids in the long term. It would be easy not to be open & honest with players about concerns, but that helps no one.

As coaches we are always having hours of lengthy conversations about players and we will always help each other and will often consult you about issues / thoughts. While we are not perfect (no one is) and not every single decision may be the right one in your eyes, we will always do what we think is best for each player.

If you have any problems with a coach, out of respect please don't air any judgement or thoughts publicly. That's not an appropriate or good example for the kids, and UKFA coaches would not do that about a parent or a player. We want to ensure a positive atmosphere and environment for all. Please raise any issues through the appropriate channels (directly with the coach or with the owner).