

ABBOTS YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

Club Handbook Season 2021/22

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<https://abbotsyouthfc.co.uk/>

Affiliation Number: X-HER4291



**ACCREDITED
CLUB**
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

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Coach me, I will learn.

Challenge me, I will improve.

Believe in me, I will grow.



Introduction

The Club Handbook is for players, parents, and club volunteers. It is intended to give an overview of AYFC to prospective participants and to provide anyone involved with the club with some useful information.

About the Club

Abbots Youth Football Club has been running for more than 50 years in the heart of the village. We are a community club and are committed to meeting the sporting needs of the children of Abbots Langley.

Our base is in the heart of the village at Manor House, in alliance with the Abbots Youth Cricket Club. Our players predominately come from the village although due to the growth and strength of the club we now attract players and coaches from a 10-mile radius of Abbots Langley

We currently have teams playing competitive/friendly football every week from Under 7 through to Under 18, as well as development groups for Under 6s. We compete in the West Herts League, as well as playing in the Herts County Cup which involves teams from all over Hertfordshire.

Currently we have over 60 qualified coaches and managers running 19 teams with over 240 registered players. We are always keen to expand our number of teams and players; we are particularly keen to start girls' teams if we have sufficient volunteers and players.

Everyone involved in the running of the club is a volunteer and the vast majority are parents of current or previous AYFC players. **It's a great way of supporting your local community so if you would like to get involved please get in touch!**

England Football Accredited

We are proud to be an England Football Accredited club. This is an award given by the Football Association to clubs and leagues who demonstrate they offer well-run and sustainable football.

Those who achieve accredited status are proud to prioritise qualified coaching and safeguarding as well as the values of The FA's Respect Programme as part of their game.

We take accredited status very seriously, and all players, managers, coaches, and spectators are expected to adhere to our codes of conduct and to the FA Respect guidelines.

Our ethos

Abbots Youth Football Club (AYFC) aims to provide all the boys and girls at the club the maximum opportunity to develop their football, personal, social, educational and sporting skills to their full potential. We place the children's welfare and enjoyment central to all decisions we make.

AYFC is non-political and non-discriminatory. The club welcomes children regardless of ability, experience or life circumstances because we believe that football should be available for all that want to play the game.

Good sportsmanship is considered an essential part of AYFC membership and for all teams regardless of the competition being played.

0.0017% of grass roots footballers will play in the Premiership
100% will be members of society

Player development

We encourage all children to reach their true potential in football by applying the FA's four corner model. This model was developed by the FA to aid coaches with their planning and delivery of grassroots coaching sessions. The aim is to encourage coaches to prepare their sessions more intricately, and consider the impacts their coaching has on the players they work with.

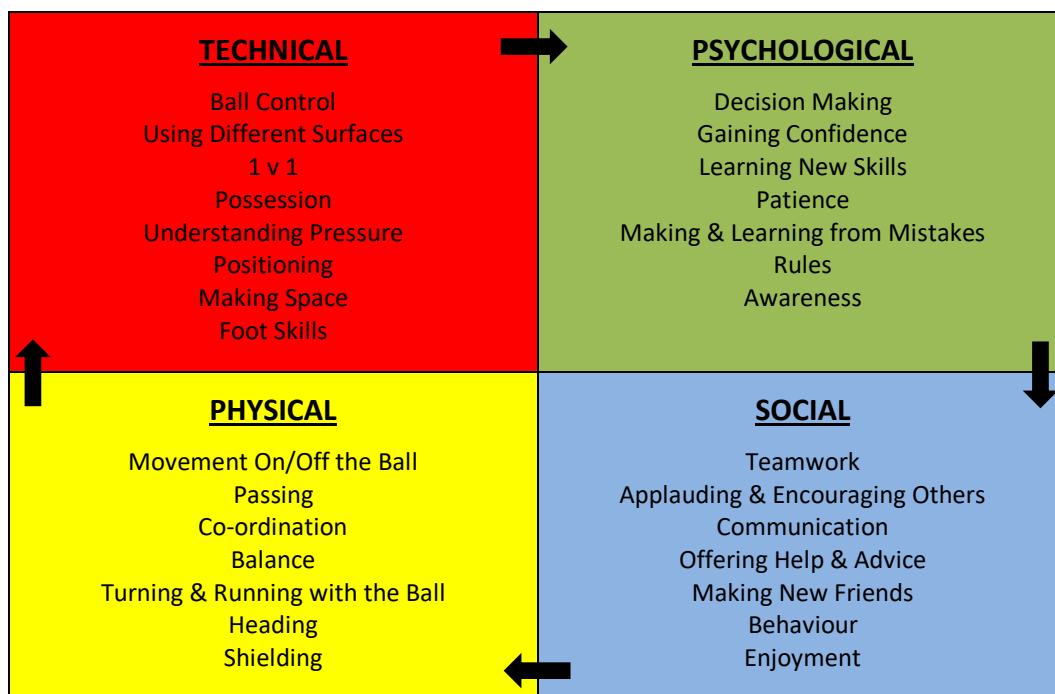
The four corners are defined as:

Technical – football skills 'on the ball'

Psychological – mental attributes

Physical – movement within the game

Social – Interactions with other participants



This development approach also means that the score is not the most important thing. The “final result of the match” is an adult orientated view of football not always shared by children. This is why AYFC Coaches, particularly in the mini soccer section where results are not recorded or published, will focus children away from the result of the game and more onto the way they are playing or developing or their effort to do what they have learned.

Squad sizes

AYFC recommend the following squad sizes:

| Age groups | Match format | Squad size |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| U6 development | | |
| U7 & U8 | 5 vs 5 | 7/8 players |
| U9 & U10 | 7 vs 7 | 9/10 players |
| U11 & U12 | 9 vs 9 | 11 - 13 players |
| U13 up | 11 vs 11 | 14 - 15 players |

We recognise that there needs to be some flexibility according to the needs of the players. Some teams may wish to have additional squad members if the numbers of committed regular players is not at a stable level or if there are long-term injuries for example.

There may be scope for players to join the club for training only, possibly moving into match squads in time when numbers permit – as long as player registration processes are completed.

Playing time

We cannot always guarantee that all players get exactly the same playing time in matches because it is difficult for coaches to monitor and depending on squad numbers it may not always be possible.

For younger age groups (U10 and below) it is good practice for coaches to try ensure that each player plays at least half of any match for which they are selected.

For older age groups with larger squads some managers/coaches may choose to use a rota basis in order to ensure that all players present get some playing time on a match day. Coaches need to have some flexibility in order to respond to a variety of factors including players' availability, injuries, commitments, etc.

Coaches will communicate their approach at the start of the season so that expectations of players/parents are clear.

Managing playing time and expectations is one of the most challenging aspects of coaching youth football so we ask that parents/guardians are understanding of this and raise any concerns they have in a constructive approach.

Streaming

The issues of 'streaming' can be one of the most divisive issues in youth football so we want to make clear our club approach.

At AYFC our guiding principle is that we want to provide opportunity for all players, irrespective of their technical development. However, we recognise that, in order to provide development opportunities for *all* players, some streaming in certain age groups may be beneficial.

Teams playing 5 and 7-a-side football (U7 to U10 leagues) should not be streamed. Instead, it is the role of the coaches during these initial years to develop the players within the teams, and to work together as a collective age group squad. Our experience is that young players flourish and develop faster and better in a non-streamed environment. This is in line with latest FA guidelines that place inclusion and player development foremost.

In exceptional circumstances (such as the need to balance team numbers within a year group), the club may support the movement of players between teams at these age groups, but only where there is a positive benefit to everyone concerned.

Health, Safety & Welfare

We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. Abbots Youth Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

All club volunteers have a valid DBS and have completed the FA Safeguarding Children course.

The club Welfare Officers, alongside the club committee and all volunteers, are responsible for the welfare and safeguarding of all members under the age of 18.

The club website contains details of several policies and documents relating to welfare issues:

[AYFC Safeguarding Children Policy And Procedures](#)

[AYFC Risk Assessment – Covid19](#)

[FA anti-bullying policy](#)

[FA guidance on heading](#)

It is important that Parents and Managers are familiar with these documents and understand the action to take in the event of a concern relating to young players or any conduct/disciplinary issues, raised by members, parents or by players/parents of opposing teams.

Please take the time to read these documents and understand them.

Safeguarding

Every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. Abbots Youth Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

- The club has an annually reviewed [safeguarding policy](#)
- All volunteers must have an FA enhanced DBS check
- Each team must have at least one designated first aider with an in-date FA Introduction to First Aid in Football (IFAIF)
- Each team must have at least one FA Level 1 qualified coach
- Each team should have a coach:player ratio of 1:16 or less

First Aid

At every training session or match all teams must have at least one qualified FA Level 1 coach and at least one first aider who has completed The FA Introduction to First Aid in Football.

All teams must have a fully stocked first aid kit; it is the coach/manager's responsibility to keep this kit appropriately stocked.

Each coach/manager is issued with an Emergency Action Plan relevant to their venue. This is used when communicating with emergency services and to provide relevant local information to visiting teams.

Almost all of the venues we use for training or matches have a defibrillator.

All serious injuries or incidents (i.e., those requiring hospital/medical treatment) should be registered with the Welfare Officer.

Bullying

Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club.

We fully support the FA's Anti-Bullying Policy for Football Clubs which is available on our website (<https://abbotsyouthfc.co.uk/cms/fa-anti-bullying-policy-for-clubs.pdf>)

If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to report it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents must be reported to the Club Welfare Officer.

Discrimination

Discrimination has no place in football.

If you are the victim or witness discrimination, every instance should be reported. <https://www.thefa.com/get-involved/respect/anti-discrimination>

Respect

AYFC are fully supportive of the FA's *Respect* agenda.

Creating the right environment, both on and off the pitch is the responsibility of everyone involved in football. Whether we are a player, parent or coach it is important that we all play our part in creating a fun, safe and inclusive environment.



Play your part and support the FA's Code of Respect:

- Have fun, that's what we're all here for
- Celebrate effort and good play from both sides
- Always respect the Referee and assistants, encourage players to do the same
- Stay behind the respect barrier and touchline
- When players make mistakes, offer them encouragement to try again next time
- Never engage in, or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour

On match days a respect barrier should be set up along the side of the pitch. Each team must also have a match delegate who should be introduced to the referee before the match. A full list of duties can be found in the appendix.

Codes of Conduct

The club has Codes of Conduct for players, coaches and parents. These are important documents that are available on our website and are part of our registration process for players and their parents/guardians.

Most of the issues we have around behaviour are with parents/supporters rather than players. We all know that football can evoke strong emotions in the moment, but it is important parents/supporters recognise they are all role models to their own children and other players, and representatives of AYFC.

Kit and Club shop

Each player registered with the club will receive their own kit as part of their registration fees. The club are very appreciative of sponsorship to pay for new kits for teams when required. Local businesses can, within FA guidelines, have branding on kits/jackets.

Additional items such as jackets, sweatshirts, training tops or bags can be obtained through sponsorship or by agreement with parents/guardians.

The official Abbots Youth kit is blue and black stripes, black shorts and black socks.



The away kit is yellow and black stripes, black shorts and black socks.



AYFC's official team store is at:

<https://www.totalfootballdirect.com/club-shops/football-teams/abbots-youth-fc>

Boot room

In order to reduce costs and be more sustainable the club has a scheme to encourage the donation and re-use of boots. Our young members feet grow fast so there are often boots (astro, firm ground, soft ground) that no longer fit but have lots of life in them. Each team's coach can accept boot donations from parents/guardians of their players; these are then added to a stock list on <https://ayfcbootrm.weebly.com/>

A small monetary donation is requested for each pair of boots recycled - 100% of this money goes to Abbots Youth to help keep subscription fees as low as we can.

Outgrown kits are also passed down to younger groups where possible or donated to charitable groups.

Facilities

We do not currently have our own clubhouse but our 'home' is at Manor House in alliance with the Abbots Youth Cricket Club. Most teams from U6 to U11 train and play matches here.

Older teams play matches and train at a range of local venues including Leavesden Country Park, Future Academies Watford, St. Michael's School, and Watford Leisure Centre – Woodside.

Such is the growth of the club and the scarcity of local playing facilities; we are always looking for additional pitches and training venues.

We encourage our players and supporters to leave venues better than we found them – by picking up litter and ensuring we take home all drinks, oranges, etc.

Get involved

AYFC is a community club and is dependent on **volunteers** giving their time to support grass roots football. We expect all parents/guardians of club players to volunteer wherever possible to assist in the running of their child's team.

As well as ensuring that your child arrives on time and is well prepared with water, kit, etc. there are plenty of ways that parents/guardians can assist on match days such including:

- Be the match delegate
- Be the referee/assistant referee
- Put up the respect barrier
- Make sure the pitch is safe/clear
- Put up/put away goalposts
- Put up/put away corner flags
- Clear litter after the game

Every team at AYFC is managed by **coaches/managers** who are parents and first got involved with coaching to support their child's enjoyment of football. It is a very rewarding activity and is a hugely important role in the positive development of your child and other young people. The club supports coaching coaches and development – if you are interested please talk to any of our team coaches or a member of the committee.

Throughout the year the club run various **fundraising events**; as well as building the social aspects of the club these events are an essential part of maintaining the financial health of the club and help to keep subscription fees low. We are very appreciative of the friends and families who support these events.

Membership and fees

The club strives to keep membership subscriptions as low as possible and our subscriptions are generally amongst the lowest in the local area. All fees go towards the costs of pitch hire, training venue hire, kits and equipment, league entry, referee fees, end of season awards, and coach/volunteer training.

Registration fees are payable in two instalments – one on registration prior to the season and the second in January. There is a sibling discount available to families with two or more players registered with the club.

For any queries relating to membership please contact the membership secretary at abbotsyouth@gmail.com

Managers should maintain a contact list and provide this to the membership secretary to keep the membership database up to date. The club maintains a set of accounts that can be made available to club members on request.

The club are keen that finance should not be a barrier to participation and enjoyment in youth football.

In instances where payment of the membership fees would cause financial hardship please contact the team manager or Membership Secretary.

All registered players automatically become members of the club and affiliate members of Abbots Langley Cricket Club. This includes social membership of ALCC which means the facilities of the clubhouse are available to everyone at AYFC including the hire of the clubhouse – for details please contact John Sweedy on 01923 440474.

Sponsorship

The club has a long history of working with local companies who may wish to sponsor an individual team to contribute to the costs of kits, rain jackets, training tops, etc. Sponsoring organisations can have their logo on team clothing as well as use team photos – NB. As long as all parents are in agreement.

If you have a connection to a company that might wish to sponsor your team, please discuss with your team manager or the club committee.

The FA recommend that for youth football it is inappropriate for team clothing to promote any age-restricted products, services or related activities such as alcohol or gambling. Generally, reference to a pub or restaurant may be permissible.

Communications and social media

The FA recommends that texting is not used as the primary method of communication between adults and child/young people in football.

The club recommend the use of a team management app such as [Team App](#) or [Full-Time](#).

If a team sets up a social networking group, e.g. on WhatsApp, it is strongly advised that it should be explicitly for use by named members, parents and carers solely about football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection. At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments about individual players, opponents, match officials, etc.

AYFC obtain permission that photographs of playing members can be used in AYFC media during the registration process. Any individual members posting photographs of players on social media should have the express permission of the member's parents/guardians.

It is against Club and FA rules to post comments that are or maybe conceived as offensive, insulting, abusive, threatening, racist, and discriminatory or any other reference that may cause offence or harm to others.

For under 11 and below age teams no reference to results must be made on social media.

Complaints Procedure

In the event that any AYFC member feels that they have suffered discrimination in any way, or that the Club Policies, Rules or Code of Conduct have been broken they should follow the procedures below.

They should report the matter to the Club Secretary or another member of the Committee.

The report should include:

- i. Details of what happened, including when and where the occurrence took place.
- ii. Any witness statement and names.
- iii. Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way.
- iv. Details of any former complaints made about the incident, date, when and to whom made.
- v. A preference for a solution to the incident.

The Club's Management Committee will aim to respond to complaints within 10 days.

If the complaint is complex or needs investigation you can expect a holding letter within 10 days and a detailed response within 20 days.

The Club's Management Committee will have the power to:

- warn as to future conduct;
- suspend from membership;
- remove from membership;

any person found to have broken the Club's Policies or Codes of Conduct.

Individuals have the right to seek guidance from Hertfordshire FA where they feel they have been unfairly treated by the club committee.

Information for Managers

Match arrangements

Before the game:

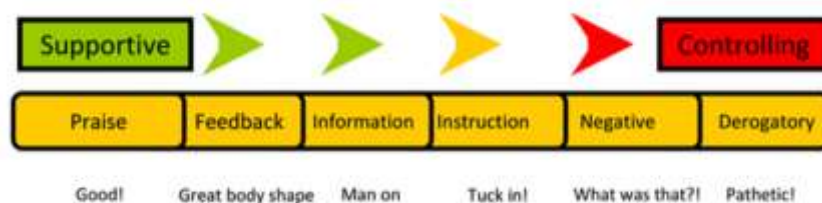
- Details of fixtures will be provided to you by your fixtures secretary or on the FA's Full-Time website (<https://fulltime-league.thefa.com>) or app
- If you are the home side you must contact the opposition and referee (where provided) to confirm location and kick off time by the Tuesday before the Sunday game
- Check that your first aid kit is replenished and that you have details of the location's Emergency Action Plan

Match day:

- Exchange player registration print outs if required
- Ensure your Match Day Delegate is present, wearing the hi-viz and reports to the referee 15 minutes before kick-off. (see Appendix I for details of MDD role)
- Appoint an assistant referee who should also report to the referee 15 minutes before kick-off

During the game

- Check that substitutes are keeping dry and warm wherever possible
- Ensure you individually are giving only positive messages to your players - <https://www.thefa.com/get-involved/respect/we-only-do-positive>



Credit: Dr's Matt Pain, Chris Harwood, Andy Cole

After the game

- Report the result to your fixture secretary by completing the match report on Full-Time including details of players, substitutes, referee, pitch conditions, Respect, etc.
- There are separate reporting arrangements for County Cup fixtures
- Report all yellow and red cards to the club secretary within 5 days with details including name of player, match date, venue, opposition, type of card and offence, name of referee, etc.
- Any fines accrued by players or teams must be paid within 7 days of notification by the league/Herts FA.

Pitch venues and arrangements

Manor House

The Parish Council contact us if the pitches are unplayable.

We supply our own respect barriers, goals, nets and corner flags for all pitches, these are stored in the cricket club score hut. Keys are held by managers of teams playing at Manor House.

FA Respect barriers should be erected before every game.

Leavesden County Park (Senior & Mini)

Please ring the Three Rivers Pitch helpline (07966 406238) to determine playability of pitches.

The keys for the car park barrier and changing rooms are held by Andy Cox.

We supply our own nets and corner flags.

FA Respect barriers should be erected before every game

Futures Academy Watford

We generally make our own decision on whether the pitches are playable. Please bear in mind the damage that might be caused by playing on a very wet surface meaning potential future postponements.

We supply our own respect barriers, net pegs and corner flags for all pitches.

The pitches are accessed through a gate on the path off High Elms – padlock code will be advised.

FA Respect barriers should be erected before every game.

Kings Langley School

The School contact us if the pitch is unplayable.

The school supply nets, we supply corner flags.

FA Respect barriers should be erected before every game.

For all locations please ensure that any litter, particularly discarded drink bottles, are cleared from all grounds (Home & Away).

Tournaments

AYFC will fund the cost of entry fees for each squad to enter one external tournament to a maximum level of £50 per tournament. It is the team manager's responsibility to decide how many (if any) tournaments the team enter.

Appendix I: Club Committee

| Position | Name | Email | Mobile |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Chairman | Tim Denyer | tim.denyer@tiscali.co.uk | 07940 548263 |
| Secretary | Martin Dean | martindean1000@gmail.com | 07747 790617 |
| Membership Secretary | Marie Tailor | abbotsyouth@gmail.com | 07956 192206 |
| Social Secretary | Andy Cox | andycox138@hotmail.com | 07720 288408 |
| Treasurer | Jon Messenger | j.messenger@sky.com | 07554 313232 |
| Welfare Officer | Gordon Wilson | gordonamwilson@gmail.com | 07931 541535 |

Appendix II: Match Delegate Role

From WHYL Handbook:

The role of match day delegate is **compulsory to all teams** in youth football and was introduced by the Football Association to help protect young referees by having a responsible individual from each team whom the referee could approach if there was a problem with coaches or spectators.

- We would also expect the delegate to be proactive in ensuring good behaviour from those from their team on the touchline.
- THE MATCH DAY DELEGATE **SHOULD NOT BE THE MANAGER, COACH OR ASSISTANT REFEREE**
- Every team should have a high visibility jackets for match delegates and these should be worn so the referee can identify the delegate quickly, if needed.
- The home match delegate should meet the referee when they arrive.
- The two match delegates should introduce themselves to each other, and *report to the referee at least 15 minutes before kick-off*.
- The delegate should identify themselves as the match delegate to the referee and supply the referee with their full name.
- If the delegate is approached by the referee they must act on their instructions.
- Both delegates should speak to the referee at half time, if necessary.
- Match day delegates are not expected to deal with the opposition spectators or coaches but sometimes they may need to liaise with the opponent's match delegate and ask them to take any necessary action.
- It is much better to try to stop problems at an early stage. For example, if the delegate is aware of a parent who is shouting at the ref, they should not wait for the referee to intervene but have a quiet word themselves.
- Ensure that AYFC supporters treat the assistant referee with respect and under no circumstances comment on their performance except in a positive manner.
- The referee should be safely seen out of the ground by the home match delegate at the end of the game if necessary, in order to avoid confrontation in car parks, etc.
- Never comment to the referee on their performance or decisions other than in a positive manner.

Appendix III: Team Managers 2021/22

| Team | Name | Email | Mobile |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| U6 Development | Steve Gray Tony Bullock | steven.j.gray@talk21.com tbullock@uk.ey.com | 07929 977515 07776 170865 |
| U7 | Dean Creswell | deanacreswell@hotmail.com | 07811 733333 |
| U8 Red | Keith Sheeky | info@cheekysigns.co.uk | 07854 800524 |
| U8 Blue | John Gomez | john.gomez@sky.com | 07450 161845 |
| U8 White | Nick Rich | Richworld78@gmail.com | 07766 113732 |
| U10 Blue | Andrew Chambers | andrewchambers1977@hotmail.co.uk | 07736 944351 |
| U10 Black | William Hughes | hughes_w@hotmail.com | 07930 509877 |
| U11 Yellow | Joseph Quinn | quinny_24@icloud.com | 07785 617051 |
| U11 Blue | Brian Evans | slug37906@gmail.com | 07977 133598 |
| U12 | Carl Mitchell | Mitchellwr@sky.com | 07947 064450 |
| U13 | Craig Morrison | craig.morrison@motorolasolutions.com | 07792 511254 |
| U14 Yellow | Luke Horne | lukeghorne@outlook.com | 07832 219009 |
| U14 Red | Steven Querns Simon Wilding | Steveq08@hotmail.co.uk simon@mustrememberthat.com | 07850 428760 07802 418519 |
| U15 | Gordon Wilson | gordonamwilson@gmail.com | 07931 541535 |
| U16 | Spencer Hoadly | spencerhoadly@hotmail.com | 07961 800453 |
| U17 Blue | Rodney Bennett | bennettrodney@aol.com | 07512 723718 |
| U17 Red | Grant Smith | grant@grantcsmith.com | 07977 239151 |
| U18 | Andy Cox | andycox138@hotmail.com | 07720 288408 |