



# WCFA COACHES CORNER #4

FEBRUARY 2022



## SESSIONS, TIPS & TOOLS

### COACHES SPOTLIGHT: MARTIN GARDINER



### PLANNING: MATCH DAY WARM UP

### PLAYERS: PLAYING POSITIONS



### DID YOU KNOW?

Kendal County FC have  
never lost a game in the  
WCFA U25 Summer League!



### SESSION OF THE MONTH!

### COURSES: REFEREE'S

# COACHES SPOTLIGHT -

## MARTIN GARDINER



We headed south of the county to catch up with Martin Gardiner, in our second installment of Coaches Spotlight!

WCFA-What team/age group do you coach?

MG-Milnthorpe JFC U12s.

WCFA-When did you start coaching the team?

MG-I started coaching the team at U10's, so this is my third season now.

WCFA-What coaching qualifications do you have, and do you plan to do more?

MG-I have completed the new online 'Introduction to Coaching Football', which has replaced the level 1. I have also done part one of the online talent ID qualification. I plan to do my level 2 (UEFA C) and maybe more as i enjoy learning. I would also like to continue the talent ID process and would really enjoy going around to watch games for talented players.

WCFA-How did you get in to coaching?

MG-Both of my kids started playing at MJFC U8's, and whilst I enjoyed standing on the sidelines watching, I always felt that I wanted to be more involved, as I got a real buzz from seeing the kids improve. When the opportunity came, I jumped at the chance to get involved, supported by Paul Wakefield (Chairman).

WCFA-What do you enjoy most about coaching?

MG-I love seeing the kids grow in confidence and try new skills on the pitch, like a Maradona turn, step over or Ronaldo chop!

WCFA-Most memorable moment in coaching?

MG-We were playing a friendly away at Bowerham and it involved a player who had just started with us. We tried him on the right wing (he'd never played there before), and on his first run down the line, he attempted a cross. The cross in to



# COACHES SPOTLIGHT -

## .....CONTINUED



the box, looped over the goalkeeper in to the top bins!  
The look on his face as well as mine was priceless!

WCFA-What is your worst moment in coaching?

MG-I think it is when there is a heavy defeat and the teams are a real mis-match. Watching the players come off the pitch with their heads down and looking despondant after trying so hard. Then trying to make them feel positive after the game!

WCFA-What are the challenges that you face in coaching?

MG-There are always lots of challenges, as well as lots of positives too. Most of the challenges are insurmountable over time, however the biggest challenge would be time commitment as a volunteer, especially in and around my other commitments. It would be great to have another coach or two to share the work load.

WCFA-What advice would you give others looking to get in to coaching?

MG-It's easy to get in to, especially with the support of your club and County FA. The rewards outweigh the negatives.....so what are you waiting for?

WCFA-And lastly, if you could swap shoes with a Premier League (or beyond) manager for the day, who would it be?

MG-I spend a lot of time supporting my daughter in RTC football, so have followed the feeble game and growth of the sport for a number of years. So, I am going to say that I'd like to swap places for a day with Matt Beard at the end of the season.....when Liverpool WFC reach promotion back to the WSL!

# PLANNING - MATCH DAY WARM UP



Do you have a structure to your pre-match warm up? Often, this essential preparation is over looked, particularly in youth football. How many times have you seen players stood around waiting their turn to receive a 1-2 from their manager, to then shoot at goal, and then retrieve their ball, ambling to the back of the line? Or perhaps the manager has been side-tracked talking to parents, or making some final adjustments to the corner flags and nets, whilst the players have defaulted into taking turns in shooting at goal. Both are common occurrences in youth football, which apart from the goal keeper, does little to get your players ready for the match.

The very basics of a warm up should include movements and changes of direction/speed which will ready players for the game. So, if you are in a position whereby you are having to set up the pitch and the players are out and ready, why not get them straight in to a 5 a side game? You have half a pitch already marked out! Just a couple of cones on each touchline will serve as make-shift goals, and come kick off, the players will have already played 20 minutes of football. More often than not, the opposition players will be glancing over thinking, 'I wish we were playing a game for our warm up'.

If you find yourself with ample time for your warm-ups, why not run it as a 30-40 minute training session? Perhaps linking it in to the game!

Either way, both ideas will have your players actively warming up.



# PLAYERS - PLAYING POSITIONS



Are you giving your players the best possible opportunities to develop and learn the game? For example: What about that tall U11 player in your team that you play centre back week in, week out, because he/she can win ariel contests and can clear the ball long. How would that player react in a game if they found themselves in possession of the ball in the centre forward role or on the left wing? Would they know how to beat their opponents in a 1 v1, or create themselves half a yard (with their back to goal) to fire a shot away? How many times has that player been put in those scenarios in both training and games?

By keeping players in set positions, certainly in the foundation phase years, you may be hindering player development! So, why not have that centre half playing as a striker in the next game, whereby they are having to receive the ball with their back to goal? Or play that player out on the wing to give them lots of opportunities in 1 v 1s?

If young players are not exposed to different scenarios within a game, it might have a detrimental effect on not only their technical learning, but also in learning the game!

'The only team that needs to win games is the first team. The youth teams don't need to win, they just need to make their players better. Before the age of 14, it is about skillful play, developing good habits on the ball and understanding of positions. So in the end, you don't just have a complete player, but a person who is good for others, who means something in the world'

DENNIS BERGKAMP ON THE AJAX YOUTH TEAM PHILOSOPHY

# SESSION OF THE MONTH - ROTATION AND COVER

This small sided game session will give your players a better understanding of inter-changing positions and recognising when to cover. It will also encourage players to experience a variety of playing positions and being exposed to 1 v 1 scenarios.

Free play:

-The attacking team must try to occupy all four triangles in play (if they can). No player is restricted and may move to different triangle zones of the pitch. There will be times when this will not happen. Let the players experiment.

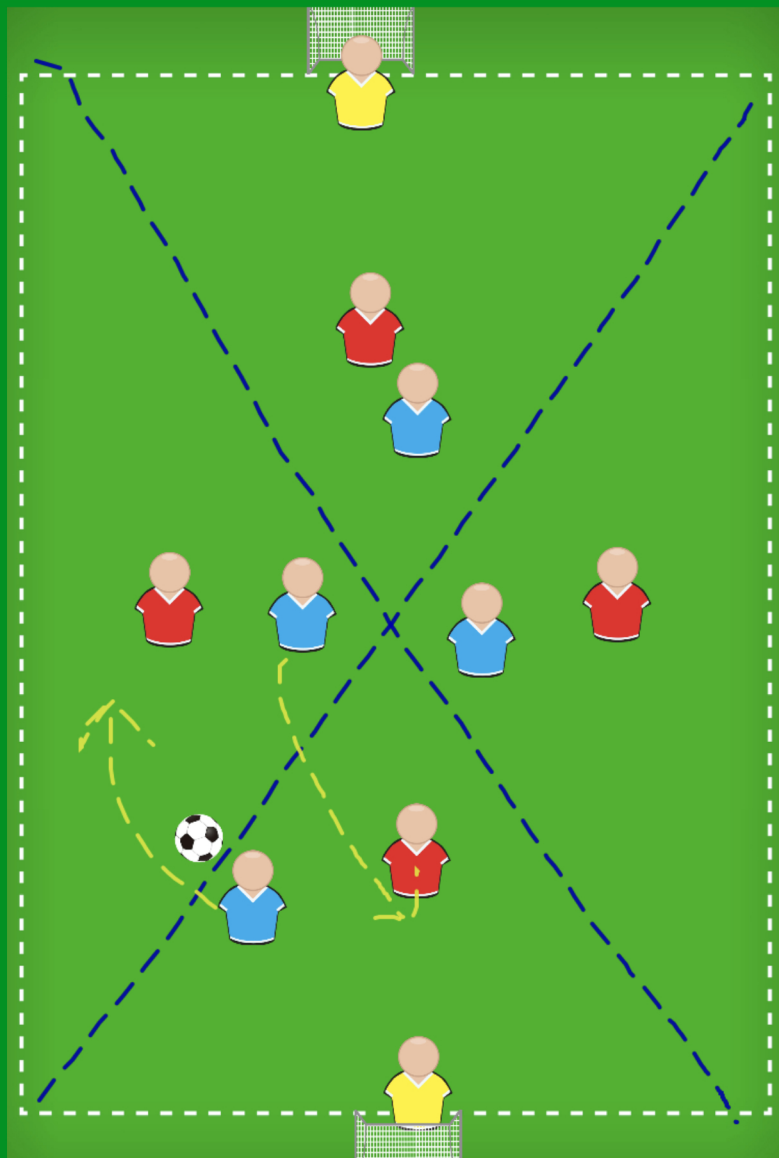


## PROGRESSIONS:

- if an attacking player travels with the ball in to another zone, a team mate must try and cover the zone from where the player came from
- if a player passes the ball in to another zone, they must try to move in to another zone, rotating positions with team mates
- create 2 v 1s in triangle zones with cover

## COACHING NOTE:

If you stop the group to help paint the picture of rotating and covering, keep it brief. A lot of your instructions can be encouraged in play.





# COURSES - REFEREE'S COURSE

Our next Referee's Course is coming up towards the end of this month, so now is the time to get involved!



**MONDAY 21 FEB, 6-9PM @ Westmorland County FA**

**SUNDAY 27 FEB, 9-5pm @ Westmorland County FA**

**Cost: £130 for over 18s, £90 for under 18s**

The course includes: Qualification, registration for the season, DBS, flags, whistle and cards. Please note that you will have to pay for your safeguarding qualification separately.

All learners must have reached the age of 14 years before starting the course.



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