



Issue One

MARCH 2020

ACADEMY

Welcome to the MK Dons Academy Newsletter which aims to provide you with insights and information across all the Academy age groups from Under 9s to Under 18s, as well as updates from various Academy staff members.

As I write these notes, the Coronavirus is increasingly impacting all aspects of life with the Government elevating its containment measures and restricting our 'normal' daily activities. The Academy, as per the EFL guidelines will not be competing in any fixtures until April 30th at the earliest with further updates due in the coming days. This shutdown has also impacted the training schedule across all the Academy age groups and as we continue to take guidance from the authorities, we will update you all in due course.

It is also looking increasingly unlikely that the annual Academy Showcase game will go ahead. We had provisionally agreed an exciting fixture against a top European team but will now need to delay this announcement until further notice.

Ultimately the health and safety of our society is of paramount importance and we do wish you all the very best during these challenging times.

Jon Goodman.
ACADEMY MANAGER



HEAD OF COACHING.

Hi everyone, I'm Stephen Payne and I am the Head of Coaching in the Academy.

The purpose of my role is to oversee the Academy Coaching programme. This includes monitoring coaches, evaluating the effectiveness of our Player Development Model, the Coaching Philosophy and enhancing the quality of coaching through a club specific 'Coach Competency Framework'.

Our club has an outstanding reputation for developing intelligent, hard-working, expressive and technically gifted players. It's my job to ensure that the coaching methodology being implemented continues to align to these values.

For example, one of our core principles is to develop players that are able to make quick intelligent decisions, so the coaches need to deliver practices where a variety of decisions can be made independently whilst under pressure. We are also looking to develop hard working players and therefore we need an intensity in training that is conducive to this.

There are a number of considerations that our coaching staff must be aware of to ensure our players are at the centre of our planning and delivery; some of the most important ones are:

1. A high ball rolling time (above 75% of practice spent with a ball moving)
2. No fixed passing practices (the practices are as random, close and chaotic as the most challenging moments of the game could be)
3. High tempo and intensity through considered and appropriate coaching interventions (we don't stop it if we don't need to)
4. High possession and high press (aiming to dominate games in and out of possession of the football)

Whenever you see a graduate of the Academy playing for the senior side you should see someone who is confident in their abilities, is brave in possession of the ball, works hard and intelligently to retain or regain possession and works very hard for their team. In the coming months I will aim to provide more insight behind our coaching and playing philosophy to offer you exclusive insight into some of the more complex methods we use in the MK Dons Academy.

Stephen Payne.

HEAD OF ACADEMY COACHING



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U18S UPDATE – HEAD COACH LEE COLLIER.



I'm Lee Collier, Head Coach for the Under 18s in our Academy. Like Stephen, I have recently joined the club and I would like to say how pleased I am to be working for a club such as MK Dons.

The club has a tremendous track record for developing players and I am very much looking forward to helping the Academy develop and produce more players for the First Team.

Since I started my role in December, I have been able to assess the players in the group, plan for the rest of the season and build towards the next. On the playing front, the boys have started to put in some very strong performances and the recent performance at Barnet last week, a 3-0 victory, was particularly pleasing.

The First Team management staff have been incredibly open and supportive which has allowed me to work alongside Ryan Harley for the reserve fixtures. This role

enables me to support our U18s in these fixtures and coach them in the finer details of how the senior professionals perform tactically. This is especially important when younger players such as Jack Davies transition from Academy to First Team training and matches.

As it currently stands, we are due to resume Academy fixtures on April 30th and I look forwards to updating you further as to our scholars' progression.

Lee Collier.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE UPDATE.

Hi all, I'm John Bitting. You may spot me on a First Team Matchday as I co-ordinate the ball boys, who are from our Academy teams. Youth Development is very important for young players.

The Youth Development Phase (YDP) runs from Under 13s through to Under 18s. The Lead Coaches of each age group are:

Under 18s
Izale McLeod

Under 17s
John Bitting

Under 16s
Anthony Lands / Martyn Westcott

Under 15s
Kylrn Brooks-Lynch / Matthew Pring

So far the season has been a very positive one for all phases. A number of Under 18s have featured regularly with the Under 16s, which in turn has created further openings across the younger age groups. From the Under 18s, Brook, Lewis, Charlie and Ryan have all accepted their scholarship offers and will be joining the Under 16s next season.

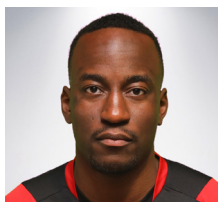
Each age group have performed well this season in both their scheduled league fixtures and additional friendlies that we arrange to provide an alternative test. As importantly, our coaches are embracing the style in which we play with a focus upon ball possession, individual expression and pressing when the opposition have the ball.

Like all other Academies, we are not currently training or playing matches but are due to resume the weekend of April 30th. I have recently sent all players a fact sheet which they can use to hone their skills and hopefully share with us via HUDL during this period.

John Bitting.

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**EACH AGE GROUP
HAVE PERFORMED
WELL THIS SEASON
IN BOTH THEIR
SCHEDULED
LEAGUE FIXTURES**



FOUNDATION PHASE UPDATE NATHAN THOMAS.

Hi everyone I'm Nathan Thomas and I coach in the Foundation Phase of the Academy.

The Foundation phase is made up of four age groups, Under 9s to Under 12s. The purpose of the Foundation Phase programme is to develop an individual's core skills, identify and develop an outstanding attribute and create players who love the game, love to practice, play with bravery and can demonstrate a willingness to learn on their journey to playing 11v11 and transitioning into the Youth Development Phase.

There are currently seven coaches working across the age groups who play a big part in the development of the boys as they progress through the phases.

Nathan Thomas.

Under 12s

Paul Read / Stuart McFayden

Under 11s

Felipe Chebal / Nathan Thomas

Under 10s

Matt Chart / Val M'bewe

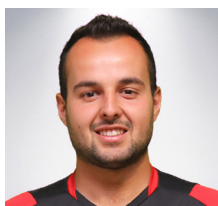
Under 9s

Gedeon Okito



The unique method of coaching adopted at the Academy is based on a consistent delivery thread, which is evident during sessions that cater for all our players. Planning and organisation for an Academy coaching practice is influenced by the characteristics that help towards the creation of a positive learning environment, including bespoke practices, variety of coaching styles, academy values and knowledge of the person.

Now a few months into 2020, we have welcomed two new arrivals within our FP age groups, Castle (U10) and King (U11). The fixtures programme has seen good performances from our Under 9s vs Arsenal, Under 10s vs Luton, and most recently from the Under 11 and Under 12s vs Peterborough.



PERFORMANCE INSIGHTS TOM GITTOES.

(HEAD OF ACADEMY SPORTS MEDICINE)

Hey, I'm Tom Gittoes. I'm the Head of Academy Sports Medicine at MK Dons.

The Academy Medical department have been working with both former sandwich year student Caitlin O'Reilly (University of Bedfordshire) and current MSc. student Beth Adams (University of Chichester) on research projects investigating the effects of skeletal maturity on injury rates in Academy football. Using anonymised injury and growth data collected in the Academy over the past three seasons, Caitlin and Beth have both completed in-depth statistical analysis of our data and are currently finalising the results and discussions.

Following the completion and acceptance of Caitlin's Abstract earlier this month, our initial results are due to be presented at the University of Bedfordshire on the 27th March. It is hoped these results will help us better understand the nature of growth-related injuries in Academy football and help us improve the monitoring of our schoolboy players. Look out for the results!

ACADEMY CORE SKILLS

Our Academy uses the online platform HUDL to host any matches that we film along with providing CPD content for coaches. Please see the following links that demonstrate some of our core skills for individuals as well as our 6 key phases of the game (Build / Create / Finish / Dictate / Delay / Deny).

Ball Mastery – [CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

MK Dons Phases of Play – [CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

ACADEMY GOALS OF THE MONTH

(MARCH 2020)

Please see our first Academy Goals of the Month awards as awarded by the coaching staff

Scholars (U18s) Goal of the Month – Lewis Johnson (U16s) playing for our U18s v Barnet (A)

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

Schoolboys (U9s – U16s) Goal of the Month – Nathan Hohenkirk (U12s) v Peterborough (H)

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

Academy (U9s – U18s) Best Piece of Play – Take a bow Jamie Beer (U12s) v Peterborough (H)

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



M K D O N S A C A D E M Y

Thank you.

