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PARNELLS COACHING POLICY

Parnell's GAA Club has an increasing number of juvenile teams in football, hurling and ladies football. The most important section of our club is the juvenile section and it is vital that we as coaches ensure there is an accepted coaching policy in all codes. We at juvenile level are laying the foundations for Parnell's to become more successful when they reach adult level. This coaching policy provides guidelines to help coaches make progress with their teams and therefore it is imperative that these guidelines are adhered to.

Coaching Policy

1. Qualifications

All mentors must be qualified at foundation level and be committed to implementing the "Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport" guidelines to their teams. Particular attention must be paid to instilling the highest levels of discipline in players, mentors and Parents/supporters alike. Any abuse of players, mentors or officials will not be tolerated and will be promptly dealt with by the club disciplinary committee. Mentors are requested to be available to attend all workshops and coaching courses provided and to implement any new coaching methods to their training. It is envisaged that a high percentage of coaches will progress to Level 1. It is extremely important where possible that all teams must have at least one representative attend Juvenile meetings

2. Requirements

We must ensure that all coaches / mentors have filled in all the relevant forms and completed the necessary course as set out by Gaa, this includes garda vetting and Code of Behaviour / Conduct

3. Ball / sliotar ratio

If children are to improve their football/hurling game, they need as much practice with the ball as possible. The more ball/sliotar contacts our players get in training, the more improvement there will be in their handling and overall skills. It goes without saying that if young players are to improve their football, hurling skills that they should have a football / sliotar of their own. If we accept this why not ask our players to arrive at training with their own ball / sliotar (all clearly marked with their name). It is

recommended that for each player to improve their skill level, they need a minimum of 200 ball/sliotar contacts per session. To achieve this figure, ideally you need a minimum of one ball per two children. As financial this is not feasible

4. Structure of a session

We are all aware the whilst children love playing games, they will not continue to improve if they come to training and the ball is just thrown in for a match. It is beneficial to allow the children a few minutes of each session for creative practice, where they are encouraged to practice a particular skill in whatever way they choose. Modified games, such as 2v2 or 3v3 etc., scoring or possession games, are a great way of Improving a players' performance.

The basic structures of a session which should be followed are:

Warm-up

Skill drills

Modified/conditioned games

Full match

5. Fun games at start of session

The importance of children having fun at training cannot be overstated. Children get bored extremely quickly if they are not having fun and they will be far more likely to attend training sessions if they are having fun. One of the easiest ways to have fun is with the warm-up game. Fun games are a perfect way to start a training session and should involve as much movement jumping/changing direction and pace etc. as possible. Fun games like tag-ball, call the number, bulldog, tag, catch the tails, stuck in the mud etc. are also beneficial for the following reasons: They are all about fun so the children love them The movements involved in these games mimic exactly the movements involved in match Situations.

6. Limited fitness training for juveniles

The vast majority of top senior inter-county teams use the ball for at least 80% of all their Sessions throughout the year. This percentage should be even higher for juvenile teams, Where the physical aspect of the game is far less relevant. Juvenile players are neither physically or psychologically matured yet and 'running' them without a ball/sliotar is far from enjoyable, children need 200 ball contacts per session and taking into account children can work as hard in a drill using the ball, there is no need for purely fitness training especially for the younger children

7. Working with beginners

Parnell's GAA Club is always actively looking to increase the number of juvenile members. Children of all ages are encouraged to come along and are tempted with the prospects of making new friends, being part of a club and learning the skills of a new game. Obviously a lot of these children won't already have the basic skills and it is our responsibility as coaches to encourage these children and work extra hard to Help them to develop these skills. Even though this takes extra time and effort from coaches is it appropriate or fair of us to say "he/she is no good..." etc. and disregard their efforts.

8. Have clear targets/goals for sessions/season and review regularly

How are you supposed to know what you're doing and how you're progressing etc. without setting any objectives/goals? Teams need specific targets. If you don't know where you're going, how are you going? To get there? All aims and objectives should be:

S.M.A.R.T.

Specific: goals should be very specific. For example, it is our goal to ensure that all of our players can kick a ball accurately over 20 meters with both feet.

Measurable: objectives should be measured frequently.

Action related: Aims must be relative to the skills/games. For example, Parnell's U13 hurling team is going to spend 10 minutes of every session doing shooting practice.

Realistic: Obviously aims must be realistic. There is no point in expecting the children to be able to kick over 45's with both feet...as it is not realistic.

Timescale: Set a date by which you hope to achieve your goals. For example, by March we want every player to be able to solo with both feet. It is very important and helpful for you as coaches to set targets for yourselves and your team as it will give you something to aim for.

All mentors should keep records of training attendances and player's participation in games as it can be referred to if problems arise concerning team selection etc.

9. Football/Hurling left and right side to be developed in every session

It should go without saying that every young player should be constantly encouraged to use their left and right hand/foot in football and be able to strike off their left side as much as their right side and vice versa in hurling. This should happen in every session, not just the odd one. Is it the player's fault that they can't use both sides? No - unfortunately it is the fault of the coach. In all drills, skill, games, shooting practice etc., players must develop their left and right sides.

10. Home practice is the most important practice

The most important practice of all for a child can do is the practice which they do on their own or with family / friends. This cannot be emphasized enough. Sporting greats are not necessarily born, they all have spent many thousands of hours of their childhood playing the sport they love. After each session when a new skill is introduced or practiced the coach should set home practice for all the team. It is advisable to show the children different way of practicing the skill, perhaps against a wall or with a friend. Coaches should constantly encourage the importance of home practice. A good quote for the children is"practice doesn't make perfect Perfect practice make perfect "

11. No Pigeon Holing

This phrase is used to describe the categorization of a child as a certain type of player from a young age (for example playing a player at full back because he father / brother played there) or putting a younger player into full forward because they are "slow" but have decent skill. Therefore it is much better for young players confidence and ability to experience as many different positions as possible in matches as well as training

12. Team Selection

Coaches / Mentors must base team selections on an individual's commitment to training and discipline. Talented players from other codes (soccer, rugby etc.) who don't attend training should not be selected ahead of committed club players. Also teams competing in championships and feile na nGael must not draft in players from other codes to strengthen their teams. (I.e. off season soccer players). Instead they should bring up younger players to give them experience for next year. This must be agreed in advance with mentors and parents of the younger players and courtesy calls made to all. Ideally they should train together in the

Weeks before the competition. Please note that it is preferable players must train and play in their own age

Group before they can be subbed up to an older team, **however bear in mind that there can be unique cases**

N.B. Player's should be made available to play for teams above their age above e.g., u12 to u14.

However this should not happen at the expense of a player already part of that particular team.

Mentor's must play players from their team before using underage players. Any exceptions to any of the above must be approved by the Juvenile chairperson. Any movement of players between age groups must be approved by the player's parents.

13. Parents/Supporters

Every effort should be made to encourage the support of parents especially on match day in particular with nets or if there is a requirement for calling the line or standing in as umpire. However, the mentors are responsible for the behavior of the supporters/parents and so the parents/supporters must take direction from the appointed mentors on match day. Any unwelcome behavior should be reported to the Juvenile Chairman. Parents should be encouraged to support the team, players and mentors in a positive sporting way. **Under no circumstances should the parents/supporters attempt to coach the**

team unless invited to by

The management team.

14. Skills Testing

If players are training and playing games in the club two or three times every week there should be an improvement in their level of skill and performance. Players will have to be competent in the basic skills appropriate to their own age group. Mentors should regularly preform skills test and keep a record of each player's progress. These skills tests should also be a method of encouraging our players to pick up a ball/sliotar and to practice at home.

15. Winning is not everything (or the only thing!)

In Parnell's GAA Club juvenile section, player participation, enjoyment, development and retention are the most important things. All mentors must be committed to long term player development and must not adopt a short term win at all cost attitude.