

# **OAKMEADIANS RFC ANNUAL COACHING STRATEGY 2009/2010**

## INTRODUCTION.

Hello fellow coaches, thanks again for committing your time and experience to what will be a successful and enjoyable season. There are many changes this coming season, after watching from a distance and listening to you last season it is clear there are constant shortcomings throughout the club. Last season was successful on a lot of levels, this year we are focusing on success on all levels, not only on the pitch but off it, and trying to leave a system that will be the skeleton for all future success.

The annual coaching strategy (ACS) is a working document designed to aide you in making your season a success, with a firm view on coach education, player pathways and systems that protect the coach and the player alike. For this success it relies on motivated coaches, who are communicative and forward moving for the whole club, as well as professional in their attitude.

I and the rest of the team look forward to working with you all in the upcoming season.

## WHY.

The ACS is introduced on the RFUL3 coaching award, and explained as an aide for coach education, mandatory systems to benefit individual, team and club, and a guide for consistency throughout the club.

The ACS is a working document, meaning that it will be revised and developed as we recognise issues or feel items should be included. This will involve all of us working together and ensure communication lines are clear in all directions.

I have worked as part of successful and unsuccessful ACS's and I believe that the successful systems are that where all sections of the club are united in vision, work ethic and understanding. One weak link in the chain and the system can come apart.

## ACS MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

James Croker, senior coach at Oakmeadians RFC is heading up the team that will implement and monitor the ACS for season 2009/2010. James is an RFUL3 coach who has a history in elite rugby and player development having worked with England women, rugby Canada and currently forwards coach for the combined services. Mark Mulcahy is the player and coach development expert, who has always been involved with academies and had great success with London Irish, and Blackheath. Mark has also been involved with Surrey and London and South East Division at 18 group. Finally Andy Barrett (twiz) is not only part of the senior coaching staff, but is the senior coach within the youth and mini section of the club. An RFUL2 coach and on his way to level 3, Twiz is enjoying success with the u15s. Andy's

involvement is ensuring that the clubs ethos is not breached. As a former coaching coordinator this position ties in perfectly with his existing roles.

The final unnamed member of the team is you, the coaches, for without your support and feedback it would be almost impossible to implement our objectives successfully.

### SEASON PROGRAMME.

The season is broken down into 5 segments.

1. off season. *This will incorporate fitness and core skills.*
2. Pre-season. *Continuance of core skills and unit work.*
3. Start of season. *Focussed on game related training.*
4. Mid season. *Reflection and planning.*
5. End of season. *Building ACS 10/11 based on the 09/10 document.*

Senior section timeline will be as follows.

Off season: -	Mid April 09	-	01 June 09
Pre-season:-	02 June 09	-	19 August 09
Start of season: -	20 August 09	-	01 December 09
Mid season: -	02 December 09	-	01 March 10
End of season: -	02 March 10	-	Mid April 10

### SESSION PLANNING.

Session planning is a multipurpose tool which will be done for every training session carried out from Pre season to end of season.

#### *Why session planning?*

It is an opportunity for the coach to sit down and think about the team and the individuals, their needs and the coach's delivery. It focuses the mind. Session planning is a useful archive, it enables the coach to monitor what the players have and have not done during the week. It ensures that there is an equal amount of time spent on player and team development, also ensuring that assistant coaches are being given the opportunity to take drills. Session planning also ensures that all 13 core skills are being covered. It is also just as important that the coach should then make notes and reflect on the session, and refer to these prior to coaching the

same or similar drills. Session planning makes sure that time is allocated to warm up, warm down and sandwiching the skills training in the middle. Coaches will session plan and archive them. These will be monitored and feedback should be expected, this will have a direct affect on your coach development and aide you prior to the RFU coaching awards.

The session plan can be found in annex A.

### CORE SKILLS.

As a senior section, the perfect scenario would be to have a constant stream of youth and mini players coming through the ranks and feeding the senior teams. As the senior coach, the perfect scenario is, as the 18 year olds come to the seniors, all the coaching staffs have to do is game play and an introduction to the physical aspect of senior rugby. For us, as a club coaching structure, to achieve this, we need to ensure that all core skills are included and being trained regularly and correctly.

These core skills are:-

1. Communication.
2. Team work.
3. Speed and evasive running.
4. Strength and conditioning.
5. Tackling.
6. Contact area.
7. Passing.
8. Kicking.
9. Rucking.
10. Mauling.
11. Decision making.
12. Running lines.
13. Game play.

These core skills are then broken down into sub sections. These will be discussed at the coach education training sessions over the summer. Dates tbc.

## INDIVIDUAL, SMALL GROUP, UNIT & TEAM TRAINING.

### INDIVIDUAL.

This is done in 2 ways:-

1. Within a drill where repetition of the drill and individual feedback is given, or
2. A small group/unit/team session is occurring the assistant coach is giving 1 on 1 or 1 on 2 Tuition concurrently.

### SMALL GROUP.

This can be achieved during a squad session, but ensuring that back 3, centres, half backs, back row, front five, midfield, decision makers, back five, front row etc, work together or a specific session where the small groups go away and work together.

### UNIT WORK.

We all know that backs and forwards are the units, but backs moves and set piece should be covered in pre-season and only polished throughout the season. Unit continuity and improvement should be the substance through the season.

### TEAM TRAINING.

A balance needs to be struck that the units are not working as 2 separate entities, but ensuring that the focus is also on player development for both skills and position specific. Team training should be kept to 20 minutes per session.

## TRAINING STRUCTURE AND FIXTURES.

Training structure is a welfare and performance issue. Oakmeadians RFC have looked at the RFU continuum and used it as a rough guide although some of the training timings have been adapted. The reason for the adaptation is based on RFU guidelines for tournaments and fixtures i.e. 4 games @ 7.5 minutes each way = 1 hr rugby not including warm up, but advised that training including warm up for 7-10 year olds be no more than 1hr. We as a club believe that training should reflect the tournament/fixture so will allow 1.5hr of rugby per week for this age group.

*TRAINING STRUCTURE.*

U7-U8	1.5HR RUGBY PER WEEK
U9-U10	1.5HR RUGBY PER WEEK
U11-U12	2.0HR RUGBY PER WEEK
U13-U14	2.5HR RUGBY PER WEEK
U15-U16	3.0HR RUGBY PER WEEK
U17-SENIORS	NO LIMIT

This also incorporates only 20 minutes team training per session. The remainder will be divided between individual, small group and unit. If coaches want the squad together for more of the time allocated then activities such as watching matches for rugby education are advised. Parents are to be made aware that for every hour of rugby training they are advised that their child do 2 hours activity during the week. This includes school PE, sports afternoons and other extracurricular hobbies. E.g. 1.5hrs rugby = 3hrs activity for the remainder of the week.

*FIXTURES.*

Oakmeadians RFC ACS also believes that competitive fixtures are vital for player interest and development; however players to be fully prepared for the fixture and have the adequate training should have 2 x training sessions to 1 x fixture/tournament.

COACHING STRATEGIES.

Coaching strategies are useful guidelines to determine what level to pitch your coaching sessions at, how to gauge a player and a skeleton to base your game around. There are many more, however these are proven to be right and give you an idea of how to think as a coach.

*COACHING PYRAMID*

BASICS.

BASICS DONE WELL.

BASICS DONE WELL AT PACE.

BASICS DONE WELL AT PACE UNDER PRESSURE.

BASICS DONE WELL AT PACE UNDER PRESSURE IN A GAME.

Never go to stage 5 without working through the pyramid, on all drills.

RUGBY

WIN THE BALL.

SECURE THE BALL.

CONVERT TO QUICK BALL.

EXPLOIT SPACE.

A focus on how simple the game is, always go back to level one on turnover ball.

*COACHING VARIABLES.*

When taking a drill you can make it hard or easier just by changing the variables, SPACE, PACE, AND TIME, whether to make it a big space at 50% pace with defenders static or make the area small at 100% with fully live defence.

*PLAYER ASSESSMENT*

A player should be graded in 4 categories.

Mental.

Physical.

Technical.

Tactical.

Each of these have sub categories, however it is in this order based on importance of category.

PLAYER AND COACHING PATHWAYS.

Pathways are laid out so players and coaches alike can achieve their short and long term goals. Player pathways in the youth and mini sections are clearly defined with the county and regional set up being accessible if the player has the talent and desire to do so. Long term goals should be to represent the senior team in the club whether that is the 1<sup>st</sup> xv or the women's side. This goal is nurtured from the age group coaching staff, supporting the senior section, and the senior section supplying players to help coach and be visual to the youth. Finally we are fully supporting of players who again have the ability and desire to want to play for a higher positioned club in the league structure. This is recognised with our strong links with Henley Hawks and being part of the Alliance, this means we select players who have the ability and desire for a Henley Alliance side playing mid week and being in the shop window for National league rugby. This has already paid dividends in its first season, with Jack Henning's being offered a contract for 08/09 season. Henley Hawks have the same

pathway with London Wasps, supplying players for their A league. In its first season James Honeybenn has been offered a contract with London Wasps. Coaching pathways are also in place with Oakmeadians RFC rewarding coaches on either success as a team (performance and result based), but more importantly on player development. Coaches will be monitored throughout the season and if they have the desire to progress and have ticked the relevant boxes will be rewarded. Andy Barrett this season has been part of the senior coaching set up after his achievements with the U15s. External coaching pathways are more difficult within the club structure, however county and regional coaching is accessible, and should a coach show the desire, we as the ACS will fight to get you a coaching position. Coach education that enables coaches to fulfil their goals is available. Firstly we will be monitoring all coaches and give feedback as mandatory. We will also upon request mentor coaches for a period of the season or in some cases the entire season. Finally RFU coaching awards are advised including courses such as SAQ etc. Budgeting for these courses will be finalised in the near future. Coaching master classes in the area will be advertised and we as the ACS will try and ensure two master classes will run at Oakmeadians RFC. Budgeting for the RFU annual seminars will be doubtful, but coaches are advised to go if feasible.

#### OAKMEADIANS ACADEMY.

The role of Oaks academy is to identify and develop young players from the age of 15 to 18 and engage them in an elite development programme. The academy is a part time integrated support service for young players within the Acorns section of the club that show potential to play the 1<sup>st</sup> team standard of rugby within a year.

The academy is made up of players from U16s, U17s, U18s boys and U18s girls.

The academy programme aims to provide a complete and robust development route that monitors and assesses training and playing commitments of players to ensure that their full potential is achieved.

The programme is made up of 6 key elements.

- Technical development and support
- Tactical development and support
- Physical development and support
- Psychological development and support
- Nutritional development and support
- Holistic development and support

In essence the academy will give total advice and guidance as to how the individual can achieve their potential on and off the pitch.

The academy will meet every other Monday from 6.30 til 8pm.

Each player will have a mentor from the senior section of the club that will spend time teaching tactical and technical play.

The senior sections conditioning and fitness coach will instruct the players on nutritional and physical development.

The acorns director of rugby will instruct the players on all aspects of development. He will be assessing the players development at all times taking a keen interest in them on match days and at training within their own squads.

The U18s girls will have mentoring from the ladies team, they will take part in the fitness and conditioning coaching by the seniors specialist and will be observed and monitored with a view to them joining the ladies team within a season.

#### PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

Oakmeadians RFC have a responsibility as a rugby club and a Ltd company, to ensure that the recruitment and retention are paramount to the development of the club. Coaches in the section and teams where they have large squads need to ensure coaching is presented to all players on all levels. Fixtures will be down to the specific coach but it is advised that sections and ages run enough teams that ease the demand. Pathways between the teams who have depleted squads need to identify why, get a recruitment strategy discussed with the section leader and the ACS team and try to build an environment which is conducive with retention. Players are also to be given monthly feedback based on training and fixtures, looking at both strengths and weaknesses. Players need to have clarity of their position whether playing regularly or finding game time at a premium. Coaches need to be approachable so any consistent complaints or suggestions come through the ACS team and will be addressed with urgency. The ACS team will also discuss up the chain to ensure issues such as resources, budgeting etc are sorted to ensure the environment remains first class. As long as players feel they are developing in an environment that is enjoyable I predict an exciting season.

#### RESOURCES.

The target for 09/10 season is that Oakmeadians for all sides and sections secure enough training equipment, training area, training light, coaching staff, management staff and support from the club that satisfies the basic necessities a new player expects to find when joining a rugby club. Communication between all the coaches will ensure that training sessions do not have to be tailored due to lack of space or light. The ACS team abreast of the morale of players and parents.

#### *TRAINING EQUIPMENT AND STAFF*

6 X BOSH PADS

1 X SAQ EQUIPMENT

12 X BALLS

1 X MATCH BALL

10 X TACKLE SUITS

2 X BIBS

2 X CONES

3 X COACHES

2 X MANAGERS

1 X FULL SET OF KIT (A & B TEAM)

#### DOCUMENTAION, STATISTICS AND PROCEDURES.

Coaches/managers are to keep a training register, ensure that session plans with reflection are up to date, playing records and stats (i.e. team, replacements, minutes on pitch, trys, and kicking points), feedback forms. All this documentation and statistics might look like bureaucracy gone mad, however, session planning and feedback are mandatory. Statistics are mandatory for your and the players protection reference minutes on the pitch and selection. Statistics reference points etc are going to be archived as Oakmeadians have no archived stats in the club at all.

#### DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE.

Oakmeadians RFU disciplinary procedure can be found in annex B

#### WHAT NOW?

As of this document going into circulation, the ACS team will be consulting with all age group coaching and management staff, to ensure a) they are happy with the document and b) to find out if they have any inclusion recommendations. Then the implementation phase will begin. We are also starting coaching workshops for all current coaches and prospective coaches; these will start in mid April and continue throughout the summer.

CONCLUSION.

To conclude, this document is a guideline, with a few mandatory elements. The key to its success are you the coaches. Ensuring that your team are complying to the ACS and the sessions are planned and delivered in a professional, safe and enjoyable environment. Any questions or objections please feel free to contact me on [jamesthecoach@hotmail.com](mailto:jamesthecoach@hotmail.com) or 07727095810

Yours in Rugby,

James Croker.  
Barrett.

Mark Mulcahy.

Andy

