



The War Memorial Ground, The Vinery, Winscombe, North Somerset BS25 1AS  
[www.winscombefootballclub.co.uk](http://www.winscombefootballclub.co.uk)

## Winscombe Football Club Junior Player Pathway

Winscombe Football Club has been in existence since 1922 and the club is at the heart of the local community with fantastic facilities. The club has teams at all age groups from pre-school right through to veterans with a number of players having played through the minis, juniors and making the step into adult football.

The purpose of the junior player pathway is for parents and players to understand the expectations and structure of the club and how this can help the development through the age groups. Players, parents and coaches should aspire to achieve the clubs core values which are respect, teamwork and sportsmanship in a safe and friendly environment.

### Minis

The minis are split into 2 main groups. Under 5s (so pre-school from 3.5 years old – reception inclusive) and under 6s (school year 1). The focus is on Agility, Balance and Co-ordination along with technical development. Annual subs for the minis are £60.

Both groups have a session on a weekly basis on a Saturday morning for an hour.

Under 5s – the session focuses on introducing the players to football through short, fun activities.

Under 6's (year 1) will participate in weekly training until Christmas which will include the introduction of 5 a side football through training matches. After Christmas, the team will aim to have a friendly game with an external opposition once a month to take this learning forward and prepare them for the move into junior football

### Junior Football – Under 7s and Under 8s – Annual subs of £160.

Both these groups (school years 2 & 3) will be entered into the local league called The Somerset Junior League and will play 5 a side football. This will provide a number of fixtures during the season for both age groups with the frequency being more regular for the under 8s. Matches are typically on a Saturday morning and consist of 2 x back-to-back games to allow a larger number of players the opportunity to play. Everyone involved in the groups can participate in matches and will receive their fair share of game time subject to meeting the player expectations (see FAQs). Coaches will decide the squads as they see appropriate so whilst ability is one factor, attitude, time keeping and attendance at training are also equally important.



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In addition to matches on a weekend, there will be training during the week. Typically, this will be on grass during the drier months and on a local 3 or 4G pitch during the winter. The length of the season will be determined by the coaches.

As well as the fixtures provided by the league, teams may choose to have additional friendly matches to increase the game time given to players.

All players will receive a Winscombe Kit which remains the property of the club and should be handed back if the coach makes the request.

### **Under 9s and Under 10s – 7 a side football – Subs £160 or £100 training only.**

Player's progress to the next stage in the football pyramid at this age by moving to larger pitches and games involving more players.

As with the under 7s and under 8s, games are on a Saturday morning and in a dual format (i.e. back to back) within the Somerset Junior Premier League along with midweek training.

To manage expectations of parents and players, teams will cap their match day squads. This will be decided by the individual coaches. This is to ensure that those who are in a matchday squad receive a good amount of game time. This is defined as at least half the match. Capping a squad also allows coaches to focus on coaching the children during matches.

Not all children are ready or have the desire / confidence to participate in matches, especially league games. Teams can offer a reduced cost option of training only for players to attend midweek training. When the diary allows, coaches may look to arrange adhoc weekend friendlies for the training only children or those who require additional development in a relaxed environment.

Training only children will still be eligible to receive a Winscombe Kit.

Demand for places at Winscombe is high and most teams will have an overall cap based on the number of coaches, training slots available etc. Age groups operate waiting lists.

### **Under 11s and Under 12s – 9 a side football - Subs £160 or £100 training only.**

At under 11 level, children move to a different league, the Woodspring league. Football is now defined as competitive. The pitches and goals are larger, goal kicks no longer require players to retreat to the halfway line and the offside rule is introduced.



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At under 12s, results and league tables are formally published. Whilst rare at this age group, players can receive yellow and red cards from referees, mainly for dissent. Fines for cards are the responsibility of the player/parents and are not absorbed within the annual subs.

As with the under 9s and 10s, teams will cap their match day squads in the same way and offer the same training only option.

## FAQs

### Playing for the year above

At Winscombe, we believe that the most important element of football is that kids have fun and often they enjoy doing this by learning to play as a team with friends. From experience, we find that a player will shine within their own age group. It is therefore club policy that children remain within their age group and are not moved up a year. It can be considered in exceptional circumstances but has to be agreed with the 2 age managers involved as well as the committee member responsible for junior football and the club chairman.

Notwithstanding the club policy, the league and FA stipulate the following for U6s and U7s:

*The relevant age for each Player is determined by his or her age as at midnight on 31 August of the relevant Playing Season i.e. children who are aged 6 as at midnight on 31 August 2024 would be classified as an under 7 for the entire 2024/25 playing season and would therefore be permitted to play matches. Any child not reaching 6 on this date would be an under 6 and therefore shall not play, shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match of any kind.*

*This rule should be followed by all clubs and any breaches we become aware of will be dealt with by the League Management Committee on a case by case basis.*

### Player Expectations

Seeing players develop through football is at the heart of the club and to achieve this, the coaches have agreed on a series of expectations from the children. Those expectations are principally to be respectful to teammates and the coaches along with listening to what they are being taught. Attending training regularly, being punctual and not being disruptive are also considered important. When selecting squads, coaches will consider these elements as well as the ability of an individual. Attitude is generally considered the most important factor.

The wearing of shin pads is a club requirement. Any player not wearing shinpads will be asked to sit out any element of training/matches that could involve the risk of contact for their safety. We strongly encourage players to wear proper sized shin protection and not wear the micro pads that are currently trending.



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## **Parent Expectations**

When completing your annual registration form, parents' consent to the FA code of conduct and all club policies which are available at [www.winscombefootballclub.co.uk/documents](http://www.winscombefootballclub.co.uk/documents). Essentially these compromises of behaviours expected at training and matchdays. Over jubilant celebrating and bad language are the main elements. Coaching the children as a spectator is also a big part because of the confusion it brings to the player. As a club, we ask our parents to leave the coaching of the children to the coaching team. If as a parent you feel you want to be involved in coaching, please speak to your team's management group because most will welcome additional help. These expectations apply to all spectators – sometimes friends/family of the player attend and from the club's perspective, the responsibility for their pitch side behaviour is with the players parents.

The club policy is that every child either has their parent/guardian or an allocated adult in attendance for the duration of training and at matches.

## **Gametime**

As mentioned in the document, children who are in a matchday squad can expect to play at least half a game of football in the u9 – u12 age groups. Coaches have the discretion to decide the size of a matchday squad. Not all children will necessarily be in a matchday squad every week to ensure we can give those who attend the minimum of half a game. Coaches find that too many substitutes mean they spend their time managing the wider group and not coaching the children in the games. If you have any issues around gametime, individual coaches/managers are available to discuss.