



The War Memorial Ground, The Vinery, Winscombe, North Somerset BS25 1AS
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.

The session focuses on introducing the players to football through short, fun activities.

Junior Football – Under 6/7s – Annual subs of £120 (discounted from £160 due to Grant funding secured for this season). Training only option - £90

Both these groups (school years 2 & 3) will be entered into the local league and will play 5 a side football. This will provide a number of fixtures during the season for both age groups. Matches are typically on a Saturday morning and consist of either 1 or 2 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.

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.



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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 8/9s – 7 a side football – Annual subs of £120 (discounted from £160 due to Grant funding secured for this season). Training only option - £90

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

Games are on a Sunday morning in the Bristol League along with midweek training and the team will be entered as an 'Under 9' team to allow both U8s and U9s to participate.

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 10/11s – 9 a side football - Annual subs of £120 (discounted from £160 due to Grant funding secured for this season). Training only option - £90

At under 10/11 level, children will play in the Somerset Girls League and will be entered as an 'Under 11' team to allow both U10s and u11s to participate. 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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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 8/9s, 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. With our Girls section thriving, but still in its infancy, we have decided to combine two ages group together to ensure we have enough coaches and players to put out a regular team each week. This will be reviewed each season. The teams will 'move up' through the age groups together to help develop and maintain a team spirit and understanding (ie, the u8/9s will become the u9/10s next season etc)

Not withstanding 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. 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 u8 – 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.