Hello again, and welcome to my November update. Since my last update in August a lot has been happening on the coaching front. I talked last time about the exciting FA Mentoring Programme we were about to kick off. Well this is now up and running and making good progress. I have been working closely with our FA Mentor (Steve Lilley) who works for the FA including FA Learning and Development and also coaching at Bristol City Academy.

We started off by holding a coaches session at the club on the 9th October. The session was to invite coaches from all age groups to attend with Steve demonstrating how to put on a good session for the boys, in particular focussing on FUNdamentals and the ball rolling for 70% of the session. We had a fantastic showing with 18 coaches attending on a wet and windy evening. This shows the level of interest for development and I really hope we can match this at our next session which is coming shortly (date to be confirmed very soon).

I have also been working with Steve to set up our group of Mentors which will take the mentoring programme forward as a legacy after Steve is finished with us. I have identified 3 other coaches who have volunteered to take on this role and we will be meeting with Steve in the coming weeks to move this forward.

The final aspect of the programme is Steve working with some dedicated age groups which we have identified. I am in the final planning stages of this and Steve will be in touch with the coaches shortly to start getting out and about to help and support. This should really help improve the quality of coaching we have at the club. On that note, remember I am also available to coach any specific sessions of any age group. Some of you have already taken up my offer and hopefully from the feedback so far these have been worthwhile. Please feel free to drop me a line or give me a call if you would like me to coach your session to give you a night off!

Steve invited me to attend sessions at the Bristol City Academy and this has been a great pleasure to watch the talent on show. The real big difference is the attention of the players who arrive with a clear focus on the objectives of the session and then listen intently to the coach and do what their told! I’m sure we could all do with some of that!

The next really exciting thing to have happened is the club sponsoring and funding the use of a professional coaching website. I really wanted our coaches to have access to hundreds of drills to improve the sessions we put on for the boys. Paul signed this off and the club paid for access for most of our age groups. These coaches now have access to hundreds of drills from all age groups, including session planning, tips on player development, philosophy and much more. Again, I am hopeful coaches will be using this to put on really engaging sessions for the boys.

With winter coming, don’t forget to ensure your boys are wrapped up warm and have the appropriate kit to train in. Also as coaches we need to really think about the sessions we put on and ensure they involve lots of movement and ball rolling. The last thing we should be doing on cold and wet days is lining up the boys for shooting practice. We really don’t want to see boys shivering standing in a line on cold nights. Keep them moving......

That’s it for this update, I really hope you can see we’re making great progress with our coaching structure and I hope this continues in the future, let’s make the most of this and all work together to improve the standard of coaching we offer at our club.

Regards

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