

Rotherham United FC Academy
Playing and Coaching Philosophy



Club Playing Philosophy - Principles



The RUFC Playing Philosophy (First Team and Academy) is based on the following principles:



Balance between development and winning



**To Develop technically gifted,
competitive, decision making,
WINNERS**

**WE TRAIN TO DEVELOP and PLAY TO WIN
THE MILLERS WAY**

Playing Philosophy:



Our football philosophy all teams from U9 –Development squad will play this way.

Playing the ‘Millers Way’

All teams will adopt The Academy Playing Philosophy / Academy playing style and aim to play the ‘Millers Way’ at all times. Since the last audit this has been reviewed and updated to include defensive and attacking transition, which is outlined below.

What is the ‘Millers Way’?

The RUFC Academy playing Philosophy, namely the ‘Millers Way’ is our style of play and is based on the four key game “moments”: In possession, Out of possession, Attacking Transition and Defensive transition.

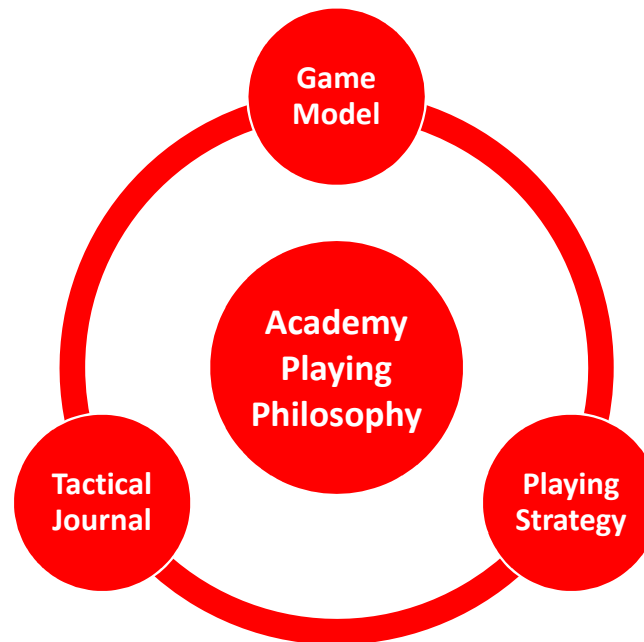
- When in possession we encourage all players to play through the thirds of the field with maximum technical and tactical efficiency.**
- When out of possession we encourage all our players if achievable to regain possession as quickly as possible by individual technical efficiency and tactical competence as a team. If possession cannot be regained quickly an organised defensive block will be formed.**
- During attacking transition all players are encouraged to launch a quick counter attack if possible, if this is not achievable we will look to retain and build possession**
- During defensive transition all players are encouraged to regain possession via intense and intelligent individual/collective pressing.**

Playing Philosophy: The Millers Way



All age groups at the Academy follow the RUFC playing philosophy principles.

The Academy playing philosophy is underpinned by the following elements:



RUFC Academy Set-Play Philosophy: “The 5th key game moment”



RUFC Academy Set-Play Philosophy – “The 5th key game moment”

Foundation Phase:

- Defending set pieces- Players will mark man for man at all defensive set pieces, with one attacking player on the half way line ready to counter attack
- Attacking set pieces- A “hand on and play” philosophy is adopted for all attacking set plays in the Foundation Phase with the focus on players’ using their own creativity and intuition to restart the game quickly.

Youth Development Phase:

- Basic set piece templates are used for all age groups (U12-U16’s) for both attacking and defensive set pieces. Defensive set pieces incorporate a mixture of man-to-man and zonal marking. More complex attacking set piece routines are used by the U15/U16 age groups in preparation for U18/Development squad level

Professional Development/Senior Professional Development Phase:

- The set piece templates used at SPDP/PDP level are now more comprehensive and provide players with detailed information on their roles and responsibilities in various situations. Attacking set pieces are now more specific and used on a game-by-game basis to exploit weaknesses in the opposition. These are practiced on a regular basis as part of the players’ weekly training programme.

RUFC Academy – Game Model



The Game Model: Academy

In Possession

Defending Third – Playing out from the back

- If possible, launch a quick counter attack from the defensive third
- Centre backs split, deep lying midfielder drops deep to receive or provide defensive balance
- Full-backs start in advanced positions but be selective when joining attacks

Middle Third – Playing through midfield

- Build patiently with lots of 2 touch play – don't dwell on the ball
- Large and small triangles to support the player in possession
- Off the ball movement to create simple passing options taking up positions that break defensive lines, getting in-between defenders in pockets of space
- Switch the play to change the point of attack but take opportunities to progress through the lines centrally
- GK's high starting positions and offer support as a passing option circulating the ball

RUFC Academy – Game Model



The Game Model: Academy

In Possession

Attacking Third – Creating and Scoring

- Play through the opposition centrally – attack opponents or space to force them to react and allow for penetrative slide rule passes through and between defenders for forward runners
- Play around the opposition with attack minded overlapping full-backs and wingers beating opponents and producing early crosses where possible
- Deliver penalty box crosses from the corner of the penalty area from midfielders and full-backs
- Combination play around the penalty area to create shooting/crossing opportunities
- Beating opponents through individual brilliance to create shooting/crossing opportunities

RUFC Academy – Game Model



The Game Model: Academy

Out of Possession

Defensive Third

- Recover as quickly as possible to get players behind the ball – the midfielders to provide cover in front of the defence
- Compact distances between the defence and midfield to deny space for opponents to play in pockets of space in-between them – a compact back 4 and midfield 5 in front of them
- Apply pressure in a controlled manner i.e. rarely committing to a tackle and conceding ‘cheap’ free kicks
- Emergency defending to be calm and controlled and not reckless

Middle Third

- Once a press has been initiated – often by a midfield player engaging the opponent by springing off his player to press a centre-back – the team press as a collective and keep distances between the lines compact.
- This tactic will mean that the defensive line is quite high so a ‘what if’ mentality is applied to deal with threats in behind our defence and positions taken up accordingly
- An aggressive press is encouraged but players should apply pressure effectively by staying on their feet and dispossessing the opponent

RUFC Academy – Game Model



The Game Model: Academy

Out of Possession

Attacking Third

- If the team is in balance, immediate pressure can be applied. Decision to show inside/outside is dependent on our areas of strength but in the main retreat into the middle third to ensure defensive compactness and to conserve energy.
- However, if an opportunity to press arises through a poor pass or a back pass etc, the nearest player should press the GK to force a rushed clearance

RUFC Academy – Game Model



The Game Model: Academy

Attacking Transition

Defensive Third

- Attempt/attitude to play forward if possible but in a secure manner
- Retention of the ball is a priority

Middle Third

- Recognition of opportunities to counter quickly and expose the opposition who may be out of balance
- Look to secure the ball and retain possession
- Have depth to ensure possession can be retained

Attacking Third

- Recognition of the opportunity to outnumber and exploit the opposition who may be out of balance
- Secure possession

RUFC Academy – Game Model



The Game Model: Academy

Defending Transition

Defensive Third

- If possession is conceded, players must react and press immediately, recovering to protect the goal and danger zone as quickly as possible

Middle Third

- If in close contact, an immediate press is applied by the nearest player with support from team-mates
- If unable to press, recover behind the ball as quickly as possible into a compact shape

Attacking Third

- If in close contact, an immediate press is applied by the nearest player with support from team-mates
- When out of balance, look to recover quickly to the middle third

RUFC Academy – Coaching Philosophy



Our aim at RUFC Academy is to develop confident, creative and skilful players who have a high work ethic, understand the value of having a professional attitude and are able to problem solve.

The Academy coaching philosophy is as follows:

To create a positive learning environment, so that all players achieve the pre-determined learning outcomes for each session/game

Creating a positive learning environment will be achieved through the following coach behaviours and characteristics:

- Building rapport
- An honest and fair approach
- Dynamic and positive demeanour
- Promoting a disciplined and inclusive environment
- Praising good behaviour and effort
- Tolerant of mistakes whilst guiding the individual to correct them
- An individualised focus
- Effective communication

RUFC Academy – Coaching Philosophy



Giving players the best possible chance to achieve the pre-determined learning outcomes for each session/game will be achieved by;

- **Excellent preparation**
- **Understanding the individual player's needs**
- **Technical/tactical knowledge**
- **A willingness to pass on knowledge and experience**

Adherence to the coaching philosophy will be monitored in coaching sessions and games by the Academy Manager, Head of Coaching, phase coach and Coach Developer and will form part of the on-going review process (end of phase reviews, coach competency framework and end of season appraisal).

RUFC Academy: Phase Specific Coaching Styles/Methods



Phase Specific Coaching Styles/Methods

All coaches will be competent at demonstrating and communication techniques and skills so that all players, regardless of their preferred learning style, receive the best possible chance of achieving the pre-determined learning objectives for all training sessions and games.

Coaches in the Foundation Phase will pre-dominantly use 'Guided Discovery' as a means of achieving the pre-determined learning outcomes for each session

Coaches in the Youth Development Phase will pre-dominantly use 'Question and Answer' as a means of achieving the pre-determined learning outcomes for each session

Coaches in the Professional/Senior Professional Development Phase will pre-dominantly use 'Command Style' as a means of achieving the pre-determined learning outcomes for each session

This will be monitored by the Academy Manager, Coach Developer, phase coach and Head of Coaching on both match days and training.

Connection between the Academy coaching and playing philosophy



The Academy Coaching and Playing Philosophies are linked in order to ensure the best possible learning environment to enable players of all ages to develop. The key aspect of the Academy coaching philosophy revolves around the creation of a positive learning environment. The two philosophies combine to produce:

- Positive, attack minded players
- Independent decision makers
- Players with the ability to adapt to various match scenarios
- Mentally resilient and socially aware individuals

Methods/approaches used to achieve the above include:

- Multi-disciplinary approach
- Use of age appropriate coaching styles
- Age/Phase specific coaching vocabulary
- Player centred approach, which encourages player-coach interaction and player ownership
- Game related practices with a focus on developing unit/position specific skills

Creative Principles



The playing philosophy of the Academy allows for individualism within the team structure.

Players are encouraged to be innovative and make independent decisions in games and coaching sessions through the Academy's CREATIVE principles:

- **Confidence**
- **Responsibility**
- **Encouragement**
- **Adventurous**
- **Tolerance of mistakes**
- **Individual freedom**
- **Varied challenges**
- **Express yourself**