



2024/25 Head Coach's Report

As always, many of our teams have had some great successes on the pitch. This includes division winners, league cup winners and some great runs and triumphs in the District and County Cups. But a successful season isn't just about winning trophies, so well done to everyone for just making it through to May.

Of course, we've seen some challenges too, most notably recurring frustration around streaming and internal club transfers - in response, and in line with the Club's Development Plan, we have put down some written guidance on what to do and how to do it for the first time. Given the subject can be quite emotive, it's quite difficult for us to lay down any strict rules but the short version is that coaches are expected to work together, be open and honest and ultimately do what is best for the players.

I've been really pleased with the progress of both the tots (U4/U5's) and the development teams (U6s) as well as the level of parent participation. We could always do with more volunteers but we are on track to have 4 new U7 Boys teams and a new U7 Girls team in September. Not only this, they will have had the opportunity to play a number of friendly games ahead of September, something which will benefit both the players and coaches and make them feel a little more prepared for the first foray into grassroots football. We currently have a waiting list for the U7 Boys, but we are always on the lookout for more girls to start playing so please direct any inquiries to me!

I'm also pleased to say our plans to create open age teams for both the boys and girls have continued to progress, albeit a little slower than we'd hoped. This will give the opportunity for those that want to continue playing and for us and potentially for us to welcome some new adult members. By the AGM we will hopefully have entered a new Women's team into the West Riding County Women's League for 2025/26 so watch this space. And don't worry, we're continuing to progress with plans for a Men's team too.

In other news for next season we've been exploring the possibility of Club-wide licence for FootballDNA to assist all our volunteers in providing the best possible coaching. As well as a brilliant tool for looking up new training drills applicable to all ages, it also offers the potential for us to effectively recommend a footballing curriculum - in other words, recommended training sessions, developed by UEFA Pro coaches, which build week on week and year to year. I know some of you will already have subscriptions to this or something similar, but we think it really could be a step change in the quality of coaching we offer. So watch this space between now and the start of next season!

As always, we've lost a few teams and managers this season and the reasons vary. I said last year that I felt there was an increasing sense of disconnect from the club at times, leaving some managers feeling they are on their own. While finding the time is tricky, we have tried to do a few more face to face meetings to improve engagement and we're hoping the end of season social for club officials, managers and coaches will help to give everyone a renewed sense of community. That said, there is always more we can do. Where we get this right, the results speak for themselves and there is no better example than Ray and his U18 Blues who have been with us right the way through from U7s.

Lastly, I wanted to highlight the benefits of the Wharfedale Grassroots Academy and encourage more members to take advantage of the joint initiative. The WGA provides additional, high quality coaching to our members at an affordable price and helps to provide some protection against the 'academies'.

Many thanks,

Kevin Harrison

Head Coach