

The 5Cs / Aldershot Town

Developing psychological health and performance of youth athletes



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The over-arching principle behind the Academy's sport psychology philosophy was to develop players with the know how to implement the behaviours and responses of the 5C's and make demonstrable improvements year on year in order to provide them with the mental skills to cope with elite sporting performance. A key caveat of this is to develop psychologically knowledgeable coaches who are competent in developing these skills with their players, supported by psychologically aware parents.

Our 5C content was delivered in tandem with the Academy's technical, tactical and physical content. This holistic approach meant that the coaches were the primary delivery point for the information to the players within the training sessions. The intention of this was to take sport psychology out of the primary setting of the classroom and ensure that it was being taught in a football context in football language, which we believed ultimately made teaching it more easily transferable to matches, whilst also more enjoyable.

The coaches were used as the main method of delivery on the basis that they were people with the most contact time with the players. They therefore received constant support on the 5Cs to enable them to become more knowledgeable and more confident in dealing with the 5C skills and more competent in delivering them. Through the 5C approach we offered, among other things, educational CPD sessions, coach observations and feedback, one-on-one support before and after training. Through this, we believed the players would begin to demonstrate consistent and high level use of 5C behaviours, skills and responses.

To supplement this work we conducted 5C supporting workshops with the players to consolidate the work undertaken by the coaches, and learning by the players. We were also able to issue the players with 5C homework tasks to further engage in the content away from the pitch.



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In the Youth Development Phase we were able to offer further provisions due to the extra contact time we had. For example we were able to offer 5C focused one-on-one and small focus group sessions, or a team based 5C educational session.

Finally we offered a series of 5C parent workshops aimed at increasing parent awareness and knowledge around the 5Cs and how they can help support their son during his time with the Clubs' Academy, and throughout their football career.

The vast and broad methods we were able to implement using the 5Cs was a point of great pride for our Academy. We also felt that we were only able to begin scratching the surface of what we could have achieved with the 5Cs, even with our limited resources. As such I consider the 5Cs are a valuable method to integrate psychology into any training session, and something which I will continue to use irrespective of the level of football I work at.

