

# Frequently asked questions and answers for new players and parents Season 2014-2015



**Sporting 87**  
**Football Club**  
witness through football



## **Q1. What is the application process?**

A1. The application process provides a consistent and transparent means of confirming that: a team place is available, the most appropriate team place is allocated, and there is no impediment for new members to join. Existing members that sign on before the stated deadline each season are deemed as renewing and thereby already approved.

## **Q2. Why does the Club need all this personal information, and want to know if we go to church?**

A2. The Club sometimes has to work and liaise with local schools for welfare purposes. Knowing which school a player attends also helps the Club understand social relationships of our players; thereby providing better informed practical decisions on things such as team allocation. It is vitally important that the Club and relevant team manager/coach are aware of each player's medical, learning and behavioural issues. Greater understanding of these allows any challenges to be overcome more expediently, efficiently and effectively. Information provided to the Club is never imparted to other organisations without permission.

The Club is run by a multi denomination Christian leadership and receives some funding from Christian based organisations, which is why we and our Christian sponsors like to know if you attend church. Although the Club was founded to principally enable Christians to play football in a positive and supportive environment, it is not exclusively for Christians and accepts players of any religion or of no faith at all. Members who don't share the 'beliefs' of the Club are still very much expected to adhere to its values and ethos (see Q8). The Club has a Chaplain, who along with a team of pastors provides moral, spiritual and practical support to our members and visitors.

## **Q3. How does the Club use parent/Carer information?**

A3. Of course the Club must be able to contact players' parents/carers for team and Club notices, and in case of emergencies. Normally non urgent information will be communicated via emails and occasionally by mobile text messages, and urgent issues will be communicated by telephone. Also, it helps us to know any family information that may allow us to avoid awkward situations, e.g. names of adults who may occasionally collect players from events. Parent/carers' trade and profession details are collected for our 'Members Directory'. By optionally providing us with these details we will assume that you're happy for us to ask for advice in your field of expertise – there is no commitment of time or effort. For older players (generally U15+) you may provide their personal telephone number and email address so that they can be copied team and Club information. Note that Club staff will not instigate 'individual' communication by these means because of safeguarding issues. Also for this reason, please only use staff Sporting 87 email addresses.

## **Q4. Why does the Club ask for a team preference and what's the difference between a 'full' player and a 'reserve' player?**

A4. Several of our youth year groups are represented by more than one team, and the Club understands that there are social and practical benefits of joining a specific team. The Club will endeavour to place a new player in the team of his/her choice, but where a squad is full, or where it is deemed inappropriate (to the individual or the proposed team) for other reasons, this may not be offered. If this is the case, a full explanation will be given. Our entry age teams (U7/8/9/10) are not streamed by ability, but formed as friendship groups. However, as a team develops through consecutive football seasons its league division becomes commensurate with the combined ability of its members: ultimately this means that this will be a factor when considering an appropriate team for a new player joining an established team.

A normal playing member of the Club is termed a full member, and as such attends regular Thursday training sessions and Saturday morning matches. The number of full member places within each squad is limited, and when a squad is full an applicant may be offered a reserve member place. Reserve players don't play Saturday morning matches, but are none-the-less viewed as a full part of the squad and thereby expected to train every Thursday. Opportunities to become full members are given to reserves not only in accordance with their position on the waiting list, but also with regard to their commitment, attitude and behaviour. Reserves are registered with the FA so that they can be called-up to play in matches to cover illness and injury. Reserves can also play in friendly matches and tournaments.

## **Q5. Why would an application be declined?**

A5. Impediments that may prevent new and existing members joining include:

- Lawful reasons and FA sanctions
- Failure to adhere to a Club rule, regulation or code of conduct
- The Club is full at the year group applied for

## **Q6. Why does it matter what players and parents think of the Club?**

A6. It is essential for the Club to know and understand the needs of players and parents so that it can focus its efforts and occasionally adjust, expand or improve its provision. Please take the time to complete this section so that we can make the Club better for you.

## **Q7. What are Young Leaders and how does a player become one?**

A7. The Club not only provides opportunities to learn and play football but also to develop broad life and leadership skills. Our junior young leader scheme is for ages up to U11, and involves taking on simple yet rewarding ad hoc responsibilities at training sessions and on match days. Our senior programme is open to: players from U12 and above, young men that play in our adult teams, and other young people that are not players. Through encouragement and example normally 2-3 players from each team will become young leaders; this is a very high proportion that the Club is very proud of. The senior programme offers a structured framework of development that is flexible in its participation requirements – young leaders choose what type and level of learning they undertake and support they wish to provide. The primary topics that the programme covers are: coaching, refereeing, event organising and club administration. The FA Football Futures development programme is a major component of our young leader scheme, with the Suffolk FA providing formal courses and opportunities for wider experience. Young leaders interested in developing as coaches are assigned to assist a specific Sporting 87 Junior Youth team, where they are guided and mentored by the team manager. To become a young leader express your interest by ticking the appropriate box on the sign on form; you will then be contacted.

# Frequently asked questions and answers for new players and parents Season 2014-2015



**Sporting 87  
Football Club**  
witness through football



## **Q8. What are the Club's values and what is its ethos?**

A8. Basic Christian values form the ethos and character of the Club. These values have been translated into the Club's procedures, standards, rules, codes of conduct and development systems; each declaring what is held as important and what behaviour is deemed appropriate. Of course Christians do not hold exclusive rights to these values, which is why non-Christians that share them are welcome to join us. Our Club Chaplain and Football Pastors are the best people to explain what it means to be a Christian; what Christian aspirations are and how this affects our daily lives, but as a start to understanding the Club's ethos, its: motto, themes of provision and mission statement can be considered.

### *Motto:*

"Witness through football". Our behaviour when playing, coaching or administering football should be consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

### *Themes of provision:*

1. "Providing opportunity" – each person is created as a very special individual possessing a vast spectrum of talents. Each has a right to discover and fulfil their God-given purposes in life and thereby exercise these talents. The Club endeavours to help its members fulfil their potential in everyway it can.
2. "Playing with integrity" – correct to the laws of the game, with fairness and honesty. The FA RESPECT and fair-play initiatives are deemed by the Club as minimum standards in this respect, i.e. the Club expects exemplary behaviour in terms of courtesy, politeness and friendliness.
3. "Caring about everyone" – valuing each individual, providing them with thoughtful, measured and appropriate football and personal development opportunities. Beyond the football context, this theme also includes having concern for general and spiritual wellbeing and providing practical help where we can.

### *Mission statement:*

"Sporting 87 FC is a Christian club dedicated to playing football to the highest possible standards of competition, ability, and good conduct. The Club is committed to developing the Christian growth of its members and being an ambassador of Christ to those it meets."

## **Q9. What is meant by 'valuing opportunity'?**

A9. Players should have fun and thoroughly enjoy their football at the Club, and we believe that this is best achieved by behaving appropriately and taking personal development seriously. The Club sets out to instil a sense of pride and responsibility within its members, which we hope would lead to an understanding that it is a privilege to be a member and not a given right by virtue of subs payments. Invariably the Club's teams not only have a team waiting list called 'reserve players', but also a list of hopeful candidates beyond that. A lack of effort and commitment especially in these circumstances is not acceptable, and may lead to suspension of player's rights as defined in the Club's equality and opportunity charter, or even cancellation of membership.

The Club welcomes players that already play for a Sunday team, and those that wish to transfer from another Saturday team. Before joining the Club a player that already plays on Sundays should think carefully about his/her commitment of time, fitness and finances – putting themselves at risk in any of these aspects will be no good for the player or either of the clubs. The Club reserves the right to cancel membership of a player where their welfare is at risk or where the Sporting 87 Codes of Conduct have not been adhered to.

The Club does not proactively engage in encouraging specific individuals to join, i.e. it does not 'cherry pick' but instead operates a general open invitation policy to players of all abilities – we aim to coach excellence into players, and not rely on others to do it for us ("Coach, don't poach!"). The Club extensively depends upon word of mouth recommendations of members, friends and other organisations, and general advertisements that inform of our presence and activities.

## **Q10. Why is playing with integrity so important to the Club?**

A10. The Club aspires to impart a set of basic ethical values and decent models of behaviour within its football teaching. However, with our children attempting to emulate the superstars of the professional game who sometimes have less than honourable objectives and methods, this is a very difficult task. The Club is unwavering in its views and expects exemplary conduct from its players both on and off the pitch; the Club not only strives to instil great sportsmanship but also seeks to develop well grounded and decent individuals.

## **Q11. What's caring got to do with football and what is the equality and opportunity charter?**

A11. Our players are taught to understand how their decisions and actions can affect themselves and others too. Players found to be using banned techniques or taking banned substances within and outside of the football environment will automatically be suspended pending investigation. Full support will be offered to players (and parent/carers) that acknowledge that they are involved in a situation that they would like to change and need help with. This may be in the form of pastoral support from our welfare officers or our Club Chaplain and football pastors team, or through referral to professional services and/or other Christian support groups. Youth players that reach their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday while playing for the Club are obliged not to smoke at or near any Sporting 87 FC event; again suspensions may be applied otherwise. No-shows at training and matches are regarded in a serious manner.

Not only does absence without notice show disrespect to the Club, team managers/coaches, teammates and their parents, match officials and the opposition, but it can also put an event at risk or at least adversely affect its format and cost the Club money. Notice of absence to a team manager/coach must always be given with an explanation. Without notice or good reason for absence rights to equality and opportunity charter privileges may be suspended.

# Frequently asked questions and answers for new players and parents Season 2014-2015



**Sporting 87  
Football Club**  
witness through football



Publically expressed negative opinion about an event or the people involved in an event will not be tolerated by the Club, and may lead to suspension or cancellation of membership and reported to the FA. This includes use of electronic social media such as Facebook and Twitter (note that the FA monitors these websites for such activity and may take action independently).

The Club's equality and opportunity charter, which applies to most youth teams (check with your team manager to see if this applies to you), guarantees equal match time for all squad members over the course of a season and a minimum half game on match days, in return for commitment and effort, i.e. training sessions attended, and 2 weeks notice given for absence. This policy extends to giving all players opportunity to experience and become capable at all positions on the pitch. The policy also ensures that all players receive a fair amount of match time for the money they pay. Subsequent to the recent FA Youth Review, such a policy is already part of the FA set of rules governing 7 v 7 and 9 v 9 format youth football (up to U12) but at the moment is mainly only optionally being adopted by affiliated leagues. If you have any questions regarding the review and our policies, please ask.

## **Q12. What is the FA RESPECT Course and why is it important?**

A12. Sporting 87 FC prides itself on the conduct of its players, parents and coaches. The Club aims to create an encouraging and supportive environment within which the children can express themselves and develop without feeling intimidated or pressured. There are two particular ways in which parents can help with this:

1. Avoid coaching the players during the game. That is shout out "run with it", "boot it out", "cross it", "shoot", "pass", "go here, go there" or any other instruction. There are three good reasons not to do this: a. confusion for the children (your child and others) because of differences between what you say and what is being coached from the other side of the pitch, b. immense pressure for your child to meet your expectations which will undoubtedly restrict their decisions to take risk and so learn from both positive and negative footy experiences, c. you are unaware of any team strategy or personal challenges that the coach has set. It's easy for parents to get emotional and carried away, and not clearly see the difference between 'instruction' and 'encouragement', so if you're in doubt of what you're doing, here's a simple question to ask yourself during the game: did I say it before or after the act (before - instruction, after - praise)?

2. Don't shout and scream. You are at a children's footy match, which should be a pleasant experience for players and everyone else. It is not a mini-professional game, there is no need for adult anxiety and tension to influence and spoil a children's game. We should not be attempting to recreate a 'stadium atmosphere'. Even if you're saying the right things, to do so continually eventually serves no purpose to the players (it all blends into one constant noise), and spoils the game for others.

Traditionally Sporting 87 parents and carers are very positive and encouraging towards all of the players including those in the opposition team, and this is often commented upon by their coaches after games - it's what helps us make friends and get invited to play friendly matches. To be clear on the expectations of the Club and the FA, all players and parents/carers are mandatorily required to complete the online FA Respect Course. You will find the course at [www.theFA.com/RespectGuide](http://www.theFA.com/RespectGuide). It takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and results in the participant being issued with a FAN reference that must be given on the sign on form. If you don't have Internet access the Club can help you with this. If a parent/carer completes the course with their child, they may give a single FAN reference that should be in the name of the child. If sign on forms are submitted without a FAN reference, then the sign on fee is £10 more expensive. Subsequent supply of a FAN reference results in a refund of the additional £10.

## **Q13. What behaviour is expected of supporters at matches?**

A13. Much of the answer to this question is given in the FA RESPECT Course and so has been covered in the previous question. However, one further point to make is interaction with and treatment of referees. Although referees are paid a minimal fee for their services this is normally not the main reason that they participate in grassroots football. If asked why they give up their Saturday mornings most referees would declare their enjoyment of the game and desire to help others enjoy it too. They provide a service to Clubs, parents and players from both teams without bias, but this is not to say without the occasional mistake. The 'human factor' of error which is prevalent within players, coaches and officials (and supporters!) is inevitable, and so referees should not be singled out and berated from the side of the pitch as an easy target. In doing so spectators (and sometimes coaches) risk the game descending into an unpleasant experience where players develop contempt for the referee and flout the rules.

Inexperienced referees are particularly vulnerable to spectator abuse, and it must be remembered that some may be as young as 14 years old, and thereby such action could be deemed an unlawful offence. When referees are having a particularly bad day, in your view, please keep your opinions to yourself during and immediately after the game. Also, it is worth remembering that in severe cases of interference the referee may ask a spectator to leave the game, and will suspend play until this happens.

The Club always endeavours to use FA licensed referees at its home games. However, some opposition Clubs unfortunately don't have a similar pool of refereeing expertise to call upon and will occasionally use team coaches and parents. These situations are not ideal but unfortunately are within the rules of the league and have to be tolerated.

## **Q14. What are the main responsibilities of parents/carers and how can they best support the team manager and Club?**

A14. To maintain member status and claim rights afforded by the Club's player equality and opportunity charter parents/carers need to provide best notice and reason for absence from matches (at least 2 weeks) and training (at least 5 days). Parents/carers are also responsible for providing or arranging transport for their child to away matches, and required to pay monies due promptly.

Parents/carers should recognise that the Club is a voluntary run organisation and not a paid for private or public service. Thereby parents/carers are asked to be a part of the Club themselves and contribute: lend a hand with carrying and setting/packing-up equipment, offer to be a lines-person, support our indirect activities such as the match-day drinks and snack bar, and especially take part in our fund raising events.



# Frequently asked questions and answers for new players and parents Season 2014-2015



**Sporting 87  
Football Club**  
witness through football



## **Q15. How do you become a parent/carer Club volunteer?**

A15. If you would like to offer your expertise or time in a more formal manner or on a regular basis, then the Club would welcome your offer. Please initially talk to those already involved in the Club to make your decision as informed as possible, and then approach either the Club Secretary or Chairman for a preliminary chat about making an official application to join the Club's staff.

## **Q16. How does the Club use photographs of players and can parents/carers take photographs of their child?**

A16. Occasionally the Club (and the Educational Trust) may have a photographer at activities or events. The photographs taken help the Club produce publicity material and documentation; such as press releases, articles for our website, brochures, advertisements and Club news letters. If you don't want the Club to take photographs of your child, just leave the relevant tick box blank. If you wish to take photographs of your child at a Club event, you must seek the permission of your child's team manager and when applicable the permission of the opposition team manager. This is because you may inadvertently capture the image of a child that is on an 'at risk' register. You must accept a negative response to your request without question or explanation. In our experience most requests will be granted when you ask in a courteous manner; sometimes you may be asked to introduce yourself to opposition parents/carers.

## **Q17. What is the Club's policy regarding arriving at and leaving activities without a responsible adult?**

A17. All U7/8/9 players MUST arrive at and leave events with an adult. Children U10+ may arrive at and leave events without an adult on condition that notice has been given on the sign on sheet. All children awaiting adult collection will require supervision of staff that will either need to depart themselves or are required to supervise children attending following sessions, so please be prompt for pick-ups. Adults must fetch U7/8/9 children from the exact location of activities; children will not be allowed to walk to car parks.

## **Q18. What are subs, and what do these regular payments cover?**

A18. To avoid confusion in the world of football, the word 'subs' in terms of payments is short for 'subscription' which is the regular fee required to be a member of the Club. The subs fee for signings is £15 per month. The subs fee for girls and reserves is just £10, because these players don't play weekly matches.

The non-profit subs fee covers the costs of: pitch/facility hire, home-game referees, Club football equipment replenishment (goal posts, nets, flags, etc.) team football equipment replenishment (balls, bibs, cones, etc.), and coach/manager training courses and apparel. The regular subs fee is a monthly division of a yearly total, and is required every month, even out of season. This is because the Club took the view that the payments would be better managed by parents/carers in this way, as opposed to increasing the monthly amount but only requiring payments for ten months of the year. The Club 'season' is defined as being the period between the first day of pre-season training (mid July) to the date of the Club awards evening (mid May).

Note that subs don't have to cover any staff costs including coaches' fees because the Club is entirely voluntary run. Also note that regular subs payments don't cover additional activities, such as: out-of-season 'continuity' training (run by the Educational Trust), tournaments, and socials. Payments for these activities must be made in advance, so please don't put the Club staff in an awkward position by forgetting or making late payments.

## **Q19. What is the sign on fee, and what does it cover?**

A19. The sign on fee is the initial payment to the Club for non-recurring charges. It covers: league registration, overheads and related fees, administrative equipment and consumables, awards evening costs (trophies, medals, venue hire, special guest expenses, drinks and snacks), and similar parents evening costs. There is no sign on fee for some subsidised groups: reserves or girls. To encourage completion of the FA RESPECT course a £10 reduction in sign on fee is given for supply of a FAN.

## **Q20. Who is the child welfare officer and how can I get in touch with them?**

A20. Jonathan Warnock and two support staff Sandra Shields and Nikki Brown take care of Club welfare matters. If you have any questions or anxieties of any nature that you don't feel comfortable discussing with your team manager then please contact them. The feelings and wellbeing of all players are always of our utmost concern. You can get in touch with them by phone 07946 733184, or email Jonathan.Warnock@Sporting87.co.uk, Sandra.Shields@Sporting87.co.uk, Nikki.Brown@Sporting87.co.uk.

## **Q22. What player clothing and equipment is needed?**

A22. Kit can be ordered through our online shop which is accessed via the Club website. Mandatory kit (shirt, shorts, socks and jacket) and optional garments are available. Also, frequently replaced non-personalised garments such as socks and shorts can be purchased from the Club shop at the Victory Sports Ground on match days. A discreet hardship fund is available to help upon request (see Q23), and donations of good condition outgrown kit, boots and equipment are gratefully received.

## **Q23. What costs are involved initially and thereafter?**

A23. The general outlay is: clothing (mandatory kit from the Club, no more than £50) and optional equipment as mentioned above, annual sign on fee (£20) (not required for reserves or girls), and match/training subs (£15 full member, and £10 reserves and girls each month). As stated in Q22, please contact us if you require financial support for any of these costs. We often find that this assistance is needed only temporarily, and we are always happy to help. You should also understand that if you are unable to, you don't have to pay back monies at a later date, so it won't become a debt. Some parents/carers that we help financially offer to support the Club in other ways, and we welcome these offers.

# Frequently asked questions and answers for new players and parents Season 2014-2015



**Sporting 87  
Football Club**  
witness through football



## **Q24. When and where are the matches played?**

A24. League and cup matches are scheduled from the first Saturday in September to around the start of May. From the last week in September to the last week of March most home games are played at either the Victory Sports Ground in Nowton Road, IP33 2BT; or the Sporting 87 FC & ET Football Development Centre at St Benedict's High School in Beetons Way, IP32 6RH. For the weeks outside of this period local authority pitches at Nowton Park and Hardwick Heath are also used. The Victory Sports Ground is shared with Bury St Edmunds Cricket Club who has priority during the summer. For directions please see our website: [www.Sporting87.co.uk/directions](http://www.Sporting87.co.uk/directions).

At the Victory Sports Ground drinks and snacks are normally available in the pavilion. There are toilets, changing rooms, and parking is free (if the car park is full, please use Nowton Park, the entrance of which is just a further 400 yards on the left). At all venues we protect our pitches which are of an exceptional standard and we especially look after the goal areas by asking teams to warm-up in designated off-pitch areas. Please don't use the pitches and goal areas for casual kickabouts before or after matches. Also, at the Victory Sports Ground there are two roped-off cricket squares near the pitches, which must not be walked on with studs, and only carefully walked on with flat shoes to collect stray balls. There is a strict no dogs policy at the ground.

Matches kick-off at either 1000 (junior youth) or 1030 (senior youth), and managers will advise on when they want players to arrive for preparation (generally 45 minutes beforehand). Away matches also start at the same time so travel time must also be allowed for.

## **Q25. When and where does training take place?**

A25. Regular training sessions take place on Thursday evenings: junior youth at the Sporting 87 FC & ET Football Development Centre at St Benedict's High School in Beetons Way, IP32 6RH, and senior youth at Nowton Park, Nowton Road, Bury St Edmunds. IP29 5LU. To make the most of allocated pitch time some teams deal with administration, briefings and warm-ups outside the astro pitch before and/or after session times – check with the team manager on the exact times of arrival and dismissal.

## **Q26. What league do the teams play in?**

A26. Our junior teams play in the WAYS League, which is short for Western Area Youth Soccer, an exciting and progressive new youth football league launched by the Suffolk FA for the West Suffolk region. All senior youth teams play in the largest youth football league in East Anglia – the South Suffolk Youth League, which has over 350 affiliated teams.

## **Q27. What are the match formats played within the leagues?**

A27. Through the age ranges there are varied formats; from 5-a-side for the youngest, then 7-a-side mini soccer, next 9-a-side and then full 11-a-side, all having different pitch dimensions, goal and ball sizes, match durations, and rules, etc.

## **Q28. How can I get news on team matches and league tables?**

A28. This facility is available on our website along with lots of other up-to-date information about the Club: [www.Sporting87.co.uk](http://www.Sporting87.co.uk).

## **Q29. What is the Sporting 87 Educational Trust?**

A29. As the Club has grown over recent seasons its modes of football provision have expanded. Much of this provision is quite unrelated to the Club's core function of providing competitive team football, and although run on a not-for-profit basis, it is also more commercial in its application. Wishing to retain its focus on team football, and wanting to remain an entirely voluntary run organisation, the Club Committee decided to establish the Educational Trust to facilitate these extended services. The Trust has three themes of provision:

1. Educating, instilling confidence and developing life skills using football
2. Achieving health and wellbeing through football
3. Affording equal opportunities and full inclusion in football

and it achieves these through four modes of provision:

1. Community football – (Tots Footy, Men's and Ladies' Futsal, etc.)
2. Personal development centre (PDC) – (Structured Training Programmes, Young Leaders Programme, Coaches Education, etc.)
3. Holiday clubs – (Varied club day formats provide fun and educational activities during school holidays for children aged 7 to 11)
4. Schools support – (Extracurricular clubs, PPA cover and curriculum support, development and recreational pathways)

If you'd like to know more about the Educational Trust, either visit our website: [www.Sporting87.co.uk/Sporting-87-Educational-Trust](http://www.Sporting87.co.uk/Sporting-87-Educational-Trust) or email [Darren.Brown@Sporting87.co.uk](mailto:Darren.Brown@Sporting87.co.uk).

## **Q30. What is CrossLinks?**

A30. CrossLinks is a register of Christian youth groups, clubs and regular activities based in Bury St Edmunds that is available on our website: [www.Sporting87.co.uk/crosslinks](http://www.Sporting87.co.uk/crosslinks). Parents that have brought their children to the Club because of its beliefs and values can use the register to find out about similarly run local organisations. If you belong to or know of a suitable organisation that would like to be part of CrossLinks, please let the Club know by contacting Tim Banks, Club Chaplain.