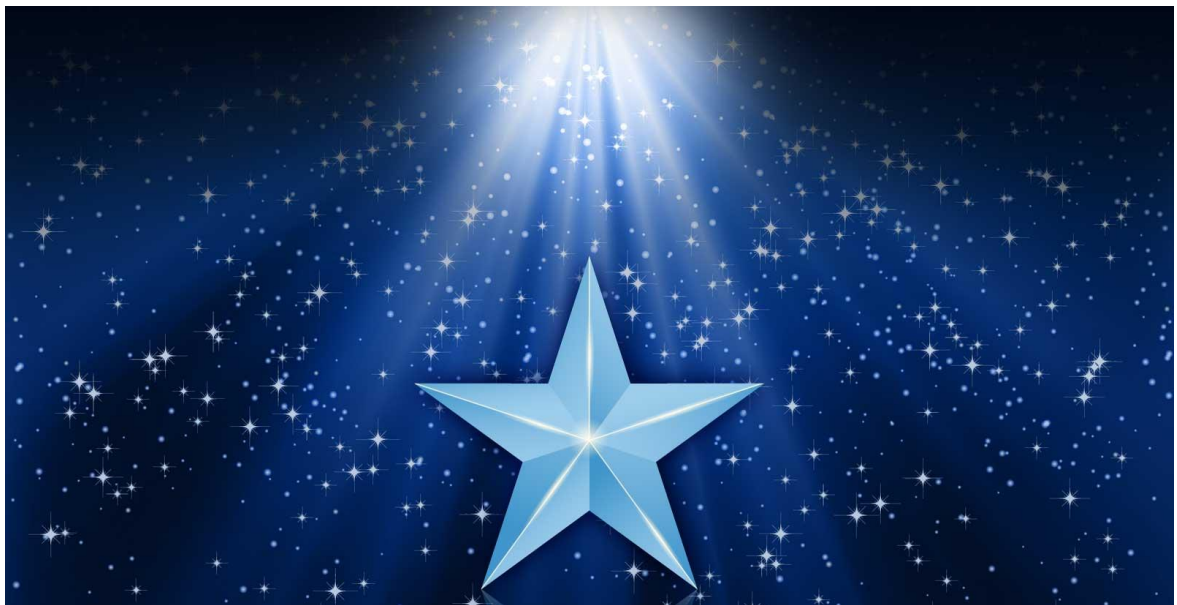




## WORPLESDON RANGERS FC - OUR CLUB ETHOS



### Introduction

Worplesdon Rangers has a very distinctive ethos as a Club. In our eyes, all our players are 'stars', so we refer to our ethos as the **Star Treatment**. It is something we are extremely proud of and try to instil in all our managers, coaches, parents/guardians and players.

Are we perfect in this respect? Absolutely not - but the **Star Treatment** as far as possible guides our thinking and aspirations as a Club, how we run our teams and what (and how) we communicate to our players and their parents/guardians.

### 'Football For All'

At the heart of the **Star Treatment** lies our historical emphasis on *football for all* in a fun and safe environment; essentially, Worplesdon Rangers' approach to inclusion.



We believe football has the power at grass roots level to build better futures for our children. The beautiful game can be an excellent teacher: self-discipline, teamwork, physical well-being and leadership are all examples that spring quickly to mind as possible benefits. However, these will remain elusive to many if the Club does not actively embrace diversity and inclusion in the way it is run.

In practice, this means that we encourage children to join us, regardless of their age, gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, ability or disability. As a Club, we recognise that inequalities exist within the game as they do in broader society. We take action to address these and try hard to create opportunities for children where these might not exist elsewhere.

We have had many successes over the years; for example by running mixed gender teams, integrating players with physical disabilities and mentoring players with low self-esteem, confidence and other behavioural difficulties. Once again, we don't claim to be perfect but the spirit at Worplesdon Rangers is very willing - and we try hard to ensure that we remain an inclusive Club.

To quote a famous ex-American President: 'All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should be given equal opportunity to develop our talent'.

## **'Respect'**

The next aspect of the **Star Treatment** is *respect*. Most people associated with grass-roots football will have come across the FA's 'Respect' campaign and as a Club, we are aligned very closely with its aims and philosophy. Essentially, Worplesdon Rangers promotes integrity, good behaviour and mutual respect between players, opponents, parents/guardians, match officials, our coaching staff and other volunteers. We also strive to be good local citizens, mindful of the fact that many of our pitch venues are located within close-knit communities around the Worplesdon, Stoughton and Guildford area.

We reinforce the emphasis on respect through regularly updated Club policies (such as our Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy) and, more importantly, through practising what we preach, whether it's on the touchline, at the training ground or in Committee Meetings. Actions speak louder than words.



## 'Competition'

Public opinion is polarised regarding the role of *competition* in children's sport (not just football), yet it is included as an important third element of our **Star Treatment** ethos.

As a Club, we do not subscribe to the view that competition *per se* is 'bad' for children, or that children of a specific age do not have the emotional maturity to cope with a 4-1 defeat. We do agree that it can get in the way of a player's development, although often this is not so much due to competition but to the reaction of some adults involved in the grass roots game (whether as spectators or coaches).

Worplesdon Rangers' ethos is thus about encouraging healthy competition for children, within the boundaries set by the various FA match formats and rules. We motivate our players to stretch themselves, fulfil their potential and learn to compete against their own 'personal best'. We encourage our teams to develop a winning mentality - but not at any cost and certainly not at the expense of enjoying their football, another strand of our ethos (see below). Learning to be gracious and accepting of defeat is all part of growing up and our coaches instil this wisdom in our players from a very early age. In summary, our view is that competition (with some important strings attached) is a good thing!

## 'Development'

The fourth element of our **Star Treatment** is *development*. Developing our players 'skill and will' is core to what we are about as a Club. Any player who invests a minimum of one season with us, who trains regularly and turns out frequently for their team, will be a better player for it.

Primarily, we exist to provide age-appropriate coaching to support the longer-term development of our players and to help them achieve their true potential. We strive to offer a challenging but supportive environment where children can learn from their mistakes without undue pressure and anxiety. This applies to the way we coach ([click here to see our Coaching Philosophy](#)) and the way we run teams on match days.

Our Coaches and Managers are volunteers who possess a valid enhanced FA DBS check. In addition, each team has at least one FA Level 1 qualified Coach (many have several). Coaches and Managers regularly attend Emergency First Aid and Safeguarding courses in fulfilment of their role with the Club.



We are always looking for new and innovative ways to improve coach education within the Club, including external partnerships (such as our link with the Coerver Performance Academy in Guildford) and coach mentoring schemes. We also have an active Youth Volunteer Programme, in which we encourage 16-18 year olds from within and outside the Club to get involved in grass roots football coaching. The programme can be aligned to educational schemes, such as Sports Leaders UK and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

## 'Enjoyment'

The final strand of our **Star Treatment** is *enjoyment*.

This is something of a 'no-brainer' but so often forgotten about in children's football and well worth a special mention. Put simply, we believe that children (and indeed most adults!) learn more quickly and powerfully when they are enjoying themselves.

We often ask our coaches 'what would your players do if they designed training themselves?' Of course, a group of 9- or 10-year olds would steer well away from complicated drills, seemingly pointless rules, adults shouting instructions at them, long queues waiting for 'my turn' and repetitive exercises that involve few if any touches of a football! Their response would probably be 'matches please, more matches and after that, even more matches!' A timely reminder that enjoyment is an important part of the equation in learning anything new.

As a Club, we support all our players in trying their best and make the most of their abilities. We encourage them to compete fairly on the pitch and to learn quickly from their mistakes. However, above all, playing for Worplesdon Rangers is about enjoyment, forging new friendships, learning something new and exciting and yes, even having some fun in the process!

## Conclusion: A Little History Lesson....

To understand what we are about as a 'football for all' Club, you need look no further than the programme notes for our 10th anniversary Club celebrations: 'How It All Started'....



*'We don't just take anyone, you will have to bring him along for a trial, then if he is good enough, we will consider him'*

*That was the reply I received 10 years ago, when I rang the manager of an U8s side for my son, who was keen to play football. To be honest, it wasn't the only reply like that.*

*I questioned myself; do I really want my son to play in a club like that? What happens to all the boys and girls that don't pass the trial - where do they go?*

*Surely every child should be able to play football if they want to?*

*It made me think back to my childhood, when I wanted to play football. I can't ever remember not kicking a ball around every chance I had....*

*During the school holidays from early morning to dusk I would be out playing football. A couple of jumpers as goals - and away we went.*

*A lad I played with is now with the Club - Chris Hudson - he will remember those days on the field....*

*I wanted to play in a team but I wasn't the best player in the world (thought I was - but who doesn't?!)*

*I went to a couple of local sides, joined up but was always the sub - some games I didn't even get on the pitch. But I never gave up.*

*I was signed on for Merrow at the time and we had an early game against Shalford. I turned up bright and early on the Sunday morning but come the kick-off we only had nine players, so I was in the starting line-up. Yippee!*

*Ten minutes into the game our three best players turned up, all three were put on - and I was pulled off.*

*Heart-broken, I sat on the grass away from everyone else....on my own.*

*To this day, I can't remember the Shalford Manager's name but he came over and spoke to me: 'If you want to play football son, be at Shalford Park next Saturday at 9am'.*



*The following Saturday, I left home at 8am on my Chopper bike and cycled to Shalford. I was 10. To this day, my mum still doesn't know I cycled nearly every week to Shalford.*

*Sixteen boys turned up for training; I had a great time - really friendly and fun. I was picked for the team on Sunday, started as a sub but had twenty minutes on the pitch....it felt fantastic! We lost 10-0 but I had played, the best feeling in the world. I stayed signed on for Shalford for years. We always, even as a sub, had 20 minutes and we all took turns at missing a week, even the best lads.*

*Looking back now, it was a fantastic time and it was all down to that manager. He did everything himself, took training, matches, supplied the oranges, washed the kit. Even took us to away matches (up to thirteen lads in his Cortina Estate, plus balls and kit!). He did all this so we could all play football - and because he loved doing it.*

*These thoughts of my childhood is how Worplesdon Rangers started.*

*A card on the school notice board 'Anyone interested in their child playing football?'...I went along with a couple of other dads and their sons on the said day and a club was formed.*

*None of us had much idea about running a club but we were all enthusiastic. Twelve boys started and within a few weeks we had enough for two Mini-Soccer sides - and from there we have never looked back, resulting in this season having over 250 children....*

*Why do we have so many children? It's because we welcome and allow all to come and play and enjoy themselves. We don't have trials and we don't pick the best and discard the rest, like other clubs.*

***It's all about the right ethos.***

(Words from Brian Slyfield, a Club founder, former WRFC Team Manager and the Club's current Deputy Chairman: Worplesdon Rangers FC 10th anniversary programme notes, 2011).