

# About the Club



## Structure

We have achieved FA Charter Standard (at Development level)

We have teams at 13 Age groups with 27 squads – Under 5's up to Under 16s, and Over 16s for BridgeAbility (for season 2018/19).

All our development as a club is supported with qualified coaches and Club officials, all suitably certificated to the appropriate level for the roles they undertake on the clubs behalf.

We have now expanded to have 27 squads across these age groups.

## Squad Development

Each season sees an influx at the very youngest ages of new Players, Parents, Volunteers and Managers from players at 4yrs of age, and we establish a NEW academy group each year (for Under 5 and 6year olds), and we take our Under 6s group into Under 7s participation in their 1st recognised structured football environment.

This allows us to constantly be sustaining the club, as all the existing youngsters move up year on year whilst with us.

We also constantly replenish squads (where necessary) where places become available because of natural wastage across our established squads.

## Player Development at Bridge

### Male 17+ Development - Mainstream and Disability

Our aim is to hopefully establish teams beyond Under 16s. We already established this in partnership with Hopwood Hall Middleton for our post 16 Bridgeability (Disability) programme where we are delivering our own, AND the Colleges Disability opportunities for students and who take part in the LFA 'Ability Counts' league.

### Disability – Bridgeability – 9 to 16 year olds

We also have an Academy group for 9-16yrs olds, supporting Disability inclusion into Football which we have established and who regularly play in the LFA recognised participation programme called 'Ability Counts'

This group is called **Bridgeability**, which trains weekly at both the Soccer factory and at Hopwood Hall, is costed at just £5 per month which covers kit, travel, training and playing costs, and is coached by qualified coaches supported by the Club.

This session, run by Bridge JFC, is in partnership with Hopwood Hall, and it supports special needs pupils, and Bridgeability is the only group at a community club level that offers access and inclusion to football, whatever the nature of the disability, in the Borough.

## Girls

We also now have an Under 15s girls team in the North Manchester Girls league managed by Leigh Ann Carnall, an FA Qualified and CRB/DBS approved/accredited coach. The aim is to continue to invite girls at all ages to join our structured development coaching sessions to assist in establishing pathways for all to follow in enjoying a structured access to football.

## Under 5s to Under 16s

At all these ages we have a mix of teams, and players, across the ability spectrum, and our role is simply to provide an environment where they can be as good as 'they' can be, where they can enjoy and grow, and if some make it into the professional game at any level then that is a bonus.

## Our Reputation

We are seen as one of the best organised, attractive and structured Junior Football Clubs by many in the football community with excellent value for money at our core. This is actually what others say about us. It is from a plethora of professional Clubs, County FA's, Local Authority organisations, Sporting bodies inside and outside football, local leagues and local opponents who we meet on a week by week basis. More importantly it is what their parents say about us being a Family centred club, with the children and enjoyment at the centre of all we do, it is not just the result of the match we are playing in that is important, and it is why more and more parents want their child to play for us. It is also why we are recognised in our local community.

**We also have held the coveted Rochdale 'Club of the Year' title having had this awarded to us in direct competition with every other SPORTS club (not just football clubs) of which there are over 250, in both 2007 AND 2010.**

Our Player base of approximately 300+ is attracted predominantly from Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton with a small number from other local areas.

## Our Home at Bamford

We have our own Site at [Top O' th' Lane, Bamford, Rochdale](#), (Behind the Grapes Pub on Norden Rd and next to Fieldhouse Cricket Club and Rochdale Tennis Club). It is on 25 year lease on a self-management contract with RMBC.

We have access to 11 Pitches, 16 Changing Rooms, our own Tea Bar and extensive Car Parking on a sole usage agreement.

## External Recognition of Bridge as a Club

We are recognised by Sport England (previously The Sports Council) with 3 consecutive awards under the Volunteer Investment Programme in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

## **Where We Play**

Our teams are in;

- The North Bury League
- The North Manchester Girls League

## **Coach Qualifications**

Every team has qualified volunteers (over 100 already hold certificates) with all Managers/Assistants and Club Officials either holding or working towards Qualifications in;

- Football Association Level 1 Coaching
- First Aid
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults

A number of these coaches also hold:

- Football Association Level 2 qualifications
- Referee Badges
- Football Association Goalkeeping Coaching Badges
- Football Association Age Appropriate Coaching Badges
- Some are also working towards, or have, their UEFA B Coaching Badges.
- Coaching Disabled Footballers

So you can see that there is a wealth of experience and expertise available

We also have access to FA Skills and Mentor Coaches, provided to us via the FA because of our Charter Status, for us to utilise, to assist in continually helping our coaches develop and grow their own skills, by receiving advice and guidance, and gaining access to all the new coaching initiatives that the FA encourage clubs to embrace.

## **DBS/CRB Background clearance checks**

All our active volunteers have to undergo background checks to reassure parents that all our volunteers are above doubt and have in place the appropriate CRB/DBS checks.

## **Winter Training**

All Winter Training, Floodlit and Indoor, provided by Club at various sites around the Rochdale area is paid for by the Club.

## **School Links**

We have direct links with numerous schools in the Borough of Rochdale.

## **The Football Environment**

Our aim is to provide the best access to football that we can, in an enjoyable, supportive, qualified and safe environment and ensure that the players under our care ENJOY, first and foremost their time with us.

We pride ourselves on setting good standards of behaviour, of encouraging and not criticising, of remembering that children do not make mistakes on purpose, and of supporting not criticising their efforts when on the field of play.

We see the challenge of behaviour off the pitch as the most important one that we constantly need to address, and if we get that right – which we believe we do – then all the other positives come through as a result of setting the right example.

It is quite clear that it is how Adults behave off the pitch that affects how youngsters feel and behave on it.

We aim to stop passion overtaking self-control and turning into aggression or bullying from the side-line.

Our job is to make sure we lead by example, are good role models and provide the right atmosphere and environment for our own, and other, children to grow into enjoying the game we all passionately support.

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