

# Somersall Rangers

Engaging and Building Relationships with Parents

V1.0



# *Somersall Rangers FC*

## **Aim**

- To develop an understanding of effective strategies to build positive relationships with parents to benefit our young players

## **Objectives**

- Identify what challenges you face with parents
- Identify why the player-coach relationships benefits the player and how it can support them
- Discuss how to engage with parents positively to keep them involved
- Discuss and share different experiences of dealing with difficult parents

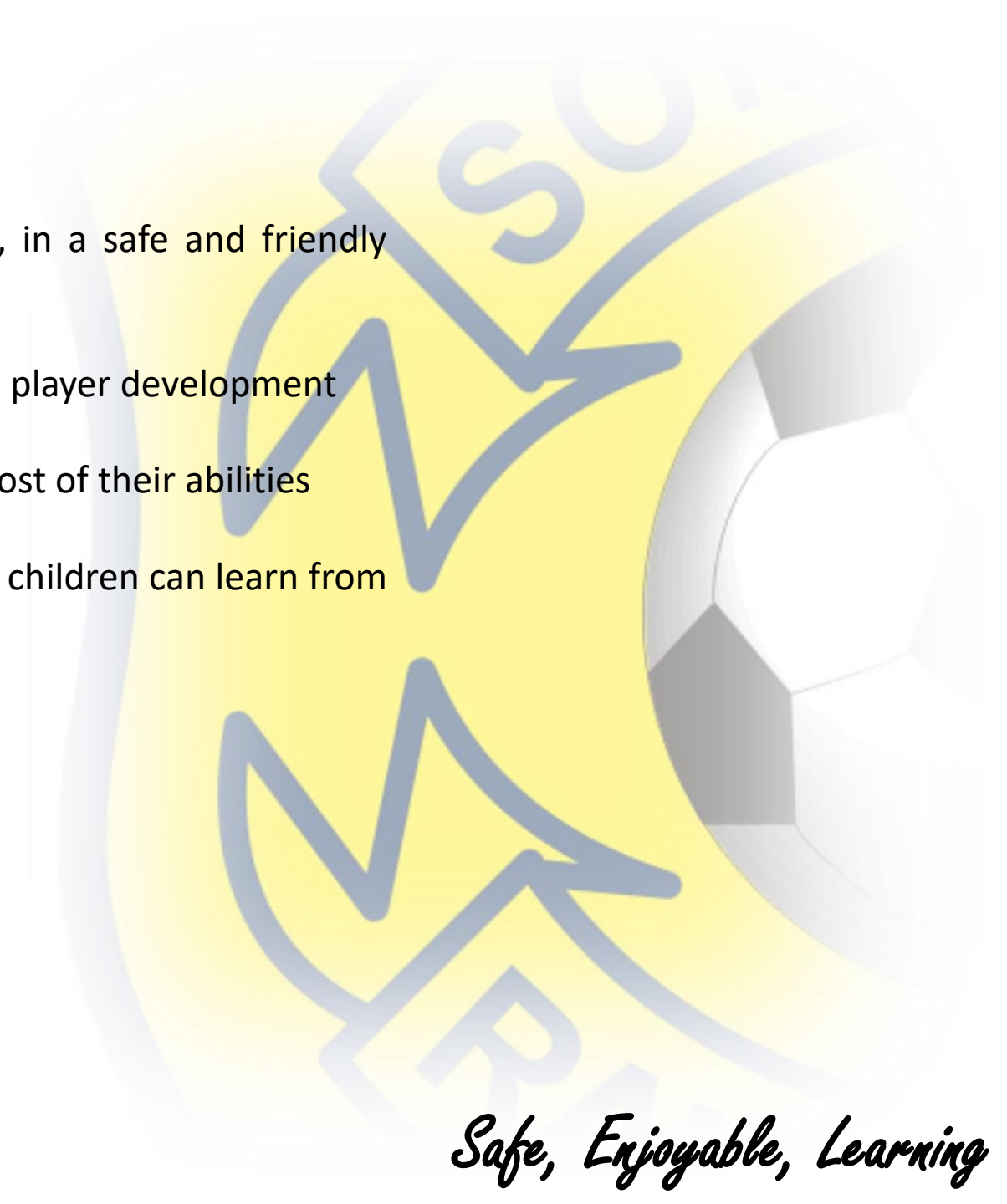
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## **Our Philosophy**

- ✓ To provide football to children of all ages and abilities, in a safe and friendly environment
- ✓ To deliver age appropriate coaching to support long-term player development
- ✓ To encourage all players to try their best and make the most of their abilities
- ✓ To offer a challenging but supportive environment where children can learn from their mistakes without undue pressure and anxiety
- ✓ To promote good behavior and respect for others

**We are here to assist!**

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## **Introduction**

- As coaches we always want the best for our players - we spend a significant amount of our time planning the right sessions to every fine little detail we do this to ensure our players get the best possible experience in football
- There are many misconceptions about parents within the game, although some may be true, not all parents are monsters and want to give the coach a hard time.
- Its important that we identify the parents who are seeking what is best for their child and use this as an opportunity to engage to create a better youth culture
- A common trend within grassroots and academy football is relationships with parents and how it is dealt with
- How can we effectively build that relationship and understand why it could be so important to our players development?

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## Task

- Write down some of the challenges or experiences you have faced with parents?
- Examples could be:
  - Confrontations
  - difficult questions
  - conduct on match days
  - Conduct at training
  - Positive parent engagement
  - Positive experience
- Not all parents are difficult!

## Response

- How did you deal with it?
- Would you do something different?
- Review



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## **Research**

### **Job Satisfaction**

- A recent study in the UK has shown teachers felt significantly happier in their jobs when parents engaged with them and took a deep interest in their child's education
- Why cant we apply this to Football?

### **Player Retention**

- We want to retain players, in order to do this we need to maintain a positive environment
- Research shows that schools that engage with parents have children who are less likely to drop out of school
- Schools that engage with parents have children that perform better in exams etc

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## **Research**

### **Are We Doing Enough?**

- Parents tend to be a key major issue around grassroots football for a variety of different reasons
- Are we doing enough to support and educate them as much as we do for the players?
- Is a more open collaboration between coaches and parents needed in order for your players to progress?
- Will it inspire our players?

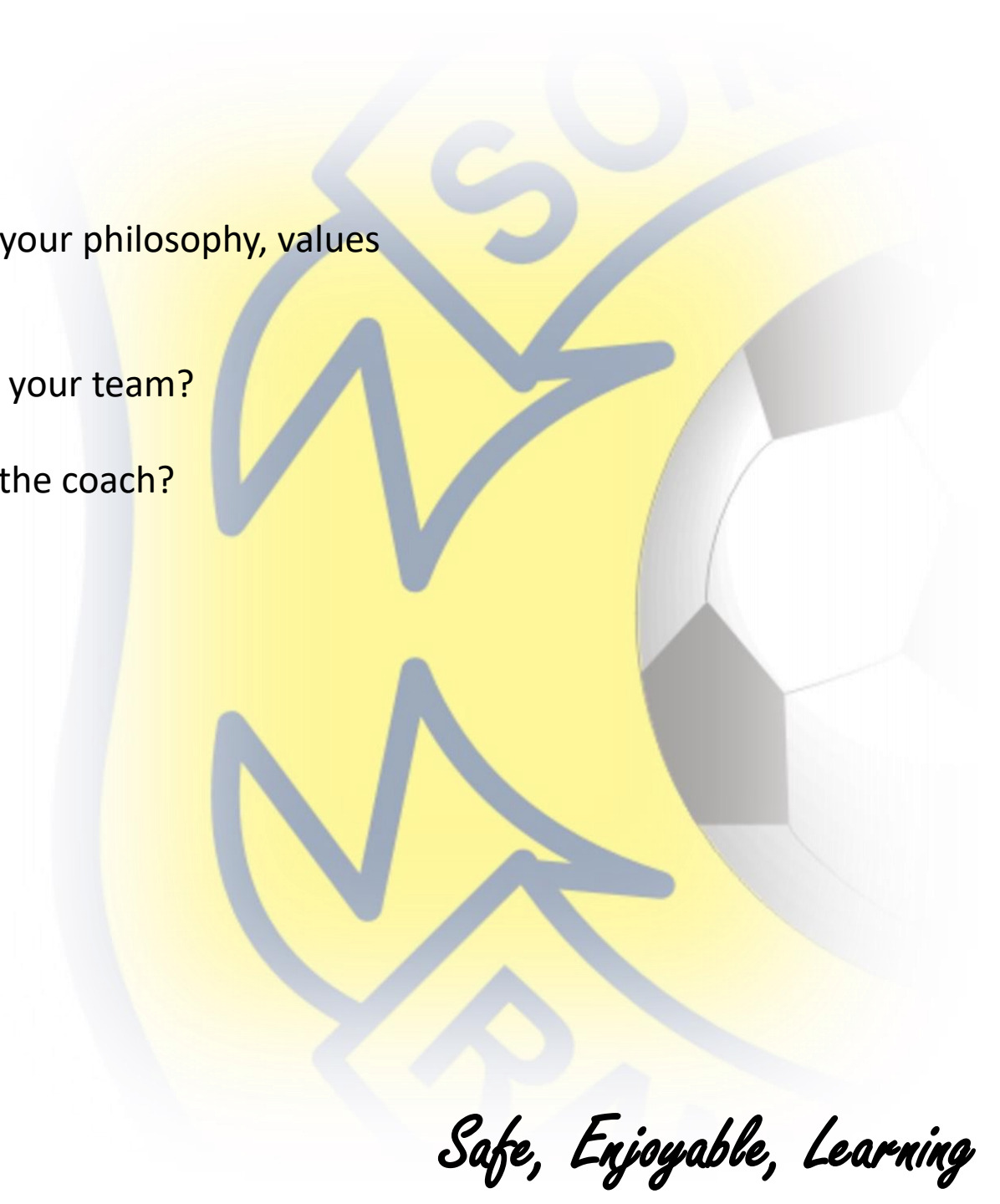


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## **Task**

- Do you do enough to inform and educate your parents about your philosophy, values and beliefs etc?
- Could the parents be the key missing ingredient of success for your team?
- Do your parents act out due to a lack of communication from the coach?
- Would clubs benefit from a parent engagement officer?
- What social aspects do you do outside of football as a team?
- What could be the pros & cons?



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## **Coaches v Parents**

- Try not to see situations as coaches vs parents
- The coaches that are well intentioned, who are open and seeking to support young players find their role much more fulfilling by engaging with parents and seeing the benefits
- Parents need to feel that they have some control over choosing the right environment for their child
- We want the level headed parents to take the sidelines back from the crazy ones! Lets inspire a new generation of parents
- Collaborate with parents in the best interest of player development - pushing parents away will not work!
- Providing them with some information, guidance and support will give them some clarity and help them understand the environment their child is in
- Involve them in your feedback?

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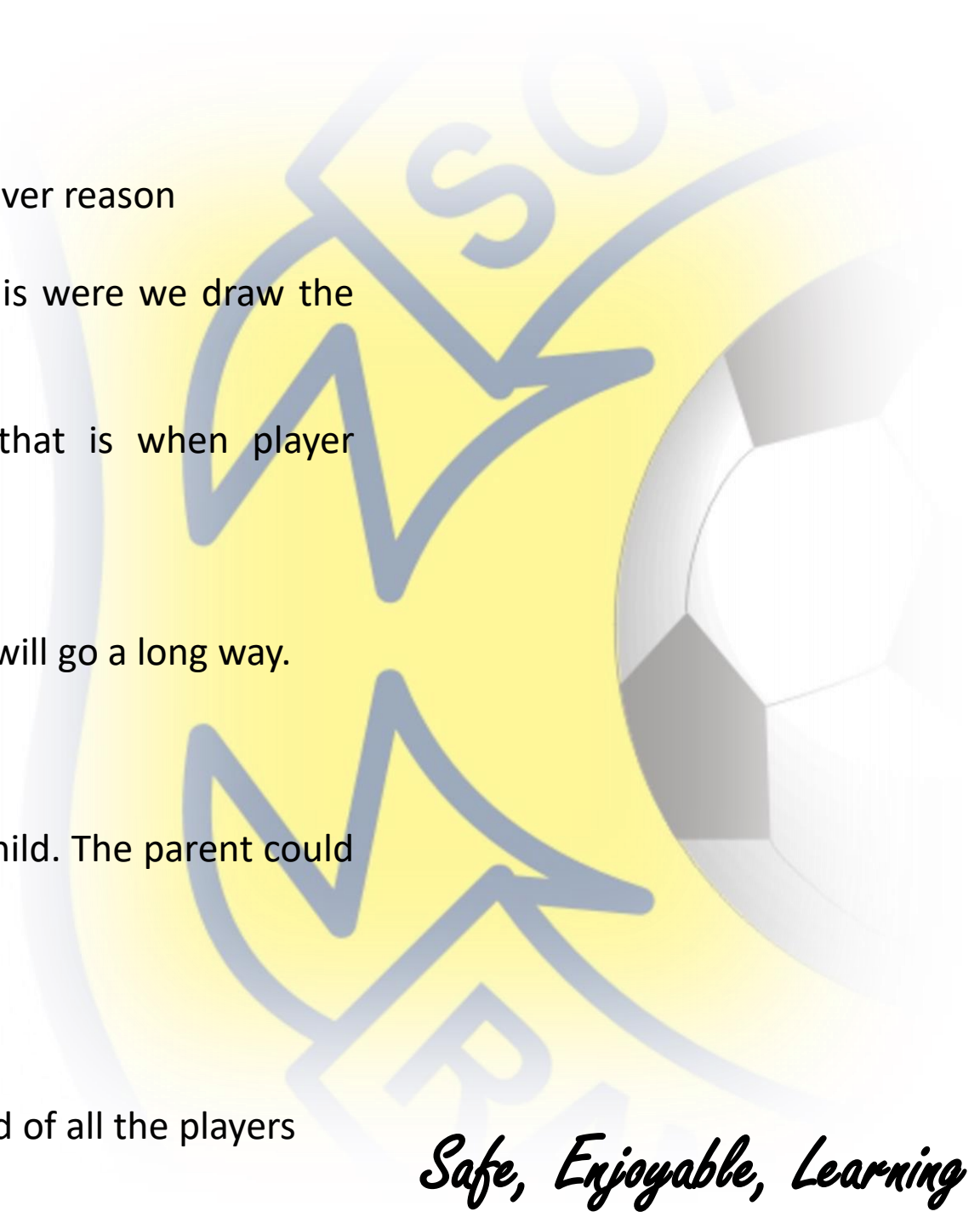
## **Parental Boundaries**

- We want to know if their child is not enjoying football for whatever reason
- We don't want specifics on game related expectations - that is where we draw the line
- Establish ground rules and an open trusting relationship, that is when player development will flourish

## **Communication is Key**

- Providing parents with some feedback on their child's progress will go a long way.
- This can be done informally after training sessions or matches
- Don't alienate the parent from the feedback you're giving their child. The parent could help support you!
- Open the door to parents and be clear why you are doing so!
- Everyone should be committed to working together for the good of all the players

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## **Task**

- How would you respond to the following questions?
- “Anyone could just “have a game”
- “The coach is not “coaching”
- “The players are not learning anything”
- “The coach is not “telling” the players everything”
- “Is this what we are paying our subs for?”



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## **Supportive Parents**

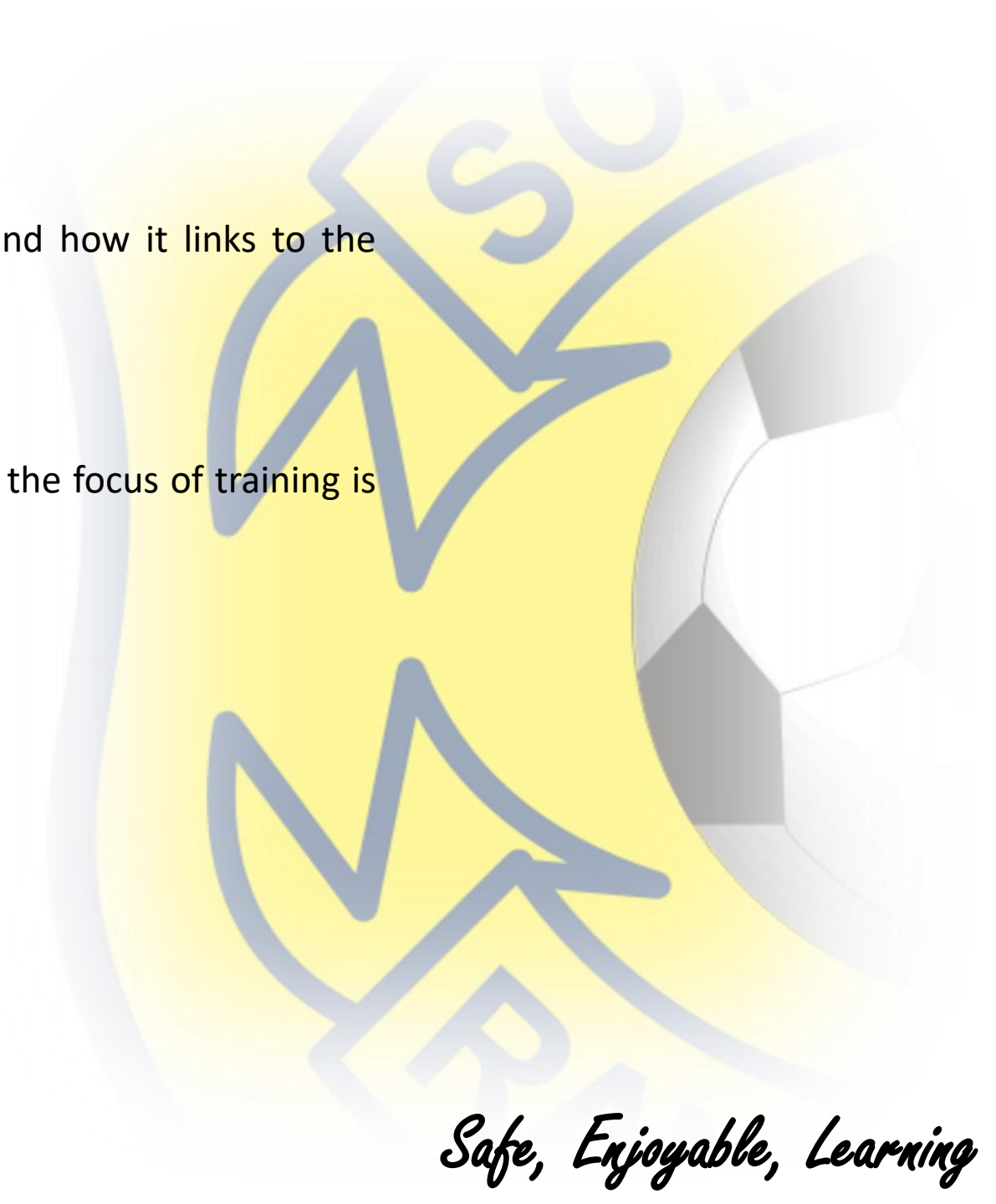
- Encourage and celebrate individual ability on the ball
- Encourage lots of opportunities to experiment and explore
- Ask if there are other solutions to problems rather than just having just one
- Avoid putting undue pressures on the player
- Promote enjoyment and involvement over winning
- Be a great role model - someone your child will look up to NOT be embarrassed by
- Help us use Football to develop great players who grow into great people.



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## **Strategy to Build Coach – Parent Relationships**

- Pre and post game chat about expectations for the game and how it links to the previous training sessions.
- What went well and what didn't go so well?
- Watts App / Messenger groups - Post session plans and what the focus of training is for each particular session.
- Parent/Coach informal meetings
- What ideas have you used in the past?



## **Dealing With Difficult Parents**

- Dealing with difficult parents is something we as coaches need to accept will happen once in a while
- No one goes through an entire coaching career without ruffling at least a couple of parents' feathers!

## **Never Talk to Someone That is Yelling at You**

- You're giving up your time to help out their kids and deserve more respect than that.
- If a parent comes up to you frustrated and yelling, in a calm voice let them know that you'd be happy to discuss whatever their concern is when they've calmed down.

## **Discuss the Problem at a Later Time**

- If a parent gets frustrated with you during the game and walks over and demands you talk to them this instant (during the game), kindly let them know that you're happy to talk to them about it, but they will need to wait until after the game.
- Schedule a meeting with them at a later time. This gives both yourself and the parent time to sit down and think about the conversation prior to meeting, rather than blurting out what ever comes to mind when they're angry.

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## **The Meeting**

This can be beneficial in many ways, such as:

- Someone else can sit in the meeting – another parent
- The club will support you with this – the Welfare Officer
- Derbyshire FA will support you with this!
- Clarifying facts that may arise during the meeting
- A witness in case anything happens
- To recall comments made in the meeting at a later time if needed



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## **The Meeting**

### **Hear Them Out**

- The parent needs to feel like they're being heard - if you're constantly interrupting and disputing their comments mid-conversation, the only thing you're going to achieve is making the parent much angrier than they already are
- Hear them out and get their complete side of the story before you start adding your comments - the last thing you want to do is make the situation worse than it already is

### **Body Language**

- You must show the parent that you're paying attention to what they have to say by using good body language
- Don't sit back in your chair with your arms crossed. This shows a type of arrogance and stubbornness and will only infuriate the parent further
- Sit forward and look them in the eyes - nod when they're speaking to show that you understand



## **The Meeting**

### **Keep Your Composure**

- Even if they come in blasting you for reasons you don't understand, it's important to make sure you keep calm and talk rationally
- You don't want to get into a shouting match and say something you'll regret in the future
- If you find the way they're speaking to you is unacceptable, politely ask them not to talk to you that way, and if they continue to do so, you'll have to end the conversation
- Then if they do continue to speak to you in an unacceptable way, simply tell them that that you're not willing to talk to them when they're in this state and you'd be happy to talk to them again when they've cooled off.

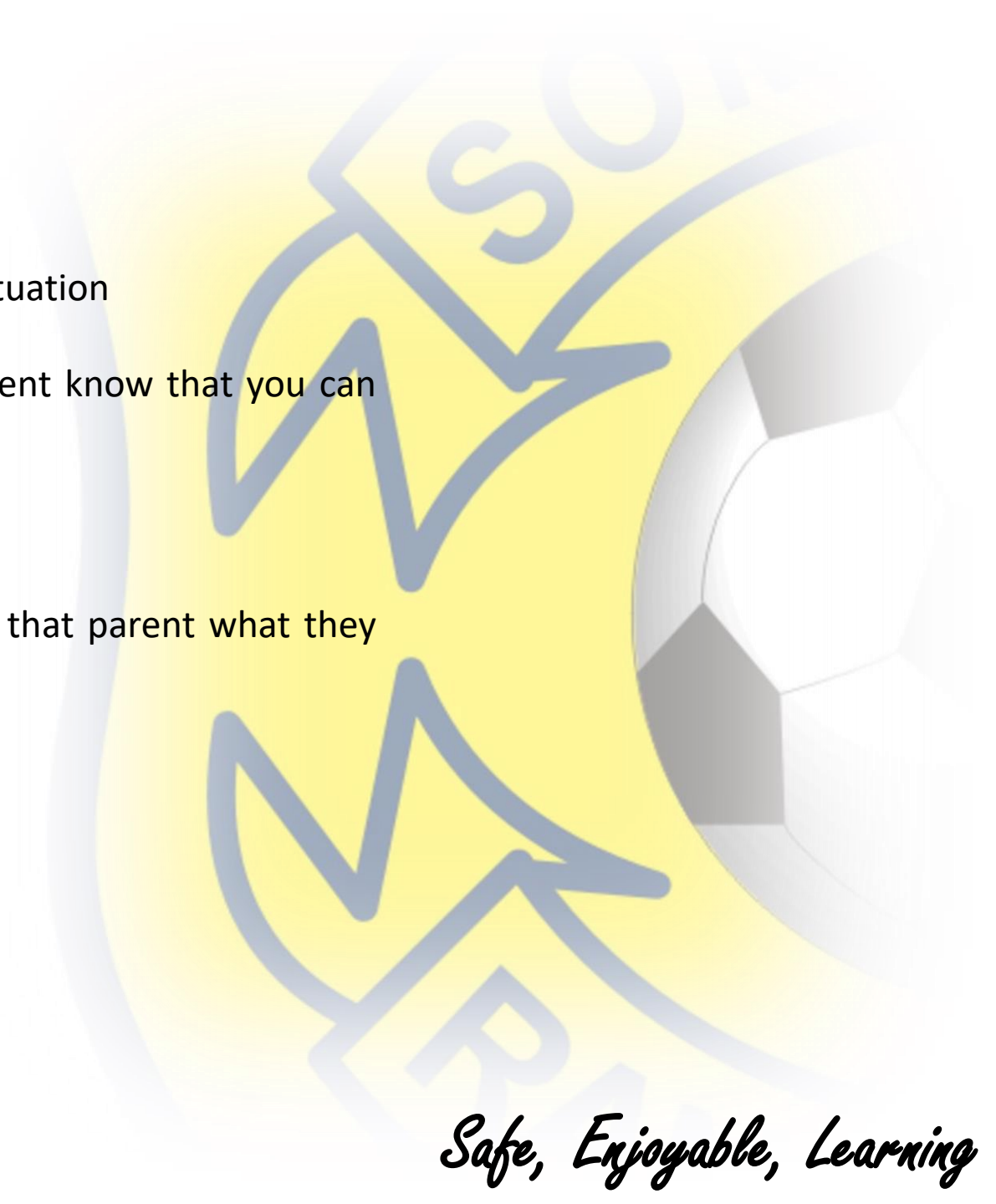
## **The Meeting**

### **The Correct Way to respond**

- The correct way to respond is going to differ greatly in every situation
- Even if you don't fully agree with their argument, let the parent know that you can see where they're coming from
- Acknowledge the points in their argument that you agree with
- Acknowledge their son's/daughter's strengths before you tell that parent what they need to improve on.

### **Task**

- Would you do anything differently?
- What methods would you adopt?
- What tips would you have for others?



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## **Inspire Players by Empowering Parents**

- A strong and supportive community of level-headed and like-minded parents and coaches will inspire players
- A much more collaborative environment between coach, parent, club, and player is in the best interest of player development
- When parents seek information about how to best support their player, great things will happen
- We believe youth football parents will be difference makers when it comes to improving the game

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## **Useful Support**

- The Club
- The Welfare Officer
- Other Coaches
- Hive Learning
- FA Bootroom



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## Useful Links

- <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/respect>
- <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/respect/resources>
- <http://www.derbyshirefa.com/coaches/coaching-support/policies-and-procedures>
- <http://www.somersallrangersfc.co.uk/documents/>
- <https://www.soccerparenting.com/>

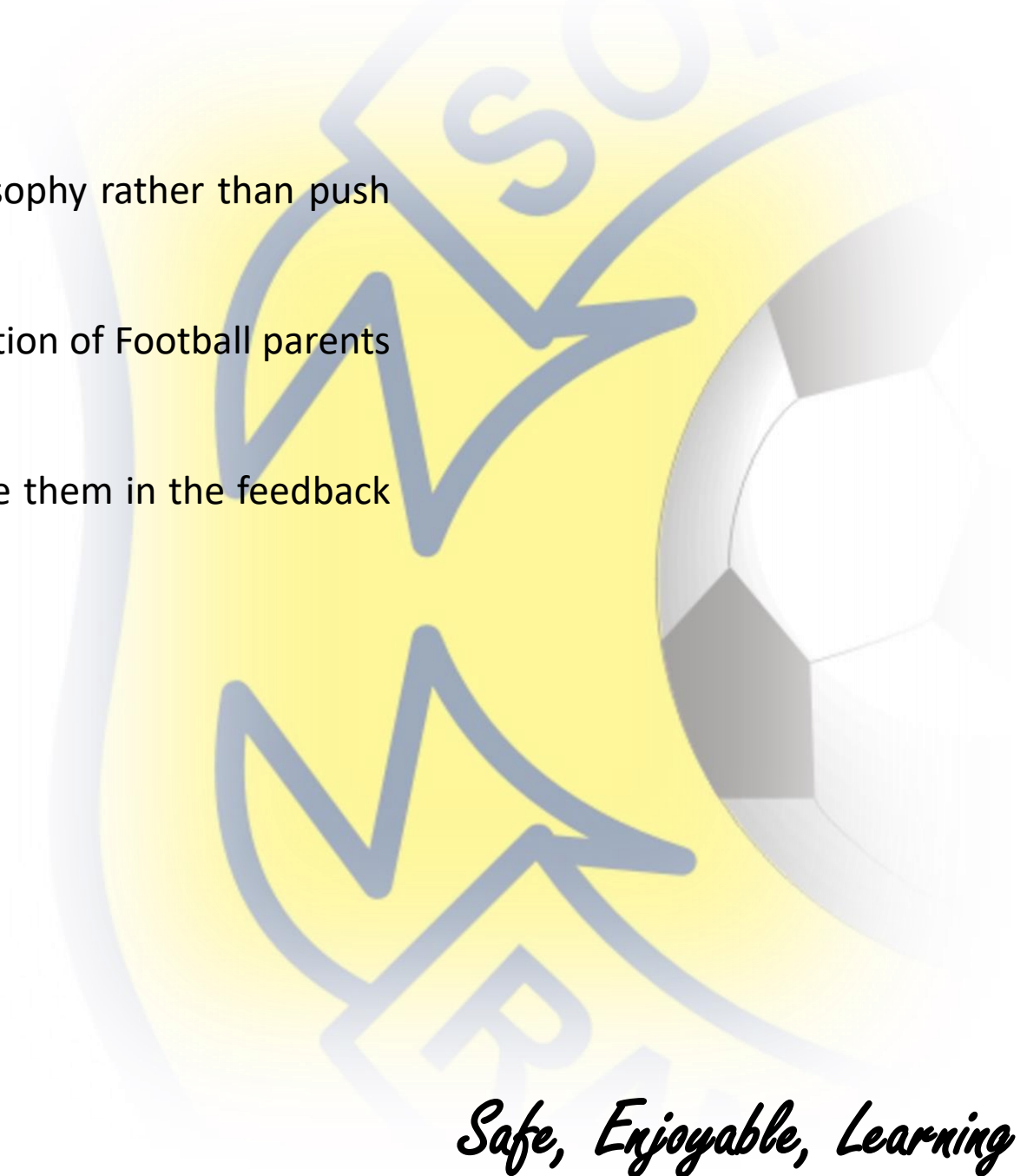


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## **Summary**

- Provide parents with more information about coaching philosophy rather than push them away
- Offer guidance and support to parents to create a new generation of Football parents and fresh environment
- Guide and inform parents of why and what you coach, include them in the feedback process with their child
- Always respond in the correct way to reactions from parents
- Be positive!



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