

**Kent Exiles Academy U19
American Football
Team
Handbook
2023-2024**



“Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it”

Lou Holtz

Kent Exiles Academy U19 Team Vision and Values

OUR VISION

We aim to promote the sport of American Football, developing players to their highest potential in a positive environment, while encouraging discipline, commitment, integrity and respect both on and off the pitch.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will provide an environment for all involved to achieve personal and team excellence through our five Core Values:

RESPECT – INTEGRITY – DEVELOPMENT – COMMITMENT – ENJOYMENT

CORE VALUES

RESPECT – Everyone in the team is valued and is expected to show respect to each other, officials, opponents and the game of football.

INTEGRITY – Honesty and trust are central to the team, with every member being expected to always demonstrate sound moral and ethical principles.

DEVELOPMENT – We will provide players and coaches the opportunity to learn, develop and progress their skills and abilities.

COMMITMENT – There must be willingness to give up time and energy to achieve the team goals, and dedication to each other by committing to training, game days and Club events.

ENJOYMENT – Having fun, enjoying football, and feeling part of the Club is fundamental to its overall success.

OUR GOALS

- To develop a framework for ***achieving excellence***, for both our players and coaching staff;
- To aspire to the very ***highest standards*** of play;
- To make the playoffs

TEAM EXPECTATIONS

1. Be physical on the field.
2. Win the special teams battle.
3. Out-work and out-fight our opponent.

GAME / PRACTICE

1. Be on time. Being late sends a message that your time is more important than those you are with.
2. Always fight and play relentlessly through the whistle. Never quit on a play!
3. Always engage in what we are doing and the role assigned and agreed upon.

WHAT WE OFFER?

Why play for our U19 academy team? We like to think we've got a lot to offer both new players and those who've played before that sets us apart from other clubs in South East London & in Kent.

Our coaching

We offer dedicated, experienced, positional coaching. We also support and encourage our coaches to develop, and have a strong focus on player development. If you commit to the Exiles; you will get better as a player.

Our training/game day facilities

We train at Westcombe Park RFC and have access to our own pitch and floodlights for midweek training.

Training days/times:

Sunday's – 12noon-2.30pm

Training will run until Sunday 10th December and restart in Sunday 7th January.

Wednesday's – 7.30pm-9.30pm (from February onwards)

Our gameday

The season runs from April to August. The schedule will be distributed as soon as we receive it from the league.

We have our own pitch at WPRFC. There is a clubhouse serving food and drink. We have a team of volunteers who work hard to make this a great day out you'll be proud to invite your friends and family to.

Be part of something bigger

We're bigger than one team. Our club is made up of eight teams and has over 250 players, coaches and staff involved.

We're well run

Our club is managed by a dedicated committee. We follow all the rules, make sure

everything is always done in the right way and with player health and safety in mind. We don't settle for second best and are always pushing to be better. We are in partnership with Go London! which recognises well governed, safe, and inclusive clubs.

We have strong finances

Our finances are in great shape and are managed transparently. At our AGM we share a full copy of our accounts so you can see exactly what we've spent your money on. You're also very welcome to look at our accounts or ask questions about our finances at any time. We have a fantastic track record at securing grant funding for the club.

We look out for you

We take things like medical cover at games and insurance seriously and make sure claims are made swiftly and any incidents are recorded. A registered paramedic is always available at our home gamedays.

We listen

Your views are important to us. We regularly invite players, coaches and staff to share their views on every aspect of the organisation and we regularly act on this feedback.

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM OUR PLAYERS?

You're interested in joining our U16 academy team and we've told you what's on offer. But what do we expect from you?

You'll have a **desire to improve** and a **great attitude**. We'll help you understand your strengths and your limitations and make you into a better footballer, but you need to leave your ego at the door and come to work as a team player.

You'll go **the extra mile** for your team off the field too. This includes attending team nights out and supporting and helping our other teams on their gamedays.

You'll need a **competitive nature**. You'll have the desire to fight for a starting spot in the team and the desire to get on the field and win.

OFFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

The Exiles offense is designed to set the tempo of the game. Offensively we believe in:

- Protecting the football
- Being smart on the field
- Executing our fundamental skills

The coaching staff will work hard to analyze our athletes and put the best system in place to utilize their skills to help score points. We will have the ability to run the same plays from multiple formations and make game time adjustments based on varying defenses we'll face.

DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

We strongly believe that a great defense needs to be able to set the tone of the game. We must be committed in our approach to understand the importance of being the more physical team. This is accomplished by playing a sound attacking style of defense with the ability to adjust to the offensive formations. The Exiles defense is designed to frustrate offences and turn the ball over. We believe in being the most physical and least penalised team.

SPECIAL TEAMS PHILOSOPHY

Special teams play is the final third of the game. We take great pride in special teams, and make it a point to spend quality time so that we win this phase of the game. Special teams are a chance to set the tone of the game and create momentum changes at crucial points in a game. All special teams will be filled with the best athletes to fill these important roles. These players must be students of the game, aggressive, extremely coachable and most importantly disciplined to follow through on their assignment without self-glorification.

As special teams can be a game changing opportunity, we will take advantage of every sound opportunity to be aggressive and strategic in this part of the game. With the proper planning and timing we will take advantage of the opportunities to attack an opponent with fakes, blocks, and special plays to succeed.

SUBS & REGISTRATION

Running an American Football club is expensive, so we rely on regular income from player fees or 'subs' to cover our costs. Without that money we wouldn't be able to pay for training facilities, gamedays, medical cover, referee cover or afford all of the other things our team needs.

How it works

Annual fees for the 2024 season are as follows: £140 (payable in 7 monthly instalments of £20)

All new players get an initial free trial period of three weeks, but after that point we ask that a standing order is set up for payment and both league and club registration is completed. Our payment year runs from the 1st December.

BAFA League Registration link: <https://bafa.justgo.com/>

Registration help guide: <https://www.britishamericanfootball.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Creating-a-new-BAFA-membership-2023.pdf>

Club Registration link: <https://app.joinin.online/#/app/joinin/organisation/shop/26e3ae5c-94aa-4c19-81ee-00b262716aab>

What we expect

We require all our players, to pay monthly subs by standing order. We only accept cash by exception and by prior agreement with that team's Head Coach and the club treasurer or chairperson.

What happens if you fall behind

Players who fall behind on their player fees without prior agreement will become ineligible to play in games and may also be unable to train with the team until their debt is cleared. For players with kit on loan, we will also request that kit is returned until they are no longer in debt to the club.

Players still in debt in October of each year will be placed on the British American Football Association's debtors list and will not be able to transfer to another team until this debt has been cleared satisfactorily.

We provide a regular update to players and parents on their subs balance and we are also happy to share or answer questions on all aspects of our income and expenditure.

Other costs

We're very upfront about what our player subs include, and what they don't. All practices and gameday expenses are included. Extra charges will apply for any minibus hire to away games (although is heavily subsidised by the Club) and team social events.

You will also need to pay an annual league registration fee. This must be paid individually and is mandatory across the sport and makes you eligible for competition and provides insurance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We're regularly asked the same questions about subs – here are answers to some of the common ones....

I've quit the team part way through the season – why do I still need to pay?

We charge an annual fee, not a monthly one. We base our budget on the number of players we have on the roster for the season ahead. For all teams (from 2023 onwards) we ask players to sign a player agreement committing to pay the full fee for the year ahead. This usually takes place just before the start of the season, at the point we expect players to have decided if they wish to play with us this year and fully commit to the club. Think of it like a phone contract that you agree to pay monthly for a certain period of time, not pay as you go. We will also always treat each case individually where injury or other extenuating circumstances apply.

What if I'm having money problems?

We know that sometimes life doesn't go quite to plan – so if you find yourself in financial difficulties, let us know as soon as possible so we can discuss your circumstances and agree a way forward. Please don't just ignore the problem.

Practice isn't currently on – why do we still have to pay if there's no team activity?

As outlined above, our subs are based on an annual fee and are used to budget for the year ahead. We split the fees into 5 monthly payments to make them more affordable for you rather than asking for more money over a shorter period of time. We also often have out of season activities going on too – such as conditioning training, awards nights or training events that have costs attached too or have team registration fees to pay so we need a continuous stream of income.

Where does my money go?

All money you pay in is spent on running our teams. This means paying for practice facilities, gameday venues, team registration fees, gameday medical cover costs, gameday officials, first aid supplies, training and development for our coaching staff amongst many other things. We have Community Amateur Sports Club status with HMRC and are an entirely non-profit making organisation.

SPOND

We use an app called Spond where all information re training and games can be found. We use this app to track attendance at practice and games and to disseminate key information.

The link to join is: <https://group.spond.com/JDROL>

SAFEGUARDING

We acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of young people within our club and prioritise this in all of our activity. We're committed to ensuring our safeguarding practices reflect government guidance and complies with best practice and British American Football Association requirements to create the best and safe environment for our players.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding a safeguarding matter, please fill in the following form or reach out to safeguarding@kentexiles.com: <https://tinyurl.com/2yu684zz>

KIT & EQUIPMENT

What we provide:

- Game day jersey
- Practice jersey (white for offense and black for defense)

What you need to provide:

- Mouthguard
- Helmet
- Shoulders
- Black game pants and either a padded girdle or 7 piece pads
<https://www.footballamerica.co.uk/en/494-practice-pants> (example)

<https://www.footballamerica.co.uk/en/girdles-padding/186-2962-7-pcs-leg-and-hip-pads-set.html#/78-size-medium> (example)

- Belt
- Gloves (optional)

We have helmets and shoulders we can lend out to players on a weekly basis. We would encourage players who are able to, to purchase their own if they can.