

Kent Exiles

Women's Team

2023-2024 Handbook



“If you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride - and never quit, you'll be a winner. The price of victory is high but so are the rewards.”

Coach Bear Bryant

Kent Exiles Adult 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 create a robust legacy for our future women team players and coaches to build upon.
- To increase the presence of female coaches not just within the Women's league but the sport of American football in general.
- To aspire to the very ***highest standards*** of play.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS

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

WHAT WE OFFER?

Why play for our women's 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 facilities

We train at Westcombe Park RFC and have access to our own pitch.

Training days/times:

Sunday's – 2pm-4.30pm

Our gameday

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 300 players, coaches and staff involved. As well as being one of the longest established adult teams we have a thriving and successful youth and women's teams. The size of our club also means that if you want to make the jump from playing to coaching or helping out behind the scenes, we've lots of different ways you can stay part of the Exiles family.

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 and we have our own dedicated pitch side physiotherapist and / or first aider at all games wherever possible. This means we can offer sports taping before

games and there's always help and advice available on nutrition and gym programs and technique from our experienced players and coaches.

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 women's team and we've told you what's on offer. But what do we expect from you?

The fundamental thing is **commitment**. Players who don't regularly attend practices, team meetings and make themselves available for games will not get time on the field. We also need you to get your head into film, **know your playbook**, put in effort at the gym and pay your player subs regularly.

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 being aggressive and running an attack style of offense. The coaching staff will work hard to analyse our athletes and put the best system in place to utilize their skills to help score points. A great offense needs to be effective in both the run and passing game, while being able to execute plays of both styles at any time. Our ability to mix the pass and run will allow us to keep defences off balance and execute big third down plays when needed.

We believe that an effective offense needs to be able to take what the defence is willing to give you and exploit it. When the defence makes their adjustments we need to be able to identify that and then take advantage of the next weakness they are giving up. This is both an important part of preparation and also game time identification. A great offense isn't able to give a ratio of run to pass plays, but rather takes advantage of the defences they face based on opportunity and strategy. A great offense takes advantage of the opportunities that a defence gives and also gives their own defence a passion to go out and get the ball back into the offense hands.

DEFENSIVE PHILOSOPHY

We strongly believe that a great defence needs to be able to set the tone of the game. We must be fanatical in our approach to understand the importance of being the more physical team. This is accomplished by playing a sound attacking style of defence with the ability to adjust to the offensive formations. A great defence must be aggressive and be able to blitz, while being completely sound in doing so. It's crucial that a defence utilizes its strengths in personnel and doesn't try to play outside of its abilities. A great defence needs to be able to play their techniques with discipline and unselfishness. It must be able to identify every offensive set a team displays and both respect their offensive strengths while taking advantage of their weakness.

A great defence supports the team offense, but cannot rely on them to win the game. It needs to be able to keep the opponent out of the end zone, create turnovers and take advantage of opportunities when they occur. We will focus on tackling and taking the ball away from the opponent's offense. The ability for a defence to recognize and adjust to a different style of offense on the fly is critical. It's the coach's job to have its defence prepared through practice and film review. Defensive athletes must be taught to understand why adjustments are made and what changes in technique are required to be successful. A tremendous amount of discipline, focus and sound fundamentals are required to prevent any let downs. A great defence is also able to have a short memory and regroup to learn from errors. A reflection of passion, energy and trust in a system are the foundation of defensive success.

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. We will also be sound on special teams against fakes and special plays by playing our assignments and being disciplined to not be caught off guard. We will pride ourselves on our special teams with realizing the importance that they play in our program and will benefit from this readiness throughout the season.

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 2023/2024 season are as follows:

£140 standard rate of subs, £100 for students and those currently unemployed.
£55 BAFA membership (covers league registration and basic insurance)

Concessionary rate of subs is available for players who undertake a committee, coaching or volunteer role with the Club – to be agreed and discussed with Claire.

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 2023 to the 31st October 2024. So, team fees must be paid off in full by 31 October 2024. Slightly shortened this year due to launching new club admin system.

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 in our adult team 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, gameday expenses are included. Extra charges will apply for any residential camps, (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 7 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 the money your 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/HZMXA>

There is an expectation that all players respond on Spond re their attendance at training and games as soon as possible to allow for planning.

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

As part of our commitment to give players the best opportunity to be the best they can be, we can announce details of this year's residential training camp...

Two days of intensive football input which will include:

Two a day practices, classroom inputs, film review, and a little bit of fun!

This is an amazing event, and all players should make plans to be able to attend this camp. Please try and make any necessary arrangements now to enable you to attend!

Dates: Saturday 23rd – Sunday 24th March 2024

Arrival time: 9/9.30am on Saturday

Departure time: 4.30/5pm on Sunday

Venue: Ardingly College, College Rd, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, RH17 6SQ

Cost: £75.00 (inclusive of accommodation, food – lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday and venue hire)

Deadline for payment – 1st March 2024. Payment via the Clubs admin system:
<https://app.joinin.online/#/app/joinin/organisation/shop/product/3888/26e3ae5c-94aa-4c19-81ee-00b262716aab>

PRE-SEASON SOCIAL

Saturday 30th March 2024, 7pm, at Westcombe Park RFC

Whole club event - Head Coaches will be making a short 2-3 minute speech re the season ahead and will be announcing Team Leaders for the 2024 season.

£10 per head

7pm arrival for a 7.30pm start

Food served at 7.30pm

Dress code: Casual Please make every effort to attend and let's get 2024 off to a great start!

Payment via the Club's admin system:

<https://app.joinin.online/#/app/joinin/organisation/shop/product/3888/26e3ae5c-94aa-4c19-81ee-00b262716aab>

KIT & EQUIPMENT

What we provide:

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

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 a limited amount of helmets, shoulders and black pants we can lend out to players new to the sport. These will be lent out on a weekly basis.