

## The Importance of Role Models In Grassroots Football

As the new grassroots football season kicked off, England Men's Manager, Gareth Southgate, reflected on his own grassroots experience, from his first taste of the beautiful game as a young player to helping coach his son's team. These experiences shaped Southgate's view on the importance of role models within the game but also his understanding of the off-pitch challenges that are part and parcel of grassroots sport.

The Football Association (The FA), alongside official payments partner PayPal, is helping to combat these with [The FA Matchday app](#), which has been developed to reduce the administration time needed to run a grassroots football team. It allows club secretaries, managers and coaches to organise matches, training and select their line-up as well as enabling over a million grassroots players to pay their match fees with their smartphones.

In time for the new grassroots season, users of the app can now make annual and installment payments, a major benefit, especially for parents and guardians involved with youth teams.

Southgate said that to be able to transfer funds at the push of a button will be absolute heaven for clubs up and down the country. The app is a tool that will save people hours of administration and follow-up. It's not just match days, it's making sure you've got officials available, reporting the score line. To be able to do that all in one place, and on the move, makes such a difference. Future updates to the app will include direct debit and billing agreements.

Freeing up time previously spent on administrative tasks paves the way for coaches and managers to instead focus on their players and teams progress. Southgate explained that as a coach you have to remember that you are a significant influence, not just in a player's football career, but in their life. He noted that this stage of the season is always a good time to get your ideas across on how the team want to play; as players get older, you can start to implement more detail in how you work and put more onus on the players in terms of expectations and responsibility.

PayPal is looking forward to seeing how The FA Matchday app will support the transformation and sustainability of the grassroots game. With over 26 million PayPal account holders in the UK, we are well placed to drive positive and lasting change for the sport.

The partnership between The FA and PayPal sees the two organisations collaborate on further initiatives to support grassroots football; this season, teams can receive free football training kit and equipment as incentives for adopting the app.

For more information, and to download The FA Matchday app visit: <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/matchday>

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