

*Training Centre

Arsenal's state-of-the-art training centre can be found in leafy Hertfordshire, 45 minutes drive from Emirates Stadium

→ The first-team squad, along with the young professionals and Academy scholars, all train on what many consider to be the best playing surfaces in the country. In excess of 70 footballers use the facility on a typical day, while at the weekend the Centre stages youth team matches as well as reserve team friendlies.

In all, there are ten full-size pitches at the site, all of which have under-soil drainage and an automated sprinkler system. In addition, two have under-soil heating. Each pitch is built to the exact specifications of the playing surface at Emirates Stadium. Three of the pitches are reserved for the Arsenal youth team, three for the reserves and three for the first team. The tenth pitch is the 'match pitch' where first team friendlies and Under-18 league fixtures are played. The match pitch is named after former Arsenal player and reserve team coach George Armstrong, who passed away in October 2000 after collapsing while coaching. A commemorative memorial stone and plaque is placed at the side of the pitch.

All the pitches are maintained by award-winning groundsman Steve Braddock and his team.

The existing Centre replaced the former University College of London's Student Union site, which had hosted the Club's training facilities since 1961. Prior



to this, the Arsenal players used to train at the stadium in Highbury, running around the cinders track which used to circle the pitch and train with weights in the old stadium gym. On occasions, the team even used to train by running through the streets near to Highbury.

Manager Arsène Wenger was a key figure in the development of the present Training Centre. In fact, the contents and layout of the building were almost entirely decided by Arsène and his backroom staff. The physiotherapy team – led by long-serving

physio Gary Lewin, who departed the Club during summer 2008 to take up the position of head physio at the FA – had complete control over what the site would require for their crucial work, and fitness coach Tony Colbert, working in conjunction with Life Fitness (UK), equipped the gymnasium with everything necessary to keep the players in perfect condition. As well as the excellent pitches, indoors the facility boasts six changing rooms, a steamroom, a swimming pool with adjustable floor, gymnasium, treatment rooms, massage baths, and restaurant. In addition to the playing and coaching staff, also based at the Centre are three full-time gardeners, 12 groundstaff, four catering staff, three building supervisors, and the manager's secretary and youth-team secretary. At the start of the 2004/05 season, a dedicated press briefing building was opened at the site. This building, where the players and staff fulfil their media requirements, consists of 10 interview rooms and a press conference room, seating up to 100 people.

In July 2007 an indoor pitch facility was completed at the Training Centre. The 70 metre x 50 metre pitch is used by players across the Club's setup.

Arsenal in the Community also make use of the training facilities, running sessions for the Double Club in conjunction with Hartsmere Council. ■

*Charity

Arsenal's Charity of the Season initiative continues to raise significant funds and awareness for good causes

→ Since we introduced our Charity of the Season in 2003, Arsenal Football Club and our supporters have raised over £1.63m for our charity partners. Past benefactors include ChildLine, the David Rocastle Trust, The Willow Foundation, TreeHouse and last season's partner, Teenage Cancer Trust. For 2009/10, we are delighted to be supporting Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity. Great Ormond Street Hospital is one of the world's leading children's hospitals. Many of the children seen at the hospital have complex or life-threatening illnesses and need the specialist care that only the experts at Great Ormond Street Hospital can offer.

However, whilst the care may be of the highest standard, some of the hospital buildings are not. They are cramped, lack privacy and were built at a time when healthcare needs were very different. The hospital is undergoing a major redevelopment of its site to provide new facilities with the capacity to treat up to 20 per cent more children.

Arsenal's support will help the hospital build a new lung function unit for children who have difficulty breathing or sleeping. These problems can



mean that children may not grow properly and the lung function unit is vitally important in their treatment. The new unit will be designed to help newborn babies right through to teenagers and will provide a modern and spacious environment in which to help children and their families.

Over the course of the season, Arsenal and Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity will work

on a range of charitable activities including our stadium running event, our annual charity match day and the end of season ball. We hope that you will join us and do all you can to raise funds for this important cause. For more information on Arsenal's partnership with Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity please visit www.beagoonbeagiver.org or call 020 7612 0370. ■

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***fact**
The Training Centre covers an area of **143** acres, including **45** acres of forestry and **28,000** trees



ChildLine were the first beneficiaries in 2003/04

***fact**
Last season, Arsenal Football Club raised a remarkable **£532,816** for Teenage Cancer Trust



Great Ormond Street Hospital 2009/10