



Loftus Yarrawarrah Rovers Football Club

Grading and Selection Policy





Table of Contents

Player Grading and Selection Policy

Policy Overview

Positives and Negatives of Player Grading

Team Selection and Player Grading Guidelines

Team Sizes

Playing above your Age Group

Late Registrations

Composition of Leagues

Grading Appeals Process

Team Selection during Season

Coaching & Managing Support

Grievances & Escalation throughout the season



Player Grading and Selection Policy

This policy document relates to team composition as well as match playing time and has been developed from the club's philosophy of *'being inclusive of players of all skill levels and the drive to help all players to develop to be the best that they can be'*.

Policy Overview

The aim of this policy is to assist players and their parents to understand the club's process of placing players into a team that best suits their level of ability.

It is the club's policy to grade players every year to ensure that all players have the opportunity to progress.

The club encourages players and parents not to focus on which team a player is selected in, but rather, on the player's own development during the season. It is also important that parents are supportive of their children during the grading process.

As a club we follow the FFA's National Curriculum and as such our grading and selection policies is based on the building blocks which underpin the curriculum framework, namely to ensure all players are playing at the level appropriate for their age and skill level.

There will be a multiple grading/training sessions for all age groups above U7 and the technical directors – supported by age co-ordinators and coaches – will grade players primarily based on performances and behaviours during these training sessions.

It is imperative that players attend these early sessions, to allow coaches to move players between training groups in order to assess their mental and physical development when matched against players of different skill levels.



Positives and Negatives of Player Grading

There are some advantages in not grading players, such as maintaining friendships and family social groups; however this soon becomes an issue in several ways.

- **Peer pressure** – Other players will soon let their feelings be known when it comes down to ability. Our experience is that this often does more damage than any ill feelings resulting from the grading itself.
- **Exodus of talented players** – Players of above average skills and their parents will become frustrated and eventually leave for another club that does grade their players in the hope their child is put into a better team. The player's development will also stagnate because they are not being challenged to improve.
- **Reduced enjoyment** – Players who play in a grade significantly above their skill level will often feel left out as the more skilful players take control of games. Often this can result in the less skilful player leaving soccer in search of another sport.

To not grade the children based on ability would take away the opportunity for some to progress to representative soccer at a later stage. Soccer is a competitive sport. If you would like your child to play at a less competitive level then ask the grading staff and coaches if they can be placed in a lower grade when grading is conducted at the start of the season.

It's hard for coaches to decide between several players of near equal ability knowing that some will be separated from their friends. We cannot, however, make exceptions based on friendships as this can undermine the whole procedure. Children at this age tend to make new friends quickly and this also means that they extend their circle of friends.

Please remember that soccer is a sport that encourages friendship and is a great opportunity for social interaction, primarily for the players.

An integral part of grading is the information available about the player from his or her coach in the previous year. The grading staff will seek input from previous coaches regarding player attributes and playing ability. Grading will be conducted early in the pre-season so as to give teams and coaches the maximum amount of time to work together before the season starts.

Teams will be selected based on skill, attitude and attendance at grading. Players and parents need to be aware that from U12 onwards playing position will also be a factor in grading. For example, the ten most skilled players may not necessarily be selected in the same team if they are all strikers or all goalkeepers.



Team Selection and Player Grading Guidelines

- SSFA (Sutherland Shire Football Association) competitions at U6 & U7 will be graded based on friendship and previous experience, as well as interest in the game.
- SSFA age groups from U8 to U11 will be graded A, B, C etc.
- SSFA Competitions for U12 to U18 are graded as A, B, C, etc.
- Grading involves selecting a balanced team with the best ability from the pool of players in any age group.
- Grading will be conducted by the Technical Director together with the appropriate age coordinator.
- All players in an age group above U7 will be graded and players will be assigned to teams based on their ability and experience.
- Where it applies, team grading will take place pre-season with at least 4 training sessions remaining before the season starts after team assignments are made.
- The process must involve consultation between Technical Director and age coordinators, parents may also be consulted if deemed appropriate by the Technical Director.
- All players, new or returning, will be required to attend these grading/training sessions.
- If at the start of the season there are excess players in an age group or there is no appointed coach, players will be advised ASAP so as to provide them with an opportunity to register at another club.
- It is the clubs preference, based on previous consultation, to have all female teams where possible.
- Once grading is complete and teams selected, a player cannot change teams without approval from the Technical Director.
 - ⊞ Note: Players may be asked to move up or down grades within an age group due to a player's level of ability or to cover for absent or injured players in other grades; any such movements will be at the advice of the player's coach in consultation with their parents.
- Once assigned to a team, players will train with their respective team and coach.

Ideally, all teams in an age group will train at the same time to allow interaction between teams as the coaches deem fit. However, this is not always possible as training times are dependent on the schedules of each individual coach.

The technical director and age co-ordinator will meet with coaches to discuss their teams, players' capabilities and development opportunities.

The coaches in any age group should act for the benefit of all players in that age group and not just for the members of their team. All players should play in their own age group unless there is a valid reason for playing in an older group (see section on "Playing above your age group").

During the regular season, players in an existing team may be invited to play in a team in an age group that is higher than their normal age group as a cover player. That player should not displace or deny adequate playing time to the normal roster players, as a result of that player being brought in. Players who have not paid fees, or not registered with the SSFA, will not be eligible for team selection.



Team Sizes

As a club we have set a limit for Mini-Roo soccer to no less than one substitute and no more than three players above the playing number as we consider such a number will maximise the amount of playing time for each player. For Junior football (U12 upwards) there will be a minimum of 2 substitutes and no more than 16 per squad.

Team numbers by age group:

Age Group

Field Number

Preferred Squad make-up

U6, U7

U8, U9

4

7

5-7

8-11

U10, U11

9

10-12

U12 onwards

11

13-16

Playing Above Your Age Group

Loftus Yarrowarra Rovers Football Club supports the ethos regarding player development being the most important aspect of local soccer, and that children are constantly challenged or they will get bored.

Therefore it is our club policy that if a player has the ability the club may move them from one age level to another after consultation with the child's parent.

Players that will be considered for playing above their age group are those deemed by the Technical Directors, coaches and age coordinator to be highly skilled / talented. To be considered, players need to be playing comfortably in the highest level at the club for their age group and demonstrate that they can cope with the demands of the higher age group both physically and mentally.

Decisions will always be made based on what is best for the player's development.

Before moving to a higher age group the player's skills will be assessed by the higher age group coach and the Technical Director. If both coaches agree that the child should be in the higher age group then the move will be discussed with the parent.



Composition of Leagues

Games in Small Sided Football, under 6's/7's/8's/9's/10's/11's, competitions are played without points or ladders.

Junior Teams (U12's and upwards) will play for points and a league table will exist. All teams in these age levels can be split into an undefined number of Grades; A, B, C etc. The SSFA will determine this and LYRFC are represented in these discussions.

The club always intends to place its teams in the appropriate grade from the outset, and will work with the SSFA to do so. The intention will always be to challenge the teams and players and place teams in as high a grade as they are capable of playing, while trying not to overextend potentially demoralise.

There is an opportunity to regrade during the season, however, this is a last resort and can often not be possible due to grades either side of the respective team.

Late Registrations

Once teams have been finalised with their maximum number of players we will not add any late arriving players to a team and exceed the maximum team size. Should a vacancy arrive in a team, because a player leaves prior to, or during, the season, then the coach and the Technical Director will assess the situation to determine whether it is necessary to replace that player and then decide on the grading process they will adopt.

Grading Appeals Process

Parents and players are able to appeal a grading decision they feel is unfair or inappropriate by:

- Making a submission in writing to the Technical Director requesting a review of the players grading, outlining why they think the grading is not correct.
- If the Technical Director refuses to conduct another grading or reconfirms the original grading then the player or parent may then make a written submission to the Club President, outlining why they think the grading is not correct.
- The President will consider this submission in consultation with the Committee and the Committee will then make a decision on whether or not to change the player's grading.
- The Committee's decision is final.



Team Selection during Season

GENERAL

Preference will be given to children who regularly attend training, follow team rules and are reliable on game days.

Team selection will be at the discretion of the coaching group and we seek your support to ensure that this policy is maintained.

UNDER 6 & UNDER 7

Player rotation during the game is the coaches' prime goal. All players will have equal game time and players will be expected to play in all positions at different stages throughout each game and the season. Player rotations will take place in a manner which ensures players are not on the side-line for a lengthy time.

UNDER 8 TO UNDER 11

Player rotation during the game remains the coaches' prerogative. However, all players will have equal game time and players will be expected to play in all positions – including goalkeeper – at different stages throughout the season.

It is not expected or fair, to rotate players through too many positions in one game as this limits the players' development in any role.

Player rotations will take place in a manner which ensures players are not on the side-line for a lengthy time.

UNDER 12 AND ABOVE

Player rotation during the game remains the coaches' prerogative. All players will have equal time across the season meaning they could play for longer in some games than others. All players would also get a considerable amount of game time each game.

Once a player reaches this stage it is expected that positions will become more clearly defined and players will begin to play in more defined roles.

However, all players would still be expected to play in a number of different positions during the season and even during a game so as to continue their soccer development.

Coaching & Managing Support

All teams will be coached by volunteers, and we encourage parents to step forward and coach our young soccer players or manage the teams they play for.

Prior to the start of the season, the club will hold a *Coach and Manager's* night to discuss requirements for teams, and agree training allocations, as well as offer support to these roles.

Coaching courses are available to anyone undertaking this role at our club. The technical director and age coordinator will also offer support and advice throughout the season to coaches to ensure that soccer remains fun for all of those involved, and that player development is at the forefront of our learning.



Grievances & Escalation Throughout the Season

If a parent feels that a decision is taken which they feel unfairly disadvantaged their child, they should in the first instance contact the respective coach or manager.

Should it not be resolved within 7 days of notifying the coach or manager, or the matter involves these parties, the item should then be escalated to the Technical Director for review.

If the Technical Director is not able to resolve the matter to a satisfactory conclusion then the matter is then the escalated to the club's committee who will review all the facts and make the final decision.

The club's committee always has the final say on any team selection or player grading and selection decisions.

