



# Shellharbour Junior Football Club Inc.

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## SJFC Grading, Group Placement and Team Formation Policy

### **SJFC Policy and Vision for Player Development and Outcomes**

1. SJFC is first and foremost a Football Club whose aim is to promote football.
2. SJFC seeks to provide a high quality football experience for all levels of players.
3. SJFC is an open and inclusive club that welcomes players of all abilities and backgrounds
4. SJFC believes in the “one club” philosophy and seeks to avoid the creation of any internal exclusive social groupings or “clubs within the club”.
5. SJFC seeks to provide an opportunity for each player to maximise the development of their skills and enjoyment by allowing them to play and train with players of a similar standard and allow each player to develop new friendships and peer networks through the sport.
6. Play  
ers who join SJFC are expected to adhere to the policies and visions of the club and to accept and promote integration within the greater club.
7. Formal grading criteria (which will be updated and refined from time to time) will be used to guide the assessment and grading and group placement of players and teams.

## **COMPETITION TEAMS**

### **1. Grading of Players**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

At the beginning of each new football season, junior players (if required) are graded into teams in different divisions based on ability level. SJFC will field its teams in the external divisions that best match their current skill level, potential and ongoing commitment. This will be done by the Grading Selection Panel with due regard for the need to facilitate the construction of competitive competitions through FSC juniors.

The grading process gives all players the opportunity to demonstrate their talents to a variety of unbiased selectors thus giving all players (irrespective of the team they played with in the previous season) a chance to play in the highest division in the new season.

SJFC holds this as important in providing equal opportunity to all players.

Young players can change dramatically during a 12 month period. A player who is graded into an “A” team in one season must try out again in the following year to achieve a position in the “A” team. This is the best format to maintain the equality of opportunity.

Care must be taken to cater for those who have average ability (or less) but still love the game. It adds to their enjoyment if they are playing with and against players of similar or equal ability. This gives each child the chance to fully participate, enjoy the experience and develop to his/her full potential as a player. Past experience has shown that it is frustrating for any individual to play in a team which is clearly above or below their level of ability. Grading must help all players of all abilities.

The Committee has the care and, to some extent, control of the Club and its' Members/Players. It is the Club (rather than individuals) that enter teams into various competitions.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVE**

The grading policy is designed to address a number of player and club needs, some of which invariably conflict. The fundamentals of the grading policy are designed to ensure:

- That a clear process for the grading of new and existing players is provided each year;
- Bias is minimised by using an appointed grading manager to be the mediator of the trial process;
- All players have the maximum opportunity to play in a competitive environment, appropriate to their skill and ability;
- Players learn from their peers and develop an appreciation and love of the game;
- Support of a Club culture that takes priority over individual team culture; and
- Players, coaches and parents alike, have FUN, enjoy the season, and return to the club year after year.

In practice it has been demonstrated that players develop at different rates depending on ability, commitment and maturity and therefore it is to be expected that the rank ordering of players during, or at the end of the season, would be different from that at the start when grading occurred. This is why grading or re-grading will occur each season.

## **1.3 GRADING SELECTION PANEL**

### *GRADING MANAGER*

Is appointed by the SJFC Executive Committee and is responsible for the co-ordination of the grading process and the setting of the grading curriculum for the trials.

The Grading Manager may also invite returning coaches and/or others to assist on the Grading Committee.

### *THE GRADING COMMITTEE*

Is appointed by the SJFC Executive committee and they are ultimately responsible for the grading process, however they may delegate player assessment to professional coaches or others at the trials.

The Grading Committee may also take into account reports from coaches in the prior season as to player's ability, performance, potential and commitment attitude to training as part of the grading process.

All information in relation to the Grading process is strictly confidential; the Club Registrar shall inform all players of their team outcome

## **1.4 GRADING PROCESS AND TIMETABLE**

Grading is compulsory for all players (U12 or older) and is held according to age group. All players will have the opportunity to try out in trials and will be assessed on merit taking into account current ability, potential and commitment.

The grading process shall commence as soon as the Committee has completed player registrations and the likely number of teams in each age group has been determined. Grading dates and times will be given out during the registration process.

It is desirable that the grading process be based on a number of different sources of information and assessments and be based on the consensus opinion of the Grading Committee.

- a) If a player does not participate in grading without prior written notification:
  - They can be automatically graded into a team at the discretion of the Grading Manager/Executive Committee;
  - If it's determined by the Grading Manager/Executive Committee that their skill and ability is of a higher or lower standard than the team the player was placed in they may be re-graded; and/or
  - If there are large numbers in particular age groups to be assessed, players who are not available for the trials or are new to the club and have not previously been graded, grading will be done on the best information available to the Grading Committee.
- b) Players who cannot attend grading due to injury, educational or representative commitments must pre-advise the Committee in writing prior to grading;
  - They will be named in a team by the Grading Manager/Executive Committee and offered the chance to Re-Grade during the season (if required). These players will be marked with an N/G (Not Graded).
- c) Players who register after the grading assessments have taken place
  - These players are then invited to trial with a team usually in the highest division for the relevant age group. Players are then assessed by the grading committee and a recommendation is made as to the player's ability.

All players must be graded and play in the age group that corresponds to their year of birth. The only exception is as follows:

- If the age group that corresponds to their year of birth has a surplus number of players beyond the team's requirements and the lower division team from the age group above can accommodate those players, then the Grading Committee can approve the player to play up an age group.
- If in the previous season, a player was granted permission to play up an age group, that player will have to be cleared by the Grading Committee each new season that they can compete and develop playing up an age group. Therefore, each player being graded is to be individually assessed in accordance with the Grading Criteria;

(Note -The assessment does not only take into account skill, but also attitude and work ethic).

At the conclusion of the grading process, the Grading Committee shall meet to review and discuss the formation and allocation of individual players to each team.

## **1.5 GRADING METHOD**

Player Grading shall be a two stage process consisting of Basic Skills assessment and Game Play.

### **1.5.1 Basic Skills Assessment**

The basic skills assessment trials consist of the following basic skill tests.

- Control
- Dribbling
- Passing
- Touch

### **1.5.2 Game Play Assessment**

Game Play Assessment will involve players participating in trial games and being assessed on the following criteria.

- Ability to read the play
- Team play
- Playing in a set position

The player assessment is carried out over two sessions, with players scoring points on a scale for the various criteria. The scores are then summed and a total score calculated.

All players in the age group are given a score and the players are placed into teams based on highest to lowest.

Exceptions to the grading session assessment are when player's register after the assessment sessions have been completed.

These players are then invited to trial with a team usually in the highest division for the relevant age group. Players are then assessed by the grading committee and a recommendation is made as to the player's ability.

### **1.5.3 ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

#### Basic Skills Assessment

- a) The players involved in the assessment are divided into equal groups at random.
- b) The assessors are given a sheet that has the relevant numbers of the jerseys that the players are wearing. No names are provided on the assessment sheet.
- c) Each group will then be directed to an activity and instructed on what the activity involves and how the assessment is made. The players are each asked to perform the activity and scores are recorded against each player.
- d) The groups are then moved to the next activity where the process is repeated.
- e) The scores are tallied and collated on the master assessment sheet.
- f) After the session is completed the assessors meet to review the scores and discuss specific cases where required.

#### Game Play Assessment

- a) The players involved in the assessment are divided into equal teams at random.
- b) Each team will play in a game simulation. Each player is assessed against the requirements of the playing criteria.
- c) The scores are tallied and collated on the master assessment sheet.
- d) After the session is completed the assessors meet to review the scores and discuss specific cases where required.
- e) The assessors will be involved in both skills and game play sessions so consistency can be maintained.

SJFC Executive Committee may re-grade players and move players between teams during the season either to correct imperfections in the initial grading or to accommodate subsequent changes in player development.

At no stage will SJFC provide a guarantee to any individual player or parent to place children in a team that they believe would be best for their own personal gain or based on their belief of what may be best.

SJFC is committed to ensuring that the grading process and placement of players is fair to all players and maximises player development and opportunity. In this respect:

- The club philosophy is to grade players through the club system via an experienced Grader;
- The panel will ensure all players receive fair and equal opportunity;
- No player will be guaranteed placement in a particular team;
- Player and parent expectations may differ with selectors and SJFC will not allow players or parents to discuss an individual player's ability or preferences with individual selectors;
- Players are placed into teams, according to the likely best fit between the player's skill and abilities determined through the grading assessment; and
- The interpretation and decision of the Graders for each group in balancing any considerations within this Grading Policy is final; subject to review by the Executive Committee of SJFC.
- Appealing a player's assessment is available to players and parents however this must be made in writing to the club committee and will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

## **U9-U11**

### **2. Placement of Players**

#### **2.1 BACKGROUND**

Experience has shown that as player's progress through the age groups from U6 to U11, social confidence grows and abilities and performance levels become more disparate. In addition the external environment also becomes more competitive.

In the younger grades of U6 to U8 a greater emphasis is put on forming social teams where players are grouped together with their friends. This is usually done by the players and their parents seeking this type of placement on registration day.

The FSC Rules and Regulations state that from the ages of U9 each club is to introduce a policy around the "grouping" of teams with other teams of similar ability.

Therefore, from the ages of U9 to U11 the SJFC will progressively organise grouped placement of players with similar ability and commitment to training.

This does not mean that the SJFC is required to "grade" players into tiered teams as is done in the competition age groups. Teams are able to be formed by the SJFC along any lines that the club sees fit.

As a practical consideration, teams will naturally need to be formed and re-formed each year as squad numbers vary from initially needing to field teams of 4 players (U6 and U7), 7 players (U8 and U9), 9 players (U10 & U11) and eventually to 11 players from U12's and onwards.

All players must be graded and play in the age group that corresponds to their year of birth. If a player/parent wishes to play up a age group in the MiniRoos then that player will have to be cleared by the Grading Committee that they can compete and develop playing up an age group. Therefore, each player being graded is to be individually assessed in accordance with the Grading Criteria;

## **2.2 GROUPING**

Grouping the teams recognises that players benefit from training and playing with players of similar ability and also gain increased enjoyment and development from playing against opponents of similar ability.

There shall be three groupings; “Beginner”, “Intermediate”, and “Advanced”. Clubs are required by FSC to nominate teams into one of these groups.

Grouped placements for the U9 to U11 age groups have shown that a player’s development and enjoyment is greatest when the team the player plays with players who have a similar ability so that there are no “standouts” within any team.

A “standout player” has a dual meaning when it comes to football. It is a player who either dominates play because he/she is of far greater ability than his/her team mates, or a player who is isolated and cannot compete at the same level as the rest of the team because he/she is of far lesser ability.

SJFC aims to progressively group players throughout the age groups so that at each stage teams are well prepared for meeting the requirements of the external competitions in which they play, and so that player development is maximized.

In addition, the draw for these age groups is released in intervals. That way, FSC can move teams between the different groupings if they see a lot of one sided results. That is why scores are recorded for matches from U9 to U11 and reported to FSC each week.

## **2.3 PROCESS**

At the beginning of every season, players and parents are invited to request the level of grouping they wish to enter for their child. If no request has being made then the SJFC will place the players were they see fit.

The options set out by FSC are “Beginner”, “Intermediate”, and “Advanced”.

### ***2.3.1 Beginner***

Parents wishing to seek this type of placement can do so by applying to the SJFC for the Beginners/Social teams.

This is a social grouping that enables players to play with their friends provided that all the kids are of similar ability.

The SJFC will endeavour to ensure that the requests of players and parents are taken into account when forming these teams.

However teams may be re-grouped and be moved up or down by FSC pending results week to week.

Training is expected to be at least once a week and an hour long in duration.

### **2.3.2 Intermediate**

The Intermediate level is a stepping stone from the beginners to move up too. It also holds players who are not yet ready to play at the advanced level. Therefore, this level brings about a diverse mix of abilities. That is why this level is further broken down to a Level 1 group (kids stepping up from the Beginner group) and a Level 2 group (kids who are nearing the advanced group).

At no time will a player be guaranteed placement in a particular team. Nor will the team be guaranteed placement into the Intermediate levels as teams will be moved up or down pending results week to week.

Training is expected to be at least twice a week and an hour long in duration.

### **2.3.3 Advanced**

Players may do so by applying to SJFC for the Advanced level. These players will be assessed before placement takes place. If in the opinion of SJFC the player is not does not possess the ability or commitment to play within the Advanced grouping then they will be re-grouped.

At no time will a player be guaranteed placement in a particular team. Nor will the team be guaranteed placement into the Advanced grouping as teams can be moved by Football South Coast (FSC). This is carried out by the recording of game results each week and providing those results to FSC. These results are then used by FSC to ascertain the correct tier teams should be playing in. This is then reflected in the draws that are released in six week intervals.

Based on the results, teams can change between tiers.

It is the experience of SJFC that teams that are formed principally on a social basis and effectively operate as “clubs within a club” have a detrimental effect on the fabric of the club and SJFC will not sanction these teams.

Training is expected to be at least twice a week and 90 minutes long in duration.

## **3.0 COACHING NOMINATIONS AND ROLES**

Coaches and managers interested in volunteering are able to nominate by completing the nomination form and returning the form to the club secretary.

If only one nomination is received four (4) weeks prior to the season start they shall be passed.

If two nominations are received it will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Coaches are welcome to apply to coach any age/division, but as grading, placement and grouping could take up to four weeks, they will not know which team their child will be selected in. Therefore a final allocation of coaches and managers will occur once gradings and placements have been confirmed. All coaching and managing appointments are at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

*SJFC Executive Committee*  
*ADOPTED 13/1/15*