



TEAM SELECTION, GRADING & ROTATION POLICY

Purpose:

To provide all members of Altona Junior Football Club with clear guidance on team selection, grading and rotation processes. To promote a fair, consistent, and transparent approach, ensuring respectful conduct and adherence to Club codes of conduct by all stakeholders—players, parents, coaches, and coordinators.

Scope:

This policy applies to all players, coaches, coaching coordinators, committee members, parents / guardians and other officials of AJFC. Team Selection and Grading applies when registration numbers support the formation of multiple teams within an age group. Grading is an additional consideration for Teams in Under 12 and beyond. The Rotation policy applies to all teams.

Definitions:

- **Grading:** The process of assessing players in training and practice matches to help inform a) selection of a balanced team with diverse strengths and b) nominate the team to an appropriately competitive league division. Prior season results can also be a grading consideration for b).
- **Non-Graded Teams:** Under 8, 9 & 10 Mixed, Under 10 Girls.
- **Graded Teams:** Under 12, 14 Mixed, Under 16 Boys, Under 12, 14, 16 & 18.5 Girls.

Key Roles & Responsibilities:

- **Coaches Coordinators:** Oversee grading and selection policies; provide coaches with necessary player details.
- **Coaches:** Collaborate to form teams aligned with Club policy and communicate selections with families.
- **Registrar:** Confirms player registration and provides player information to Coach Coordinators and age group coaches.
- **Parents:** Register their child, support them to attend training and share relevant information that may assist in team placement for their child.

Policy:

Guiding Principles

Team selection and grading is inherently subjective and for this reason the AJFC applies a set of Guiding Principles to support the process;

1. **Club First / Team First** - The needs and goals of the team are prioritised. Coaches and Team Leaders are the custodians of this ethos.

2. **Field Competitive Teams (Graded Teams only)** - Forming competitive teams in each age group across the relevant league divisions. Key considerations; player skills, experience, physical attributes (e.g. fitness & size), age (1st or 2nd year in the age group), maturity, discipline (e.g. training attendance), team-first attitude and sportsmanship.
3. **Maximise Participation** – Enable as many players as possible to continue playing football.
4. **Player Development** - Select teams that promote player development and create an enjoyable and supportive environment for playing football.
5. **Even Distribution** - Where feasible, spread player numbers evenly across teams to minimize bench and rotation time. May be based on school attended for Non-Graded Teams.

Team Selection & Grading

Team selection and grading begins in Pre-Season Training. Players must be registered to be considered for team selection. The **Registrar** provides player information to Coach Coordinators and age group coaches.

Graded age groups train as a squad during selection. Coaches and Coach Coordinators assess players through training and practice matches. Volunteer coaches, Coach Coordinators, and Committee members dedicate time to ensure fair and thoughtful decisions.

Teams are named according to the competitive skill and division;

- Gold (highest),
- Purple (mid-level)
- White (development)

The Gold Coach, in consultation with the Purple Coach and Coach Coordinators, selects a squad of 22–24 players. If more than two teams are formed, the Purple Coach selects the second team, also capped at 24.

Teams are announced during Pre-Season Training prior to the season launch.

For Graded Teams, the AJFC makes recommendations to the Western Football Netball League (WFNL) to allocate teams into a suitable Age Group Division (e.g. 1, 2, 3). The season commences with a series of Grading Games to help match teams to an appropriately competitive league Division. The WFNL is ultimately responsible for decision making about Team allocation to Divisions.

Top Up Protocol

The process of moving players between teams (temporary or permanent) within the same group to achieve the minimum number of 20 players required on the field. Priority starts from the Gold (highest) team and cascades down. Players are sourced from the next highest division or from top-

aged players in the lower age group. A player may be elevated or re-assigned based on the key considerations for fielding a competitive team (principle 2.).

- **Important:** Selection is fluid to a threshold. When a player reaches the maximum number of allowable games (5) in a team they become permanently allocated to that team.

A Coach must promptly notify the Coach Coordinator of a player shortage. The Coach Coordinator will highlight the **Club First / Team First** Guiding Principle. After discussion, appropriate top-up players are selected and contacted by the Coach (via text or call) to confirm availability to play in an elevated team. If a player is unavailable, the next listed player is contacted and given the opportunity to play.

Although the Club First / Team First Guiding Principle will be applied in good faith, player choice will always be respected. No player will be forced to play in an elevated team if they are uncomfortable to do so.

Player Rotations

Minimum requirements for fair play that apply to ALL teams

- Consistent with the *Junior Football Rules Program Handbook (2023)*, every player gets a minimum of 50-75% game time.
- Player time on the interchange bench is therefore restricted to 50% of playing time per quarter. Note, this also applies to players elevated under the *Top Up Protocol*.
- Coaches give players the opportunity to develop in multiple positions particularly in situations where the team is winning by a significant margin (>6 goals).

Additional requirements for fair play

Non-graded Teams

- Players will be rotated throughout the game spending time in defence, midfield, forward line and interchange bench.

Graded Teams

- Coaches have discretion over the position a player is best suited to play in for team balance.

Under 18 Development Pathway

Applies to Under 16 age group players only.

Following grading, coaches will identify Under 16 players for potential development opportunities. Players and parents are consulted regarding the opportunity to play in Under 18 on occasion as

part of a Pathway Squad. The final decision is made collaboratively and includes the player, parents, Under 16 and Under 18 coaches.

Grievances:

Any concerns about team selection and grading should first be discussed with the relevant **Coach**. If unresolved, parents may contact the **Coaches Coordinators**. Contact details are available on the Club website.

Review and Compliance:

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the committee to ensure its effectiveness.

Non-compliance with this policy may result in appropriate action, up to and including removal from the position of authority within the club.