



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.

Definitions:

- **Grading:** The process of assessing registered 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.
- **Graded Age Groups / Teams:** Under 12, 14 Mixed, Under 16 Boys, Under 12, 14, 16 & 18.5 Girls.
- **Non-Graded Age Groups / Teams:** Under 8, 9 & 10 Mixed, Under 10 Girls.
- **Top vs bottom age:** When the eligible age group spans two calendar years, players in their 2nd year are top age and those in their 1st year are bottom age.

Key Roles & Responsibilities:

- **Coaches:** Collaborate to form teams aligned with Club policy and communicate selections with families.
- **Coaches Coordinators:** Provide support to Coaches to ensure this policy is understood and implemented effectively and consistently.
- **Registrar:** Confirms player registration, aligns players to competition based on their eligible age group and policies, and provides player information to Coaches and Coach Coordinators.
- **Parents:** Register their child, support them to attend training and share relevant information that may assist in team placement for their child.

Guiding Principles:

In priority order:

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. Includes consideration of social connections as evidenced by best practice research. For example, school attended or peer group.
4. **Player Development** - Select teams that promote player development and create an enjoyable and supportive environment for playing football.
5. **Even Distribution** - Spread player numbers evenly across teams to minimize bench and rotation time.

Team Selection Policy:

- Players must register¹ with the WFNL to be considered for team selection.
- The **Registrar** provides player information to age group Coaches and Coach Coordinators.
- **Coaches** record and monitor pre-season training participation by registered players.
- All age groups train as a squad during selection.
- The number of permitted players in a Team is determined by the league² and must not be exceeded.
- Non-graded team selection is based on being first to register and then school attendance.
- Graded team selection is based on player participation in the grading process.
- Team selection is usually completed by mid-March and announced prior to season launch.

Important:

- Attending training or being a previous Vikings player does not entitle a player to a place on a team.
- For avoidance of any doubt, team selection is not based on player or parent choice.

What if there are insufficient players to form a team?

- Refer to the Play-Up Policy, Topping Up category for guidance. If this is not feasible the AJFC may consider approaching another club to explore a merged team.

¹ Refer to the Registration Policy for detailed information.

² 2026 WFNL Junior Football Competition Regulations – Permitted Team Numbers and Playing Numbers.
Updated May 2026

What if there are too many players for 2 teams but not enough for 3 teams?

- This should not happen given 1) registration numbers are capped in PlayHQ to allow two teams, 2) only registered players can participate in grading, and 3) Coaches can only select a team in accordance with the league permitted numbers.

Team Grading Policy:

- Applies to all graded age groups and teams.
- Players are assessed during pre-season training and practice matches according to the Guiding Principles.
- Coaches, Coach Coordinators and Committee members aim to achieve fair and thoughtful decisions.
- Teams are named according to the competitive skill and division; Gold (highest), Purple (mid-level) and White (development).
- The Gold Coach, in consultation with the Purple Coach and Coach Coordinators, selects a squad of players. If more than two teams are formed, the Purple Coach selects the second team.

Important:

- Families/players need to appreciate that failing to attend pre-season training and practice matches (for whatever reason) will reduce the likelihood of being selected for a team.
- If there are more registered players than what permitted numbers allow, some players will miss out on team selection. This happens in many sports and cannot be helped. The Coach will notify the player (and parent where possible) and the Registrar will formalise this in writing to the parent.
 - These players can choose to be on a waitlist (in case a selected player decides not to play) or have their registration cancelled and be reimbursed by the WFNL.
 - Waitlisted players do not attend training.

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.

Team Player Rotation Policy:

Minimum requirements for fair play that apply to ALL teams:

- Consistent with the *Junior Football Rules Program Handbook (2023)*, every player should get a minimum of 50-75% game time.
- Player time on the interchange bench is therefore restricted to 50% of playing time per quarter.

- 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.

Important:

- Exceptions apply. Providing 50-75% game time does not apply to players who are Playing Up (Emergency category) or U16 players who are Playing-Up in the Under 18 competition under the development pathway. Regular team members are given priority.

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.