



# NORTHCOTE JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

Building strong community spirit through a positive football experience.

## Team Selection and Rotation Policy

### Purpose

To ensure that all players, parents and officials of the Northcote Junior Football Club have a shared understanding of the requirement to allow all players, regardless of ability, the opportunity to have equal on ground time subject to meeting the criteria set by the club.

### General Principle of Equity of Participation

The club aims to have all players in each age group participate equally in the season. To this end all players selected to play in any game (finals included) are required to have the opportunity to play a minimum of 75% game time. (Subject to exceptions below).

### Playing List size

Under 9 and under 10 playing squads can be up to 23 (games may be 12-15 players), Under 11s and 12s can have up to 30 registered players on their playing list. Under 13s and older may have up to a maximum of 28 players. Playing squads should be balanced to maximise the number of teams, while ensuring the team may field regularly, and therefore maximising playing opportunities for our players.

### Squad Selection

Where the club has more than one team entered into a single age group there is a requirement to select squads. The squads should be set to meet the greater needs of the club first and secondly to satisfy the requirements of individual players and families. That said, family requirements will be satisfied wherever possible.

Under 9s: Squads in under nines should suit the needs of new players as they transition from Auskick. We should endeavour to make them as welcome and comfortable as possible. Grouping with friends, school groups and transport should be a priority.

Under 10s 11s: As children progress through the 10s and 11s we will be looking to make them more flexible in mixing with other players and not tie them to the same teammates every year. Again exceptions should be possible where transport arrangements would make continuing with the club difficult.

Under 12s and up: Where there is an intent for teams to play in different grade levels, some preliminary streaming by ability should be considered. This is not absolute and should not result in team stacking, but there is clearly a difference between the red and green divisions (for example). At this point it is important to engage with the parent group ensuring they understand the levels and reasons for placement, more particularly for less skilled kids to ensure they remain competitive and able to cope with the level of footy they are playing. We should be always working with the best interests of the child in mind. The longer they enjoy footy, the longer they will play.

Under 14s and above: By under 14, if managed correctly players may be ready to accept differences in ability. The difference between the highest and lowest rated players by this age group will significantly influence their playing experience and enjoyment. The club will consider this on a case by case and season by season basis.

In each age group players should be reminded where there is individual need within the club to meet player requirements in other teams (within age group), the club may invite players to ensure competitive numbers are maintained and that forfeits are avoided. This would be avoided wherever possible and would likely only be temporary. The club does not have the right to direct players to play out of age group. This is on a volunteer basis only.

### Captaincy/Leadership Groups

In all age groups up to and including under 12s the captaincy will rotate through the squad by whatever criteria the coach and team management decide. The goal is to allow as many different players to have the opportunity to captain. This is probably best served by having two captains each week.

From under 13s it is possible to elect captains and leadership groups, again this will be a decision of the coach and team management (though rotation is still an option). In the event there is a decision to have a captain it should be communicated to the group the method of selection and the period of tenure. Selection of a captain and vice captain/s should occur prior to the start of the season and be by player vote (secret ballot). Selection of other leadership positions may be made by selection of coach/team management.

### Weekly Team Selection and Rotations

This should be read in conjunction with NFL rules which govern team sizes for matches. Modified rules exist for under 9-12.

Game-day teams for individual matches can have up to 24 players. Where 24 players are selected, rotations are required to ensure that all players achieve at least 75% game time. Playing lists beyond 24 players will need to develop rosters with a requirement that all players are able to play an equal number of games over the season.

Where a team wishes to play more than 24 players in a game they need to seek approval from the Committee, and where required, the NFL. The Club is more than happy to try and accommodate this request in finals games in the interests of player participation.

With less players the objective should be to achieve equal game time in each game for each player. In younger teams where rotations are more likely to only happen in breaks, the maintenance of equal time may be achieved over a period not exceeding 4 rounds, but ensuring 75% minimum game time in any game.

Sharing of playing time should also focus on providing opportunities for players to play in a variety of positions.

Records of selection and on field time should be maintained by team managers.

### Age Group Eligibility

To be eligible to play under age football a child must be aged seven years of age as at 30 April in any year to be eligible to be registered with the NFL. The appropriate football activity for younger children is Auskick.

Players' age eligibility is determined by a child's age on January 1 of that year. For example if you are 10 on January 1 you play in under 11. Players are required to play in their appropriate age group unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Only in exceptional circumstances will a player will be granted the right to play two years above their age group.

## Out of Age Group Exceptions

The club encourages players to remain in their age group as we believe it encourages appropriate development. Players who are able are also encouraged to fill in in higher age groups on occasion so they may measure their skills against requirements for the following year

A player may be granted the right to regularly play out of their age group for the current season when the Coaching Co-ordinator and the Committee consider an out of age request serves the best interests of the club and the individual (and/or their family).

Where a player wishes to play out of their age group, a request must be made in writing by the player's parent(s) (form available on the website). The request must be approved by both age group coaches and the NJFC Football Operations Manager. Where team numbers require 'top-up' from other teams, players will be given equal opportunity to play in accord with this policy. Players should only be used for top up when the team has less than 20 listed players available. Top-up players should not play more game time than any listed player in that grade.

Out of age application expire at the end of each season. The exception is not automatically granted in the next year. The decision will be balanced against the criteria above and the best interests of the football club.

## Exceptions and Qualifications to General Principle of Equity of Participation

In order for a player to be eligible to equal participation certain club standards (none of which are based on ability alone) are required to be met.

These standards include:

- Meeting the minimum requirement to be a financial member of the NJFC. This includes either being fully subscribed or meeting the minimum standards set in an agreed modified payment plan.
- Abiding by the values and behaviours of the club.
- Meeting on field/game day behaviour standards including appropriate levels of respect for:
  - Coaches, teammates, parents, club officials or members
  - players, officials or supporters of other teams
  - league officials, including umpires (field, boundary or goal)
- Not being the subject of formal club or league suspension
- Meeting agreed training attendance standards
- Following on-field team rules and instructions

In the event the standards are not met, team management should ensure the Football Operations Manager, the Player and the Parents are informed of any failure to meet these standards, prior to any modification of playing time (where possible, if the breach happens in a game, immediate action may be more appropriate).

Coaches and team officials should be flexible with the application of standards for play. Individual circumstances may make attendance at training or meeting subscriptions requirements difficult. In these circumstances coaches or team managers would be engaging with the players and families to ensure we are doing all we can to accommodate exceptions to the extent that the individuals are applying their best endeavours to meet the requirement of the club.