

Becroft Football Club



Grading and Team Formation Policy

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Beecroft Football Club Grading and Team formation Policy

Preamble

The Beecroft Soccer club has always strived to offer our Mini and Junior members a club where they can enjoy their sport in an appropriately competitive environment, test themselves, develop their skills and build friendships. We have also strived to operate as an open club who welcome newcomers and returning members alike. As the children move from the Minis to and through the Junior ranks the issue of grading according to abilities becomes more important and to some extent more contentious.

It is always difficult to manage everyone's expectations when the number of teams may reduce from one year to the next. This may cause some concern for parents at grading time but with the right approach by the parents this can become a positive experience for the children involved. The committee requests that parents assist these situations with a positive approach to make a smooth transition for all concerned. Not all players will receive the grading they anticipate. Dealing with disappointment is also a skill that many children need to develop. Again parental guidance in this regard can be crucial.

Why grade children?

We believe it is in the best interests of all children that they are given the chance to enjoy their sport with and against children of similar ability. If we achieve this we believe they will get to fully participate in their games, build confidence, build skills and also develop the values that are vital in any team sport. Also as a member club of the GHFA we are obliged to place our players and teams in grades that are appropriate to ability. We believe that a mismatch of player or team ability is not in anybody's interest

Freindship Groups:

Playing with your friends is an important part of sport. We recognize this and have asked at registration that you list the other players that you wish in your childs team. For minis, team formation is all about friendship, so we take these requests seriously. We have, on occasion, run into the issue of a child be nominated to a friendship grouping where there are too many players and this leads to disappointment when we can't fit them all into a team. Ideally, we would like parents to present us with a list of players up to the number for a full team (check with your delegate if unsure of team sizes). Everyone on that list should have given his or her agreement to be in that team.

For graded teams, grading is the main determinant of team allocation (see below). We may, on occasion, permit a child to play in a lower division for friendship reasons. We will permit this as long as the higher division team is not overly disadvantaged or would lack sufficient numbers to form a squad.

Grading in the Minis:

The GHFA are moved to small sided games .The GHFA have decided that TEAM grading will apply to U6s and 7s. This means the teams are formed based on friendship groupings and then we assess the team as a whole and grade them as high skill, average skill or new player/development team. This will hopefully reduce the issue of some teams being beaten comprehensively by others. In U8s, the GHFA will allow 1 division (BLUE) where teams are graded by individual ability. Unless there is an outstanding group coming through, we will not be putting teams up for the U8 Blue division. The other U8 teams will be graded as per U6 and U7 above i.e. as teams not individuals.

*****The GHFA may change their policy and we can only state that the above is correct at the time of writing*****

Juniors In U9s, the GHFA are maintaining their fully graded competition with referees, results recorded and grand finals. U9s will be the first year that we will grade all individuals. Players will then be ranked and the most skilled offered a place in a division the grading committee deems best suited to the overall team level of ability. If there are sufficient numbers for further teams, the process will continue till all players are placed in a team. We anticipate that usually we will have three U9s teams allowing for a high, middle and low division team giving a good chance for all children to be placed at an appropriate level.

The Grading Committee

A sub committee will be formed comprised of the Convenor, Senior, Junior and Minis delegates and Club Coach. This group may invite others eg the Superleague coach to assist. The Club Coach has overall responsibility for grading but will work closely with the relevant delegates to ensure an

appropriate grading process is undertaken. Senior players from our club will be invited to assist in grading.

Grading Process

1. We aim to get feedback from the coaches on all aspects of the season but also to get them to submit gradings of their players, simply assessing which division the player is best suited to. The coaches will also be asked to specify the player's best position should one be evident. See attachment A.
2. Mini grading day: The children will be formed into teams based on friendship and personal preference. The teams will then play a round robin style of games to allow for the teams to be ranked according to overall team ability.
3. Junior Grading day: Individual skills and team play will be assessed. If necessary, additional sessions may be run. For teams that have played together for a long time and where there is only 1 team grading will only be required if there are sufficient new recruits to require the formation of a second team. Otherwise they will be placed in a grade according to last year's results. The previous year's coaches or potential new coaches will be invited to assist in grading bearing in mind Clause 4.
4. As volunteers run the club, it will occur that a child of one of the graders may be in the grading session. No person may directly grade their own child though they may grade other children in the session.
5. Once the grading is completed, the grading committee and the coaches will immediately discuss the results and following consideration of the grading results, last year's performance and the specific needs of each team, will issue the gradings following this discussion.
6. If deemed necessary, up to two further grading sessions will be arranged. This will be to allow the U6, U7 and U8 teams to play other teams in their grade so we can further assess the level of TEAM ability. The U9s will also be given a chance to play each other as part of the grading process. We will be assessing individual ability for the U9s, particularly how they play as part of a team.
7. For players that have played for Beecroft in the prior year and cannot attend the grading sessions we will seek input from the prior coach and/or manager and will use this input for the assessment. If there is any doubt, the results from the current grading session will be given preference over last year's performance and so all players are encouraged to attend grading. For players coming from other clubs the only assessment will come from the grading sessions.
8. Players who join the club after grading is completed will be assessed for ability but only placed in the higher division if there is space

available. No graded player will be forced to give up their place in a team after gradings are announced

Team Size

It is to the benefit of the players in a team that they get sufficient time on the field. Hence oversized teams should be avoided where possible. We recommend that full size teams (11 on the field) ideally have no more than 3 reserves (total of 14) but will allow up to 15. For smaller teams, 2-3 reserves remains the ideal number (for small minis team, plenty of reserves allows for rapid turnover of tired children).

In deciding how to deal with players numbers greater than 14, the following general principles will apply:

1. For Division 1 and 2 teams, entry into the team is by annual grading and returning players will have no advantage over new players to the club. These teams are genuinely competitive teams and should field the best team each year.
2. For Division 3 and below, returning players from an existing team will have preference over new players to the club as long as they register by the closing date for initial registrations.
3. Where a Beecroft team folds, the remaining players from that team will need to try out with any new players to the club for available positions in an existing team in their age group. This is the most contentious area but this approach has been chosen for the following reasons:
 - a. The folding of the original team is regrettable but not the club's fault.
 - b. Placing children automatically in an existing Beecroft team may be unwise as there may be a large difference in overall team ability i.e. players from a Division 8 team may struggle in a Division 3 team while Division 3 players will not be challenged in a Division 8 squad.
4. A team for Division 3 or below can agree to have more than the recommended number of reserves and manage the surplus internally through rostering. It must be remembered that we have an equal time on the field policy for Div3 teams and below. This is regardless of whether the players are involved in other sporting competitions.
5. For Division 1 and 2 teams, preference will be given to players who commit to prioritise club sport over school games.

Communication of player placement

We intend to advise parents and carers of all players involved in the grading process of their team assignment after grading and by email as we do realise that there may inevitably be disappointment for some children and that this is

best to be discussed with them in the home, not announced amongst their peers.

Grading Disputes

While we understand that some children may have “a bad day” at grading, the club cannot allow a parent’s assessment to override the grading process. We accept that the grading process is not perfect. The graders are all volunteers who do their best in the time available.

If a parent feels that the grading process has failed in some way, they can contact the relevant delegate who will discuss the issue with last year’s coach and review the grading result. However, we will not re-run grading to re-assess one or two children, so even if we feel that there may have been an issue with grading, the child will only be regraded if it can be accommodated within existing teams. No child graded to a team will be asked to forego their position in the team once the teams are announced.

Should a child wish to play in a division LOWER than they are graded (for friendship or family reasons), this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If possible, we will permit this as long as the higher division team is not overly disadvantaged or would lack sufficient numbers to form a squad.

Coach and Manager

Each team will require a coach and manager. The team needs to arrange these for themselves as the club cannot provide them. People interested in these roles need to notify the relevant delegate.

If two or more candidates for these positions are put forward, the people involved will be advised and can try and sort it out between them –job sharing is usually to everyone’s advantage. If an arrangement cannot be come to, the matter will be put to a vote, conducted through the relevant delegate to maintain confidentiality. Note that if someone is felt to be unsuitable as coach due to current or prior behaviour, the relevant delegate may choose not to accept his or her nomination after discussion with the Grading Committee.

Questions and Answers

Junior Competition

1. Can I ask for my child to be placed in the higher or lower team?
 - a. **Answer:** Placement will be made primarily according to the assessment process. If there are players of similar ability in a group that could equally go into the higher or lower teams, player preference will be considered. Should a child wish to play in a division LOWER than they are graded (for friendship or family reasons), this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If possible, we will permit this as long as the higher division team is not overly disadvantaged or would lack sufficient numbers to form a squad

2. Can I ask for my child to be placed with their prior year team?
 - a. **Answer:** A preference can be noted at registration however placement will be made primarily according to the assessment process.
3. Can I ask for my child to be placed with other children that are already a group of friends?
 - a. **Answer:** Players are graded and allocated to teams based on ability. A player can ask to play down as per Q1.
4. My child has personal circumstances that I would like the club to take into account during the grading process, can this be accommodated?
 - a. **Answer:** Yes please make personal contact with the Juniors delegate between registration and the grading closure. We cannot commit that all requests will be accommodated however we will endeavour to where possible.
5. I am new to the club, is preference given to those that have been with the club in the prior year?
 - a. **Answer:** We give preference to prior club members during the registration process for Division 3 and below (refer **Team Size**). For Division 1 or 2 teams, all players have an equal chance at being selected.
6. If I am unhappy with the outcome of the grading process what can I do?
 - a. **Answer** Please make personal contact with the Junior delegate or club president in this instance. Also please note however that it will be very difficult for the club and potentially disturbing to the children to make changes to teams after announcement. Therefore refer to Grading Disputes above and make contact prior to grading conclusion.

