



Team Selection Policy

Background

The Hammond Park Football Club (HPFC) is committed to forming competitive teams that enable players of all abilities to have fun and actively participate to improve their knowledge and skills of the game. Player allocations will be undertaken in such a way that the paramount requirement is that each team is competitive in its allocated division

Intent

This policy is designed to balance various objectives with respect to player attraction, retention, and development. This policy also aims to establish clear expectations amongst coaches, players, parents and guardians regarding team nominations and the allocation of players to teams.

The intent of this policy is to:

- a) Clearly outline the team nomination process for returning players and those new to the Club
- b) Set clear expectations for coaches, players, parents and guardians with respect to the allocation of players to teams when more than one team exists within a year group
- c) Provide coaches with a decision-making framework for the allocation of players to teams, particularly in circumstances where multiple teams within the same age-group are considered by the commission to be uncompetitive.
- d) Set expectations for coaches when the Club fields more than one team within a year group in the competition

This policy is guided by various policies implemented by the Australian Football League (AFL), the WA Football Commission (WAFC), and the South Fremantle District.

Adopting a Club Mentality

Coaches, players, and their families are encouraged to adopt a club mentality rather than an individual team mentality. This will encourage long-term friendships that extend beyond school groups and minimises the impact when players move between teams or teams merge during their junior football career.

To foster this outcome, the Club encourages teams in the same year group to train together during pre-season training and beyond as a squad to:

- Build a strong Club culture
- Encourage strong friendships between a larger group of players, parents, and guardians to make any reallocation of players or team mergers less daunting for players and their families
- Achieve more effective training sessions through larger player numbers
- Keep players engaged during training by implementing a hub training model
- Expose players to a variety of coaches and coaching styles
- Share resources, e.g. oval space, coaches, equipment, etc.

Team Nominations

The number of teams nominated in each competition will be based on [WAFC POL.10A Competitions Policy: Team Selection & Nominations](#). Only players registered, with all fees paid, will be considered when deciding how many teams to nominate. Any exceptions to this will be at the discretion of the HPFC Registrar. Players will not be permitted to play in the fixtured competition unless they are registered with all fees paid in full, i.e. they are “financial” members.

A priority registration period will be used to maximise the opportunity for HPFC players from the previous season to play for the Club again. After the priority registration period, registrations will be open to new and returning players on a “first come first served” basis. The priority period end date will be advertised on the Club website (www.hammondparkjfc.com.au) and clubs facebook page (Hammond Park FC). Players registering after the team nomination date will be accepted by agreement of the team’s Coach and HPFC Registrar. The priority registration date for 2023 is 31st January 2023.

Multiple Teams

When more than one HPFC team exists in the same youth year group, the Club ,will endeavour not to have teams in the same divisions and will as far as possible apply the following hierarchy of principles when selecting players for each team:

- **Even Numbers:** The Club will endeavour to field teams with equal player numbers.
- **Ability:** The Club will endeavour to field teams that will be competitive relevant to the division teams are placed in. HPFC will endeavour to have a top side and a development in all youth age groups where there is more than one team. To achieve this outcome the coaches within a year group shall apply the “1 to 5” rating system described in [WAFC POL.10A Competitions Policy: Team Selection & Nominations](#) where required, or an equivalent methodology to select the teams. Teams will be selected to be competitive in the nominated divisions.
- **Friendship Groups:** The Club will endeavour to ensue each player is able to play with at least one close friend. Players will not be allocated, or teams built, solely according to school lines. As a community club, this principle aims to encourage long-term friendships that extend beyond school groups.
- **Annual Rotation:** This team selection process will be performed each season, i.e. players will not simply be “carried forward”. No player should be considered “tied” to any particular team or coach from one season to the next. Rotating players between teams encourages a club mentality and enables players to experience different coaching and playing styles.
- **Training:** Each season all players within the same age group will be notified, through the club Registrar, of training start dates. Players will train together in one pool until the players have been separated into individual teams. Pool training will continue throughout the season one night per week with individual team training on the other training night.
- **Coaches:** Coaching appointments may be part of a competitive selection process. Returning coaches are not guaranteed to coach the same team or in the same division as the previous year.
- **Player Recruitment:** Players who are recruited to the Club are not to be promised a team placing by the coach or parent who recruited the player.
- **Re-Allocation of Players:** As part of the selection process, all coaches will be made aware of the fact that the Management Committee reserves the right to re-allocate players in any age-group to redress any shortfall in numbers or competitiveness (as per instructions from the affiliated council).

In Years 3 to 6 the emphasis is on participation and enjoyment; there are no ladders or finals for these year groups. Additional goals in these year groups include the development of football skills, the nurturing of physical and emotional development, and general well-being through involvement in team-based sports with friends from school, the community, Auskick, and other extra-curricular activities.

Playing Outside of Age Group

The Club will seek to register players in their correct age-groups wherever possible as opposed to playing players 'up' in older age groups. Any request for a player to play the season outside their year group must be formally submitted and approved by the club and WAFC as per the association bylaws. Prior to any request for a player to play the season outside their year group being escalated to the association for approval, it must be approved by a vote in favour of the application by at least 60% of the Management Committee.

Should a team in a higher age group be short on numbers for a particular game, a request to allow players to 'play-up' week to week, can be made through the Coach Co-ordinator/ Registrar. It is expected in such circumstances any such request shall be offered to ALL players in the lower age group and the process shall NOT be one based on perceived ability, size or any other selection criteria.

The decision for any player to nominate as 'available to play-up' in a higher age group rests solely with the younger player and his family. Coaches thus shall not hand select, coerce or decide which players they may deem 'suitable' to play in the higher age group. Should the requirement for players to 'play-up' be ongoing or repeated throughout the season, Coaches and Team Managers will ensure the opportunity is shared amongst all interested players and shall not be restricted to a specific player or subset of players.

No player shall 'play-up' more than the allowed number of games under the competition bylaws. Should a player play more games than allowed in a higher grade, without Management Committee and Association approval such a player may forfeit the right to play in either grade for the remainder of the season.

Any players playing in a higher grade under a 'play-up' request must have a parent or guardian complete the 'Two Games in one Weekend Application Form' prior to playing to have that game recorded towards their personal club game tally.

Decision to Merge or Split Teams

With a focus on participation, HPFC aims to maximise the number of opportunities for as many players as possible to play football. Whilst denying registrations and turning players away is avoided where possible, the Club acknowledges there are complexities with each year group that must be considered on a case by case basis when deciding to merge or split teams.

In closing the HPFC Committee will have the final decision and will make all decisions in the best interest of HPFC, aligned with the policies and procedures where possible.