



**BULLEEN TEMPLESTOWE JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB INC.**

## **Bulleen Templestowe Junior Football Club – Grading policy**

The Bulleen Templestowe Junior Football Club (the Bullants) is a club committed to providing a safe enjoyable sporting environment for all members, players and parents. We are about:

- Being the best club for each and every player who wears the blue and gold.
- Providing a safe and inclusive environment for all our players to develop their skills.
- Developing our players not just in football, but in being a team member and thinking about team before individual.
- Having a strong sense of community and enjoying the company of our fellow Bullants.
- Giving our players and parents an opportunity to make new friends – some that may last a lifetime.

This Grading Policy has been developed to clearly define the process of grading (or streaming) of players when the Club is fielding more than one team in an age group. The Policy is to apply from Under 13 age group and above.

### **What is Grading**

Grading is the process of establishing the composition of more than one team in an age bracket to compete in the Yarra Junior Football League (YJFL). This means that if there are sufficient player numbers for two or more teams, then each team will play in different grades and grades will typically represent different standards of play. It needs to be considered that in the grading process one team will be graded higher and one lower by the YJFL. Grading also provides the opportunity for our players to continue to develop their skills and confidence and further expand their friendship groups. Some players will seek to challenge themselves by playing at a higher level and others benefit by playing in a lower grade.

The Yarra Junior Football League (YJFL) recommends that clubs implement a grading (or streaming) policy from the U13 age group. The development and implementation of a grading policy is up to each individual club; however, most Clubs implement a streaming (or grading) policy to apply from U13 age group and above.

The YJFL's guiding principle is to:

*Provide a well organised and structured football competition, including competitions which cater for the skill levels and development needs of all the children through grading of competitions. Provide opportunities for all players and umpires to develop their football skills and for the most talented players and umpires*

Bulleen Templestowe Junior Football Club agrees that U13 is the correct age group for the club to implement its grading policy and have an active responsibility for selecting teams

### **Objective**

The Bullants objective is that team grading is conducted openly, fairly and effectively. The purpose of this grading policy is to endeavour that grading of teams is undertaken in this manner, with the best interests of the Bullants players and the club. Grading will only apply when two or more teams are formed in a single age group of U13 and above.

**Players and parents are urged to be objective and reasonable in their expectations, and to encourage their children to be happy in their chosen sport no matter what team they play in.**



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The Bullants will undertake this process in good faith and to the best of our ability. Grading is not an exact science and players develop at different stages, both from year to year, and within the season, the Bullants will endeavour to place players in the appropriate team based on this guideline.

Our objective in every policy is to follow the culture of our club which include:

- Creating an environment where everyone can enjoy the game of AFL
- Developing football skills of all players,
- Build confidence, self-esteem and the opportunity to create and develop new friendships
- Encourage and supporting participation in the club

### General principles of the Bullants grading policy

The Bullants recognises the importance of team balance and will endeavour to ensure that each team is competitive in the YJFL division that they are placed. A detailed process has been developed to support the coaches with the grading and team selection process.

- All registered players in U13 and above will have the opportunity to train in their age group during the pre-season training sessions and practice matches.
- At U14 and above, the playing group will be re-graded at the beginning of the season and each year thereafter. The decision to re-grade is based on the knowledge that players can develop and change in body shape significantly over the 6-month summer period.
- Coaching staff with the support of the Bullants Football and Coaching Director and independent third person (if deemed necessary) will be responsible for initial team selections.
- Grading and final team selection will be reviewed and approved by the Bullants Committee (Football and Coaching Director).
- Each team will have sufficient key position players to ensure that the lower graded teams are competitive.
- Communication and transparency with parents and players is crucial from the outset, and the coaches are expected to **action this at all times**.

### Steps in the Grading Process

- All Players are invited to start training as an age group during pre-season.
- All players are asked to submit their preferences via a survey during pre-season.
- Grading takes about 6 weeks with group training as a squad during that time.
- Practice games both intra and inter club will form part of the selection process.
- From time to time, the Football and Coaching Director may also invite Independent Graders to assist with the grading process.
- The coaching staff will identify the playing squads using the approved *grading criteria below* and recommend the teams to the Football and Coaching Director committee who will assess the squads and make final determination on the makeup of the teams.
- Players are advised by a joint email of all team allocations as soon as practical by the coaching staff.
- Players train in their team in the last week or two before season starts and will be encouraged to train together as practicable thereafter.



- If necessary, players can be rotated during grading games (first four weeks of the season). After this, rotations are restricted by the YJFL unless there are special circumstances.
- Player's personal preferences are considered but are not a sole determinate.
- No child will be forced to play in a higher team.
- If a parent has any questions about their child's placement within a team, they should first discuss with the coach, and then can approach the Football and Coaching Director to review the placement.
- Where a conflict of interest exists (i.e., the grading session involves the child of a Football and coaching Director member) that member will only grade the other players and his or her child will be graded by all the other department members.

## **Grading Criteria**

1. Team Balance – for instance there is little point in selecting 22 players who are all midfielders. Each side needs a Ruck, backs, forwards and ball getters;
2. The previous season performance – votes, attitude, attendance at training and work ethic (advice can and may be sought from the previous season's coach);
3. The ability of the player;
4. What position(s) they play/or are considered for;
5. Whether the player may be better served playing down a grade to improve their skills;
6. Enabling the player to play in a position that they would not play in at the higher team;
7. Enabling the player to excel at a lower level which will enable them to enjoy their football and gain greater confidence in years to come;

In assessing the overall skills of a player within an age group, the assessment will consider:

- Kicking
- Speed and Agility
- Ball Handling Skills
- Attacking Skills
- Defending Skills
- Perception/Cognition Skills
- Sportsmanship and Attitude
- Game sense

## **Information Session**

Information session for players and parents from under 13 and above will be conducted at the start of each season to clarify both the Bullants Grading Policy and Grading Process where there will be two teams.