

# RICHMOND JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

## TEAM FORMATION AND SELECTION POLICY

### Introduction

The Richmond Junior Football Club (RJFC or 'the Club') seeks to encourage an environment that balances **participation and talent development**.

Accordingly, the club has developed this policy to address:

- Age group qualification;
- Game Time;
- Player numbers per team;
- Team Formation;
- Approach to grading;
- Appropriate use of 'top up' players;
- Finals Qualification.

**This policy is effective for the 2020 season and will continue until further notice.**

### Age Group Qualification

The RJFC provides opportunities to play football between the ages of 7 (players need to be at least 7 years of age by 30 April in the year they commence playing) and 17 (players must reach this age in their last year of playing). The age group for a player is determined by their age on the first of January in the current year (for example, a player who is 8 on the first of January will play in the Under 9 team, a player who is 12 on the first of January will play in the Under 13 team). Under 16 and Under 17 boys will be allocated to the Colts age group and girls will be allocated to girls teams based on the prevailing girls team structure as set down by the Yarra Junior Football League (YJFL). In instances where the Club is unable to field a team in a particular age group, players may be allocated to the next up age group.

For avoidance of doubt, the RJFC age qualification policy will always be consistent with those of the YJFL.

It is the club's policy that all players play in their age group for the following reasons:

- This is the best way to protect the health and safety of players
- To enable players to best develop according to their age and physical capacity
- It is non-discriminatory as it applies to all players
- It provides clarity and certainty for players and parents
- It is consistent with the preferred position of the YJFL.

Where a player has commenced in one age group / team and has played for 1 or more seasons and they wish to change to a different age group / team, parents must make an application in writing to the Club Committee to be exempted from this policy. The request should be submitted prior to the close of the formal registration period.

The Committee will assess such requests on their merit and notify the parent of its decision in writing. The decision of the Committee will consider:

- The reason(s) for the request, including if there are significant child safety or pastoral care issues
- The number of players in each age group impacted;
- The future implications on the respective age groups of the request.

The decision of the Committee is final.

A request to play out of age group must only be made once while a player is at the club. RJFC promotes **participation, development and enjoyment**. With these considerations in mind, the Committee has developed the following minimum game time policy.

Under 8s:	3 Quarters
Under 9s:	3 Quarters
Under 10s:	3 Quarters
Under 11s:	Equal playing time**
Under 12s:	Broadly equal playing time *
Under 13s:	Broadly equal playing time *
Under 14s:	Broadly equal playing time *
Under 15s:	Broadly equal playing time *
Under 16s:	Broadly equal playing time *
Colts/Youth:	Broadly equal playing time *

The same approach applies for both boys and girls teams.

In applying broadly equal playing time, coaches are provided with greater flexibility in how they manage their teams on match day. This coach's discretion **must** be in alignment with the Club's philosophy where all players are welcomed, and the focus is on learning and participating in a supportive team based environment. In using this flexibility in approach, it is RJFC policy that fairness and equity act as overarching principles in ensuring reasonable game time is provided to all players.

#### \* **Broadly equal playing time**

It is recognised that as players advance to more senior levels of football, there is a greater emphasis on fielding competitive teams and, accordingly, the coach is afforded a higher level of discretion in determining game time. Even so, the art of coaching at Junior level is to talk and communicate with the parents as well as the players and to act in a way that represents and supports the whole team.

\*\* **Equal Playing Time** – the amount of game time players receive over the course of a season should be reasonably equal. This does not require exact equal playing time in each game. The coach is granted some discretion on how this is administered based on:

- The calibre of the opposition
- The level of development of the player
- The status of the game
- The preparation of the player

A commitment from the coach to play players broadly equally also **requires a commitment from the players to attend training and to try their hardest in games and at training.**

When players do not fulfil this commitment, the coach is no longer obliged to fulfil his or her commitment to equal playing time.

## Minimum game time during finals matches

Coaches are to be given extra discretion on the implementation of the minimum game time policy in finals.

While the more competitive nature of finals football is understood, an attitude of fairness should still override an attitude of “win at all costs”.

Coaches are to communicate clearly with players and parents in any changes to the implementation of this policy before the finals series begins.

## Composition of teams

### Number of teams:

Prior to the Registration Period the RJFC will determine how many teams it expects to field at every age group level for that coming year. Factors taken into consideration will include anticipated demand and the availability of grounds.

The Club will appoint a senior coach for each team. Appointment of coaches is at the discretion of the Committee and is to be done prior to the team selection process, wherever possible,

### Player Numbers:

An early registration period will be provided for returning players before registration is opened up to the broader community.

The number of players per team should ideally not exceed:

<u>Boys Teams</u>		<u>Girls Teams</u>	
Under 8s:	15	Under 10s:	24
Under 9s:	18	Under 12s:	24
Under 10s:	24	Under 13s:	24
Under 11s:	24	Under 14s:	24
Under 12s:	24	Under 15s:	24
Under 13s:	24	Under 16s:	24
Under 14s:	24	Youth:	24
Under 15s:	24		
Colts:	28		

Where registrations exceed the ideal number of players in a given age group, the additional players will be known as Squad players. Squad players will be registered with the club, will train with their age appropriate team and will be offered a place in a team should one become available. Preference will be given to players based on the order of receipt of registration. Where ‘top up’ players are required for a match, Squad players will be given preference over players who have already played for another team in the same round of football.

Final decisions regarding the number of players in teams remains at the discretion of the Committee.

## Player Rostering

If a team is operating within the ideal number of players range but still determines a player roster is required, the roster should, as far as possible, ensure an **equal number of games for all players**. The coaches of U12, U13, U14, U15, U16 & Colts/Youth teams are given discretion to depart from the roster based on:

- The calibre of the opposition;
- Safety of players;
- Status of the season;
- Player preparation and experience.

## Fill in players from lower age groups

Where a team appears likely to have two or less interchange players in an upcoming match, the coach may elect to use 'top up' players to ensure there are adequate player numbers. Where this occurs, preference must be given to Squad players (if there are Squad players for that age group) or, if not, a player (or players) from a younger age group can be approached for the purpose of covering absentees. Top up players must not be more than two age groups below the team they are being asked to play for.

Top up players should not be used for the express purpose of improving the playing quality of a team and should not be afforded more game time than regular players in the team in which they are filling in.

## Team Selection (where there are two or more teams in the same age group)

### U8 – U11s

In these age groups, the emphasis is placed on participation, enjoyment and the acquisition of football skills. The overarching objective of achieving teams of broadly equal ability and potential is considered to be paramount in the selection of teams at these age levels.

RJFC teams will be picked to ensure broadly equal ability. While established friendship groups will be considered during this process, RJFC also believes it is in the players' and club's interests to encourage the mixing of social and school based groups. A selection committee will be appointed by the RJFC which will comprise a minimum of 3 people including the senior coach (only) of each team and at least one member of the RJFC Committee.

All Under 8s players will be rotated through all teams in the age group evenly throughout the season, to ensure all players are sufficiently introduced to all other players and coaches in their year, and to broaden the ability for players and parents to make friendships across the whole age group. The purpose is to bring the RJFC community closer together, enabling friendships across the age group and allowing coaches to have a more knowledgeable formation of teams in later age groups."

### U12s – Colts / Youth

In the event there is more than one team fielded at any of these age group levels and if the Committee believes it will benefit the playing group, the RJFC will look to provide players the opportunity to play in the highest level their collective skill deserves within the YJFL. For example, where there are to be two teams, this may see one team formed as a Competition Team, and expected to play at a higher division of competition, and a Development Team, which is likely to play at a level below the Competition Team.

This approach will allow for grading to occur through a managed process in which the RJFC Committee will:

- Determine whether teams at this level are to be assembled with regard to players' skills, fitness and abilities;
- Advise parents by email of the approach that is to be taken;
- Accommodate players and their families who elect to opt into a Development Team;
- Appoint a Selection Committee comprising of:
  - the senior coach of each team, or if coaches are unidentified, the relevant senior coaches from the previous year, and
  - at least three members of the Committee.

Where the number of players wishing to play in the Competition Team exceeds the number of players the Selection Committee believes comprises the logical number of players for that team, players will be selected based on a number of factors, including playing ability and physical readiness.

Selection is to be based on the Selection Committee's judgment and perception of the players' abilities, potential, development, attitude, commitment and the need for team balance.

It should be noted that teams will not be 'set in stone' before Round One of the season. If the Selection Committee believes there is a need to make changes to the teams during the YJFL Grading Period it is at the discretion of the Selection Committee to do so.

## Composition of Coaching Group

As well as a coach, each team should have one Assistant Coach, Trainer, Runner and Team Manager. Nominations by the coach for the roles of Team Manager and Assistant Coach are subject to approval by the RJFC. In line with YJFL policies, only the Coach, Assistant Coach, Runner and Trainer should be in the coaches box during matches.

## Concerns or Queries

Any concerns or queries with the implementation of this policy should be discussed with the relevant Team Manager and, should they remain unresolved or unanswered, are to be addressed in writing or by email to the RJFC Committee.

**Policy adopted: 22/06/2020**