

Junior Team Allocation Policy

Scope

This policy relates to the formulating of teams from U11's to U17's.

Purpose

With the many varied playing times available for the placement of teams and the many requests for playing preferences received each year from parents of junior players, guidelines are required to assist in formulating teams. Placing players into teams in junior sport is always a complicated process and never an exact science. It cannot be completely planned ahead as numbers are not known until registrations are completed or we have reached team capacities.

Murrumbeena Cricket Club aims to field junior teams of appropriate numbers, ideally capped at 8 for Under 11s, 10 for Under 13s and 12 for all other age groups, as we believe this to be the optimum squad size. By exception, albeit most unlikely for teams playing on turf cricket wickets, individual team squads can be increased to 13 provided the appointed coach agrees to this.

While the club aims to meet players' and parents' requests, it is not always possible to do so and we urge people to remember that players join a club rather than a particular team. Parents also need to be aware that ISEC has a basic form of grading within the various age groups – refer below.

Murrumbeena endeavours to place players with at least some of their friends when they first join at U11s. We take this approach because we understand that joining a new club can be daunting and joining with friends often eases the process. However, this is not always possible in all cases. Also, players and parents need to understand that although the club places a priority on keeping groups together, we cannot give any guarantee as players move through the post Under 11 age groups. Some players and teams will be faced with a developing period in the first year when entering these age groups.

While it may be disappointing in the first instance, it will also become an opportunity to make new friends. In our experience, players and parents very quickly adapt and thrive in these situations.

The club is aiming to foster a sense of belonging so that players get to know players in other teams in their age group. This can also be achieved through training sessions and Club social functions, which are opportunities for players to get to know other players in their age group.

Our priority is to ensure that as many kids as possible can be accommodated to play the unique and wonderful game of cricket.

Guidelines

Registration Priority

In allocating team places and playing days, priority will be given to:

- Registrations received prior to the initial registration cut-off date.
- Players being a current player from the immediately preceding season (this includes Woolworths Master Blaster) – provided they have met the initial registration cut-off date as above.

Playing in a Higher Age Group

If a player wishes to play in a higher age group, this is permitted provided it is commensurate with their skills and development. A further consideration will be whether there are shortages in the lower age group squads, and also whether there are spaces in the higher age group once all 'correct age' players have been allocated. This needs to be approved by the Junior Coordinator and ISEC.

Team Allocation

ISEC has a grading system whereby they will nominate, where there are two competitions at the same age on the same playing day (e.g., two Under 13 Friday grades), which of the two competitions is expected to be higher in terms of standard from the other.

The guidance issued by ISEC is as follows:

“The League issues the following guidelines: If your team are predominantly more ‘top age’ players then choose the higher grade, if there are more ‘bottom age’ players, choose the lower grade.”

The club has a responsibility to ISEC and its players to allocate teams that reflect this environment whilst also taking other considerations and factors into account where appropriate. This inevitably makes it harder to retain friendship groups throughout the underage levels. However, we consider the approach outlined below to wherever possible keep top and bottom age kids together will help with preserving some element of friendship groups and familiarity.

The club has adopted the following approach:

Under 11s

Under 11 team allocations will continue to be based primarily on the established factors:

- Under 11 players must be 8 or older on the 1st September 2022
- Squad caps as above
- The players preference to playing with friends and siblings
- The players preference to a certain day
- Ground availability
- The player being a current player from the immediately preceding season

Under 13 & Under 15

(Where there are multiple teams at the same age playing on the same day)

Under 13 & Under 15 team allocations will be finalised in consultation with the appointed coaches. The initial allocations for consultation with the coaches will be based on the following factors:

- The ISEC guidance as above.
- The need to address squad balance in terms of numbers and capability – this may require some lower age players being allocated to the higher-grade team and potentially vice versa.

The consultation with the coaches will be undertaken by the Junior Coordinator and the Coaches Coordinator and will also consider specific requests of the appointed coaches in terms of team balance.

Where agreement cannot be reached the Junior Coordinator and Coaches Coordinator will have the final say.

Under 17s

If there is likely to be sufficient registrations to have two under 17 teams and they are on the same playing day, the same approach as outlined for Under 13s and Under 15s will apply.

After all the above factors have been considered, the Junior Coordinator reserves the right to make selections as they see fit, in order to ensure adequate team numbers in all teams and to maximize player retention.

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