

VERMONT JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

COACHING AND TEAM SELECTION POLICY



Purpose

Vermont Junior Football (VJFC) is committed to fairness, transparency and equity. The VJFC adopts an approach which recognises that teams vary in size, skill and ability but that all players are entitled to be treated fairly and that teams are managed to be competitive irrespective of their grading.

The VJFC is committed to the development of all of its players and has adopted a pathway approach encouraging children to participate in Auskick, then developing them through their junior years (Under 8s – 18s) with the hope that they will then go on to play senior football. VJFC seeks to appoint the best available Coaches to lead and develop its teams. The underlying aim is to have fun and develop players to the best of their ability.

Age Groups U8s - U10s

The majority of players in this age group are still in the early stage of learning what many would consider to be the basic skills. In these age groups the emphasis is placed on participation and enjoyment. Additional goals are the acquisition of football skills and the nurturing of physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

The VJFC believes strongly in the equality of opportunities given to players in this age group. Players should be provided equal game time, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. On game day every player participating must play a minimum of half the game. Similarly players should be provided with the opportunity to play in all positions, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. We believe this to be the best way to provide young footballers with all round development regardless of their level of ability.

U8s - U10s Team selection

Where there is more than one team, team selection will be determined after registration day, with preference that where possible teams will be based on school groupings. If there are a significant number of players from one school, the VJFC may divide the players into other teams so as to avoid the dominance of players from one school over another.

The teams should have an equal number of players to ensure that all players in the age group have access to equal playing opportunities.

Age Groups U11s - U12s

Some players in this age group have developed good skills and are able to perform at a faster pace, which places them at a more competitive level in a match situation. While at the same time some players are still in the early stages of understanding the game and developing their skills. In many ways this is a transitional period as the players progress into a more competitive environment.

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In these age groups the emphasis is placed on participation and enjoyment. Additional focus is placed on skill development and team work supplemented through set plays and positioning. The VJFC believes strongly in providing equal opportunities to players in this age group. Players should be provided equal game time, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. On game day (including Finals) every player participating must play a minimum of half the game. While some players at this age become naturally suited to set positions, we encourage players to try various positions. We believe this to be the best way to provide young footballers with all round development regardless of their level of ability.

Age Groups U13s - U15s

Many players in this age group have developed good skills with some even playing representative football while others are still developing. This can be a difficult time as players mature at different rate with individual players growing rapidly leading to significant differences in size, ability, confidence and maturity. In these age groups there is still an emphasis on participation and enjoyment but with an increasing focus on development as the players mature. The VJFC believes strongly in providing equal opportunities to players in this age group. Players should be provided equal game time, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. On game day (including Finals) every player participating must play a minimum of half the game. Players are still encouraged to try various positions while recognizing that this is a time when players can begin to specialize as they develop and mature.

Age Group U16s - U17s

By this stage we expect that most players will have developed good skills and a sound understanding of the game. While the Coach has overall responsibility for the development and wellbeing of the team we expect players to become more accountable and take greater responsibilities for their training and performance.

This is a watershed period when some players have developed very good skills and have been selected by Eastern Rangers/Oakleigh Chargers. Others are aspiring to play senior football at Vermont while others are less driven to play senior football. Hence it can be a difficult period with boys having various aspirations.

Our aim is to help the boys develop to the best of their abilities and while the VJFC will seek to achieve this, it will very much depend on the desires of the players and their individual commitments to not only training but their own development.

U11s - U18s Team Selection

Where there are enough players to form more than one team in the one age group, the players will be graded based on their skills, size, confidence and football maturity. The players will then be split into teams having regard to the suitability of the players to participate in the relevant divisions and

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the club's desire to field more than one competitive team. On this basis it is expected that the majority of the more competent players but not necessarily all the better players will be in the higher graded team.

It is expected that the teams will train together and that the Coaches will cooperate during the selection process and in the sharing of players throughout the season should a team be short of players.

Ideally, the teams should have an equal number of players to ensure that all players in the age group have access to equal playing opportunities.

In order to determine the formation of multiple teams, the Coaches should:

- observe all players during the pre-season 'try-out' period
- take into account player assessments from the previous year's Coaches
- liaise with the previous year's Coaches (if necessary)
- liaise with the VJFC Football Operations Manager
- agree the proposed composition of the teams
- forward the team lists to the Committee for approval

The Coaches should not disclose the composition of the recommended teams to any player or parent until the teams have been approved by the Committee. The VJFC Football Operations Manager shall review the teams on behalf of the committee.

Once the teams have been established, the VJFC would prefer that the majority of the teams stay together for the current season. However, it is important that players play in the most appropriate division having regard to their abilities and the competitiveness of our teams. In recognition of this and the fact that players develop at different rates (both physically and ability wise) all players will be assessed during the pre-season period to determine the most appropriate team that they should play in.

Training

Age Group U8s to U12s will train one night a week, while Age Groups U13s to U18s will train two nights a week, with the possibility of U17.5s sessions being extended or a third training night provided for those players receiving specialist coaching from our Under 17.5s Development Coach. Players are encouraged to attend training and to participate in a cooperative manner. Non-attendance at training provided the Coach or Team Manager has been notified shall not affect a player's selection or game time. However, in the older age groups a player who is not able to regularly attend training may be selected in the Gold team where the Coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice their skill development and the ability to effectively compete at a higher level.

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At U17.5s Age Group, non-attendance at training may affect a player's selection or game time where the Coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice the player's skill development and the ability to effectively compete on game day.

Coaches will advise the location, timing and duration of training.

The VJFC does not provide first aid officers at training. Training may also be cancelled due to excessive heat, inclement weather or poor ground conditions. Accordingly, parents are expected to remain at training. They are also encouraged to assist the Coaches with training.

All players must wear mouthguards at training and for those in U8 - U12's helmets at training are compulsory.

Non Competitive Teams

Teams in the non competitive age groups will be named after icons of the Vermont Football Club. Each year the team names will be dependent upon the number of teams and names used in previous years. The team names are:

U8's

Shambrook Eagles
Ross Eagles
Coghlan Eagles
Gislingham Eagles

U9's

Nummy Eagles
White Eagles
McCarthy Eagles

U10's

Bidstrup Eagles
Cullen Eagles
Bain Eagles

Graded Teams

The higher graded team shall be referred to as the Purple team, with the second graded team known as the Gold team and a third team Eagles team. The teams will operate as separate teams (i.e. the Gold team shall not be considered a 'reserve' team). Notwithstanding this, it is expected that the teams will train together and that the Coaches will cooperate during the selection process and in the sharing of players throughout the season should a team be short of players.

Team Finalisation

It is anticipated that the teams will be finalised at least four weeks prior to the first game.

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Team Size

Total number of players per team shall not exceed 24. All players who are fit to play are entitled to play. No players are to be rostered off.

In extreme circumstances the Executive Committee have the ability to increase team size to 26. This is at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee. In this situation, EFNL by-laws have a limit of 24 players, so 2 players need to be rostered off every game.

Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances each player should be afforded the opportunity to play the same number of games as other players throughout the home and away season.

Any player rostered off should be considered an 'emergency' and should attend the game to replace a player who may not be available or to assist the team (e.g. water carrier etc).

All players should be given an equal opportunity to play finals. The same players should only be rostered off for one final. Team selection is at the discretion of the coaching staff with a fair and reasonable selection process adopted (i.e. the Committee expects that all players should be given the opportunity to play in finals). The policy of game time is the same as during the home and away season with every player participating expected to play a minimum of half a game.

Should the league at its discretion allow more players to participate in a final, a fair and reasonable approach to game time should be adhered to.

Playing up

There may be occasions where a team has insufficient players for a game.

Coaches may seek players from other teams.

Where there are two teams in the same age group, Coaches should seek players from the other team in their age group in the first instance.

Where additional players cannot be sourced from the same age group, Coaches should seek players from the age group below, starting with the team in the highest division.

Coaches should consult with the Coach or Team Manager from the players normal team to satisfy themselves that any child nominated to play up is capable of playing in the higher competition.

The EFNL poses severe limits on players playing up (e.g. number of games allowed, final's qualifications etc). Coaches should consult with the Football Manager before seeking to play a player up.

The Coach has total discretion about the amount of game time a substitute player may play if they have already played a game that day.

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Try-out period

The VJFC will determine a try-out period. Prior to the try-outs, the Coaches shall develop player assessment guidelines to assist them with the team selection process. The Guidelines must be approved by the Executive committee and shall be made available to parents and players prior to the commencement of the try-outs.

Players must attend a majority of the try-outs to be considered for the higher graded team. However, a player may be exempt from this requirement in exceptional circumstances and subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

Any player who does not participate in the try-outs will automatically be placed in the second team and will be assessed in their first two games to determine which team they should play in for the remainder of the season.

Support staff

The VJFC greatly appreciates the time and effort of our many volunteers, including the Coaches and their support staff (i.e. Assistant Coaches, Team Managers, Runners and Trainers). Where a single side exists in an age group, the support staff should be confirmed as soon as possible and definitely before pre-season training commences.

Where multiple teams exist, it is important that Coaches take an active role in establishing support staff appointments having regard to the likely and most suitable team for their players. Supporting staff roles should not be finalised until the teams are selected as players should not be selected based on the roles their parents may undertake in the VJFC, or indicated they will undertake within a specific team, rather they should be selected based on the team most suitable for their skills and ability.

Match day support roles will be rostered or appointed by the Team Manager for each week's match, all families are required to perform any tasks as requested by the Team manager. Team Managers should roster all families to assist in match day duties throughout the season.

Team Captain

In Age Groups U8s - U10, the Coach shall appoint a Captain or Co-captain each week. A player shall not be reappointed until all players have had the chance of being a Captain.

In Age Groups U11s - U18s, ideally a Captain should be appointed for the season. Alternatively, the team may elect to appoint a leadership group. Where a captain is appointed, the team may also appoint a Vice Captain or Vice Captains. The Coach may appoint the Captain or invite the players to vote for whom they believe should be the Captain. The Coach should ensure that the Captain demonstrates maturity, leads by example, has the respect of the players and, most importantly, complies with the VJFC's Codes of Conduct.

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Grievances

Team selection is not an exact science and requires consideration of a range of factors.

Coaches will be provided with selection guidelines to ensure that players are placed in the most appropriate teams having regard to their skill level. The coaches will provide feedback on areas of improvement to all players within two weeks of the announcement of the teams.

Any person who feels aggrieved should first raise the matter with the relevant Coaches, Team Managers and Coaches Coordinator. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the matter may be referred to the VJFC Football Operations Manager prior to Round 3 (Note EFNL rules make it difficult to move players after Round 3) for consideration.

Player Conduct

The Coach will not tolerate any of the following from his players:

- Abuse or disrespect towards an umpire
- Bad sportsmanship towards the opposition before, during or after games
- Bumping or wrestling opposition players more than 40 meters from the ball
- Racial vilification, abusive language or bullying aimed at team mates, opposition players or spectators
- Violent behaviour towards team mates or opposition players (not within the spirit of the game)

Where the Coach views or is made aware of unacceptable player behaviour, the Coach must address the issue immediately with an appropriate response. In the case of serious breaches of player conduct the Coach must instigate the appropriate action in accordance with the policies of the Club.

Coaching appointments

All Coaching appointments are made by the VJFC Football Operations Manager.

At the end of the season, the VJFC will declare all coaching positions vacant and invite existing and new Coaches to apply for coaching positions in the following year. Coaching applications will be in writing and Coaches may be required to attend a club interview. Successful applicants will be advised by the VJFC.

Coaches must be able to demonstrate that they have the right attributes to coach relevant to the applicable age group.

The Coach is the senior official of the age group to which they are appointed. Where there is more than one Coach appointed for the same age group they have equal jurisdiction over the age group and need to work together.

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A coach shall be appointed for one year. They may be appointed to coach the same team for a second year, any additional seasons will be sanctioned at the VJFC discretion.

The Coach must attend all Coaching meetings when called by Football Operations Manager.

Coaching attributes

Our Coaches are expected to:

- Be qualified and in doing so:
 - must have a Level 1 qualification or in receipt of a Level 1 qualification by May 31 in the year that they are coaching (the VJFC will pay the fees for attending a Level 1 course)
 - must have a valid working with children check prior to commence pre-season training and for the duration of the season
 - must attend VJFC coaches' nights and recommended professional development opportunities
- Act responsibly and in doing so:
 - adhere at all times to the VJFC's Code of Conduct
 - adhere at all times to the VJFC's Policies
 - not speak to the media without the consent of President or Vice President
 - not enter into any commercial arrangements or make purchases without the consent of the President, Vice President or Treasurer
 - not bring the club or VJFC brand into disrepute
- Display a sense of professionalism and in doing so:
 - wear appropriate attire, including a VJFC polo/hoodie/jacket to all games
 - promote the 'Vermont' brand of football
 - make decisions which are in the best interests of our players and the VJFC
 - display fairness and respect all players.
- Demonstrate commitment to their team and the VJFC and in doing so:
 - arrive promptly and well prepared for training and games
 - teach and educate players with the aim of preparing them for the next age level of football
 - attend family nights and other key events (incl. jumper presentation, presentation night and BTCR nights)
- Show leadership and in doing so:
 - display sincerity, integrity and honesty
 - base actions on reason and not emotions
 - set goals and share a vision with the team.
 - display confidence and inspire players
 - be fair to all players and responsive to their sensitivities
 - seek out and listen to the opinions of others to help them succeed

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- Build an appropriate support network and in doing so enlist a Team Manager, Assistant Coach and Runner who are responsible, and who are prepared to act in accordance with the Policies and values of the VJFC.