



# Ocean Grove Cobras Junior Football Club (OGCJFC)

## Team Allocation Policy

Version 1.0

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### 1. Purpose

This policy provides a clear, fair and transparent framework for allocating players to teams within the Ocean Grove Cobras Junior Football Club (OGCJFC).

The OGCJFC is a participation focused junior club, prioritising skill development, confidence building and long-term retention for all players over short-term competitive success. Team formation aims to support inclusive participation and a positive playing experience across all teams.

The club is committed to ensuring a team allocation process that:

- Prioritises child safety and wellbeing
- Supports player development, confidence and enjoyment
- Is conducted with integrity and consistency

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All registered junior players
- Parents and guardians
- Coaches and team managers
- Football Directors/Age Coordinators
- Committee members involved in allocation decisions

This policy applies where more than one team exists within an age group.

Team allocation decisions are made in accordance with this policy each season.

### **3. Allocation Authority**

Our Football Directors are responsible for overseeing team allocation. In the Football Directors' absence, a committee member may be nominated by the Executive Committee to assume this role. The team allocation process will be supported by Age Group Coordinators. Relevant coaches provide input at the end of each season - however, they do not determine team placement.

Parents and players should direct any queries regarding team placement through the Club's formal communication process rather than approaching coaches or other volunteers directly.

### **4. Allocation Process and Considerations**

OGCJFC is a thriving junior football club with consistently high participation. As a result, the Club fields multiple teams across most age groups. In accordance with AFL Barwon advice, teams from the same club within an age group are required to be placed across multiple 'groupings'. This approach prevents any single club from comprising a substantial proportion of one grouping, providing players with the opportunity to compete against a broader range of clubs. This underpins the Club's team allocation process. Teams within a given age group are not intended to be of equal skill. The Club's aim is that each team is competitive within its assigned grouping.

#### **Registration and numbers review**

Player registrations are reviewed to confirm team numbers, age groups and any noted wellbeing or support considerations. Registration numbers may need to be 'capped', as determined by the Committee.

#### **Player information gathering**

Information may include feedback from previous seasons, development needs, confidence levels, friendship considerations for new players and wellbeing information.

#### **Team formation**

Draft teams are formed with consideration of a range of factors to support balanced, safe and inclusive teams, including:

- Player wellbeing and safety
- Balanced numbers across teams
- Friendships and year level, where appropriate
- Development needs
- Inclusion of new or first-time players
- Where possible, teams should include a balanced representation from different schools, acknowledging the differing participation levels from each school.

The Football Directors will consult with Age Coordinators and the Child Safety Officer to support balanced and safe team formation.

#### **Finalisation and Communication**

Following consultation, the Football Directors finalise team allocations. All draft teams will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the Club's guiding principles prior to finalisation and communication to families.

## **5. Parent and Player Requests**

To encourage involvement and support confidence, players new to OGCJFC may nominate five friends during registration. The Club will endeavour to place these players with at least one nominated friend.

Other player placement requests may be considered based on specific wellbeing, medical or additional needs. These requests must be submitted in writing to the Football Director(s) prior to team finalisation and will be considered confidentially.

The club will not consider requests based on:

- Preference for placement in a particular team
- Preference for a specific coach
- Requests that would create team imbalance

All requests will be considered in line with this policy; however, specific outcomes cannot be guaranteed.

Parents and players are asked not to approach coaches regarding team placement requests. All communication should occur through the Club's formal process.

### **Mid-Season Changes**

Team changes during the season will only occur where necessary for:

- Player safety or wellbeing
- Exceptional circumstances

Any change must be approved by the Football Director(s) in consultation with relevant Club representatives including the CSO.

## **6. Underage players (playing up)**

In line with AFL Barwon and AFL National Age Dispensation guidelines, players will be allocated to their designated age group based on date of birth.

Participation in a higher age group will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear wellbeing or social benefit to the player.

### **This may be considered where:**

- Date of birth is close to age cut off and the player attends the same school year level as the higher age group
- Other exceptional circumstances identified by the Club

All decisions will prioritise player safety and wellbeing.

**This will not be approved for:**

- Requests to seek stronger competition
- Requests based on player ability or performance alone

Requests for additional challenge should occur through fill-in rather than permanent placement outside a player's age group.

## **7. Fill-in players**

There may be occasions where a team has insufficient players available due to illness, injury or absence. The use of fill-in players must prioritise fairness, player wellbeing and balanced participation across the club.

### **Fill-in Principles**

- Fill-in players must play their own scheduled match first before playing for another team
- A player cannot fill-in for another team in their own age-group
- Fill in players must come from the age group directly below (Only top-age U9 players should fill-in for an U10 team, and only top-age U12 players should fill-in for U14)
- Fill-in players must not be used to strengthen a team for competitive advantage
- Requests for fill-in players must be coordinated by the Age Group Coordinator to ensure alignment with this policy and equitable distribution of opportunities
- Arrangements must not be made between coaches and parents

## **8. Behaviour and Expectations**

### **Parents and guardians are expected to:**

- Respect allocation decisions
- Direct team placement queries through the appropriate Club channels rather than individual coaches or volunteers
- Support the Club's guiding principles

### **Coaches must:**

- Support all players equally
- Maintain confidentiality regarding team formation discussions
- Uphold principles outlined in this policy

## **9. Additional Opportunities**

Additional opportunities beyond the usual season's activities and matches may arise. For example, tickets to events or AFL matches, participation in showcase games, opportunity to represent the Club for other purposes etc.

Such opportunities are intended to recognise and reward families who contribute to the Club through roles including:

- Committee members
- Coaches
- Team managers
- Other volunteers

Decisions regarding the allocation of these opportunities will be made by member/s of the Executive Committee. On occasion, these opportunities may be advertised via Club communication channels and allocated on a first-in basis.

Repeated allocation of additional opportunities to the same family should be avoided. The Club acknowledges and greatly appreciates the large number of volunteers who contribute to the effective operation of the Club and recognises that such additional opportunities are limited.

## **10. Dispute Resolution**

Concerns regarding team allocation or other must be submitted in writing to the Football Director/s within 7 days of team announcement.

The Club will review and respond in a timely and considered manner in accordance with the Club's Complaints Handling Policy.

The outcome of this process will be considered final.

### **Related Documents**

Club Constitution

Child Safety & Wellbeing Framework

Code of Conduct

Feedback, Concerns & Complaints Policy