



FDJFC Grading Policy

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

- Being the best club for each and every player who wears the red, white and black;
- 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 Dolphins;
- Giving our players and parents an opportunity to make new friends - some that may last a lifetime.

Why do the FDJFC grade players?

FDJFC's aim is to get children playing football and enjoying it so much that they remain playing football well into early adulthood and beyond. To achieve this, it is vital to create an environment that enables safe playing, enjoyment and skill development. To facilitate this, grading teams is required to achieve the following:

- Players develop best by playing in a team and grade that best suits their skills, fitness and strength;
- Teams and players will be able to focus more on fundamental based training at their various levels;
- On field responsibilities and decision making are more likely to be spread across the playing group;
- Players are more likely to have a higher enjoyment level playing in a team suited to their skill and development level.

This policy has been included in our policy in response to the AFLSE Junior Competition Rules amendment to rule 7.1. applying from season 2023 onwards, which states:

“U13 to U18 age groups, clubs are able to move players from one team to another without restriction. Ensuring that players are allocated to a team that best suits their skills and ability and that they are involved in the decision- making process.

Before moving any players or submitting any applications (U8 to U14 age groups), Clubs must ensure that the player and the parents are engaged in the decision - making process.

For the U15 to U18 age groups and to ensure that the League can offer competitive competitions, clubs are able to move players from one team to another without restriction to ensure that players are allocated to a team that best suits their skills and ability and that they are involved in the decision - making process.

Clubs are also required to advise the League via email of any player movements before they are made.”



Parents / Guardians

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.

The FDJFC 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 football season, the FDJFC 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 includes:

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

Grading Principles

U8 to U12 Players

The FDJFC committee philosophy is for children in these age groups to have fun, learn fundamental football skills, learn the value of teamwork and play with both their friends and other children in the area, with the aim that teams formed at U8 would typically stay together until U12.

U13 to U17 Players

For U13 to 17 boys age groups, the club will organise teams and players to the best of its ability to create an environment in which all players are safe, can be competitive and continue to develop their football skills at a level that is appropriate to the individual.

Where there is a single side in any age group, selection of the side is the responsibility of the appointed coach.

Please note: team sheets allow up to 26 players in a team, if there are more than 26 players in a team, it will be subject to a roster throughout the season.

The FDJFL and AFLSE will grade the teams into divisions based on the previous season's performance and the first 4 rounds of the new season, with the club and coaching staff providing additional guidance to ensure that teams will be as competitive as possible.

Where multiple teams are formed in the same age group, there will be even numbers selected for these teams and team selection will be based upon the FDJFC grading process.



Girls and Emerging Teams

This Grading Policy is initially applicable exclusively to boys' teams.

The FDJFC acknowledges the growing interest and participation in our girls and emerging teams. As such, the club reserves the right to extend the grading policy to include these teams when the following conditions are met:

- **Team Sizes:** Adequate team sizes that facilitate meaningful competition and assessment;
- **Skills Development:** Evidence of a sufficient range of skill levels within the teams that necessitates differentiated team placements to best support player development;
- **Pathway Programs:** Maturation of pathway programs that support advanced skill acquisition and competitive play, justifying a formal grading process.

The decision to implement grading for girls and emerging teams will be taken by the club's management in consultation with coaches and stakeholders. This decision will be based on a thorough review of the aforementioned criteria and aimed at ensuring all members have the best opportunity to develop and compete effectively.

Any decision to extend the grading policy will be communicated to all members in a timely manner through the club's official communication channels. The club is committed to transparency and will provide detailed explanations of the reasons and benefits behind such a move to ensure clear understanding and alignment with club values and objectives.

Grading Philosophy

FDJFC's philosophy to grading where there are multiple teams in the same age group, is that, the club will engage with appropriately skilled individuals and in consultation with coaches, will be empowered to select teams based on their collective judgement and will consider the following criteria:

- Assessments of the players abilities with regard to the division the team is playing in;
- Prior years overall performance;
- Potential of the player;
- Physical development;
- Player attitude & commitment;
- Player adherence to code of conduct and team rules;
- Player attendance at training;
- Player fitness and athleticism;
- Player versatility and their ability to play in a number of positions;
- The need for team balance.



Grading Process

The grading process will include an information session, a selection panel, training sessions, and match practice, team selections and communication to players and parents/guardians.

This will include:

Information Session

An information session for players and parents/guardians will be conducted at the start of each season to communicate both the FDJFC grading policy and process.

Player Survey

All players are asked to submit their preferences via a club survey during pre-season.

Selection Panel

A selection panel will be formed for each age group being graded. The panel will consist of team coaches and suitably qualified independent persons. An individual can be on more than one selection panel and the selection process will be overseen by the FDJFC committee.

Training Sessions

During pre-season and prior to team selections, training sessions will be run by age group. The selection panel will observe and assess based on the grading philosophy described above.

Match Practice

Match practice will be used to assess and observe players in a match environment. The coaching staff have the right to position players in a variety of roles to determine the best options for both the individual and the team. Other criteria may also be used as required.

Team Selections

Team selections will be made after consideration of the players performance at the training session *and* match practice. The selection panel may also use other information that will assist selection.

Communication to Players and Parents/Guardians

The teams will be announced and shared across each relevant age group. Any queries with regards to individual selections are to be raised in writing to the FDJFC committee.



Application of this policy

The grading process implemented by the club is a detailed process and one that the club believes will place the children in the most appropriate team.

This policy applies equally across all individuals involved in the FDJFC, including but not limited to administrators, coaches, officials, players, parents/guardians and spectators.

New players arriving from other clubs will be subject to this policy. When a player arrives after the grading period they will be allocated to a team based on even distribution of numbers, and prioritising existing players preferences.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and the club will seek views, comments and suggestions from players, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers involved with the FDJFC.

For more information please contact our President on president@fdjfc.com.au or VP Admin on vpadmin@fdjfc.com.au.

This Policy was passed by the Club's Committee on and will take effect from **1st June 2024**.
Next policy review date is: **1st June 2025**.

Version number:	01
Approved By:	Committee
Date:	01.06.2024
Effective date:	01.06.2024
Policy Owner:	President