



## Onslow Junior Football Club

# POLICY

### P1 – Squad Sizes

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#### Section A – Policy objectives

- A.1. To provide for the optimum number of players in a squad.
- A.2. To maximise playing time for squad players, while maintaining a sufficient squad size to increase the chances the squad will be viable for the majority of the season. (Note: viability assumes players who are fit and healthy commit to turning up for matches. It also assumes that teams within grades will lend players to teams that are short.)
- A.3. To minimise the number of players standing on sidelines during matches.
- A.4. To help ensure that participation, development, and enjoyment are not compromised by the desire to win matches.

#### Section B – Principles

- B.1. Players should be given the maximum amount of playing time, subject to the Club's substitution policy.
- B.2. Teams within the same grade should help each other out by lending players to teams that are short, provided the players on loan are also able to play for their own team.
- B.3. Players registered and paid up by the registration deadline should be guaranteed a place in a team.

#### Section C – POLICY STATEMENT

- C.1. All squad sizes must be the total of the playing number plus two substitutes (n+2). The permitted exceptions to this rule are covered by C.3 and C.4 below. Accordingly for grades that play 5-aside, the squad size must be 7; for grades that play 7-aside, the squad size must be 9; and so on.
- C.2. When teams are first constituted at the beginning of a new season, Grade Coordinators may make up a small number of teams of "n+1" in anticipation that late registrants may increase the squad sizes to n+2.
- C.3. Where there are long-term player absences known in advance (e.g. for reasons such as injury, illness, or overseas travel), then a Grade Coordinator may constitute a squad of n+3 on the condition that the chances of having all n+3 players available for any one match are rare. Such an arrangement must be agreed by the Grade Coordinator and Club Captain. If agreement cannot be reached by all three of these persons, then the Grade Coordinator must constitute a squad of n+2. (Squads of n+3 should be rare, avoided in almost all circumstances, and may be subject to review at the end of the season by the Committee or President.)

- C.4. Grade Coordinators may appoint squads of n+3 only if this is necessary to accommodate an overhang<sup>1</sup> of player numbers and only when all other options have been exhausted. Such an arrangement must be agreed by the Grade Coordinator and Club Captain for regular teams and by the Grade Coordinator, Club Captain, and team coach for streamed teams.
- C.5. Players not registered or not paid up by the registration deadline are not guaranteed a place in a squad. Late registrants and late payers may be placed in squads for the purpose of building them up to the required number.

## Section D – Explanatory comments

- D.1. *Increasing the number of teams in a grade by allowing a small number of n+1 squads early on enables the Club to accommodate latecomers (most grades can expect players to register late) or deal with overhangs in adjacent grades. It avoids the oversubscribing of squad numbers from the outset.*
- D.2. *The registration deadline is important because it determines those players whom the Club is obliged to place in a team. Late registrations are useful because they allow the Club the flexibility to build squads up to the required number while also providing the Club the right to turn players away when the squad sizes are full.*
- D.3. *For squads from Nursery Grade to Grade 12, the chance of having 3 players as substitutes on the sideline at any one time should be avoided. It would reduce the playing time of all players to unacceptable levels and would create a ratio of substitutes-to-active-players that is much too great in 5-to-9-aside environments. Grade 7 to Grade 12 teams are able to compensate for player shortages by borrowing from other teams; there are usually a sufficient number of teams in these grades playing at different times during the mornings to allow for players to fill in for other teams. Facilitating player loans is also a good means of developing a grade culture. Grade Coordinators should also look for opportunities for goalkeepers to fill in for other teams as outfield players; many goalkeepers are more than keen to fill in for other teams as outfield players because of the enjoyment factor.*
- D.4. *Grades 13 and 14 tend to experience circumstances that affect squad sizes more than the young grades. The Grade 13 and 14 environments often also mean an n+3 environment may be more tolerable or, at least, less avoidable:*
- *Player drop off, and the move to 11-aside football, means that the Club is likely to be able to field only a few teams each in Grades 13 and 14.*
  - *The low player numbers and larger squad sizes increases the likelihood of an overhang of player numbers.*
  - *With the small number of teams (and sometimes two streamed teams to one regular team), there is much less scope than in other grades of teams covering each other for player shortages.*
  - *Because there is no club grade above Grade 14, there is no scope for placing boys up a grade as a last resort.*
  - *Player shortages are likely to be higher for Grade 13 and 14 teams due to medium-term injuries associated with physical growth. Players in these age groups appear to suffer injury more frequently than the younger age groups.*
  - *Although n+3 squads are not favoured in principle, 3 substitutes are more tolerably accommodated in an 11-aside team: Players are not substituted as frequently as they would need to be in Grade 12 and below, the substitution of players into a 11-aside team is less disruptive on the team than substituting 3 players into teams of 9-aside or less, and Grade 13 and 14 players play matches of longer duration.*

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<sup>1</sup> An overhang occurs when the number of players registered by the registration deadline in any one grade exceeds a multiple of n+2 for that grade and also falls too far short of the next multiple of n+2 to enable the feasible creation of smaller squads. For example, for Grade 12 (9-aside), an overhang would occur if 70 players were registered by the deadline. The Grade Coordinator would form 6 teams (11x6=66), with an overhang of 4 players. The ability to form a 7<sup>th</sup> team would depend on knowledge about the number of players not registered by the deadline and/or overhangs in adjacent grades that could be used to smooth squad sizes.

## **Section E – Other requirements**

- E.1. In giving effect to the policy on squad sizes, consideration must also be given to the Club's policy on the allocation of players to regular teams and the Club's policy on the placement of players within grades.

## **Section F – Guidelines**

- F.1. Grade Coordinators must determine the names and numbers of players in their grade who have registered by the registration deadline.
- F.2. Grade Coordinators should maintain a waitlist with the names and numbers of all players applying for registration for their grade after the registration deadline. This list should be able to identify the order in which players applied for registration, as their opportunity to be placed in a team is prioritised on a first-come-first-served basis.
- F.3. At the registration deadline, Grade Coordinators should determine the number of players in relation to the n+2 multiples for their grade. Working from the number of players who registered by the deadline, they should determine how many full squads they could constitute. They should then identify the next highest n+2 multiple to determine how many waitlisted players are needed to make up an additional squad, and repeat the exercise if the number of waitlisted players is large.
- F.4. Grade Coordinators should keep a constant watch on the waitlist and also keep in constant contact with the Grade Coordinators in the grades immediately either side of them, so that they are aware of shortage/overhang issues in adjacent grades. Girls may play in their own age group or one grade down from that, and this may provide some flexibility for dealing with shortages/overhangs if it is in girl's interest to do so.
- F.5. Grade Coordinators should also be aware of whether a player has incorrectly registered for their grade and notify the Registration Secretary and Grade Coordinator of the correct grade.
- F.6. The Club has a strict policy on the placement of players in grades; this is in addition to the Capital Football regulations on player placement. However, as a last resort, the Club may allow a boy to temporarily play up a grade only if (a) it makes the difference between that player being given a place in an Onslow team or not; (b) it is necessary to fulfil the n+2 objective of the grade above the boy's age grade; (c) there are no health, safety, or other concerns about playing the boy up one grade; and (d) it is acceptable to the boy, the boy's parents/caregivers, and both Grade Coordinators concerned. (These conditions will be stipulated in the Club's policy on the placement of players in grades.)
- F.7. If a late registrant cannot be placed in an Onslow team in accordance with Club policy, it is the Club's practice to try to find temporary placement for oversubscribed players with North Wellington or Waterside Karori, and the Club Captain should assist Grade Coordinators in making enquiries of neighbouring clubs should the non-placed late registrant be interested in that option.