

WODONGA HEART FOOTBALL CLUB JUNIOR TEAM SELECTION PROCESS & POLICY

Wodonga Heart FC aims to provide an environment that nurtures and develops players from the youngest participants in the Under 12s's through to those representing the club at Under 17 level at a level which is successful for the player, the team and our club.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to those involved in the team selection process for each Wodonga Heart FC Junior Football team.

“Team selection” means the original make-up of all male and female junior teams in their respective age groups. It does refer to not weekly selections or “line ups”.

This policy does not relate to the selection of those participating in senior soccer or Mini Roos with our club.

The policy provides the framework that will guide those participating in the selection process. Participants include coaches, players, parents and the committee.

This inclusion shall ensure that the objectives of each age group are met and that each player is given the appropriate opportunity to actively participate and enjoy their football with our club whilst also being clear that our club seeks to be viable and successful in the future.

Team Selection Objectives

The objectives of the team selection process are:

- To provide players every possible opportunity to reach their maximum potential.
- To ensure that the selection policy applies equally to all players.
- To recognise that junior football is increasingly competitive as players become older.
- To aim for continuous improvement of all players, teams and our club
- To maintain open lines of communication and co-operation between coaches, players, parents and committee.
- To recognise that for our club to be successful, parents or guardians of players are required to contribute to the functioning of our club.
- To achieve success whilst conducting a manner that instils pride in our club and earns the respect of opponents and the community in general.
- To have in place a suitable process to address issues which may arise from the team selection.

Team Selection Primary Focus

It is generally accepted that as a player's age increases, so too does the competitive nature of the players and the competition.

On-field success becomes more significant as it provides a source of player pride, greater enjoyment, and satisfaction and builds respect for teammates and the club.

It is recognised however, that young players mature and develop physically and mentally at different rates and times.

In recognising this transitional process, the club aims to develop selection policies which recognises the focus of involvement moves from even participation in the club's mini roos

program to the extremely competitive skills and performance-based culture in the senior teams age groups.

Selection panel

The selection panel shall include at least three members.

- One member of the selection panel shall be the coach of that team.
- One member of the selection panel shall be the club's technical director or a delegate appointed by the technical director.
- Another member of the selection panel shall be chosen by club's coaching team.

Members of the selection panel shall observe players during no less than two trial sessions

Upon conclusion of the trial sessions selection meetings shall be held. During these meetings, discussions are to occur to decide on player placements, taking account of the various criteria defined below.

Initial Team Structure – All Age Groups

Many variables exist that make it inappropriate for the club to set 'strict' guidelines for individual age groups. These include player siblings, family, friendship groups, schools and other considerations. Whilst recognising these are important factors, personal requests and preferences, although taken into account, may not always be accommodated.

All players, irrespective of whether or not they have played for the WH FC previously, will be selected based on a combination of:

- Player's football skills, game awareness and ability.
- Previous attitude, character, commitment and behaviour (adherence to Codes of Conduct) at WH FC.
- Attitude, commitment and behaviour at WH FC during the selection period.
- Sufficient parent contributors for all teams (to be successful our club requires volunteers)

Junior Football (U/12s – Under 16s –U/ 12 Girls- U/16/U17 Girls)

These age groups play in a competitive competition.

The selection of players in each team will be based on merit. In considering "merit" the following will be taken into consideration:

- A Player's football skills, game awareness and ability
- A Player's willingness to learn
- A Player's fitness and physical agility
- A Player's age and physical development
- A Player's attitude, character, commitment and behaviour
- Team "dynamics". Some stronger players may be selected to spend a year with a developing team to provide that stronger player with leadership opportunities.
- Team needs such as the need for a team to have sufficient number of defenders and attackers.

It is important to remember that the initial standard grading process objective is to ensure that all teams will be competitive in their respective divisions.

References to school or friend relationships are not relevant to the selection process.

Selection size

WH FC Coaches will determine their final selection size based on numbers displayed in table below.

Age Group	Game Format	Selection size
U12 (Boys and Girls)	9v9	App. 12
U13 (Girls)	9v9	App. 12
U13 - U16 (Boys)	11v11	Maximum 16
U 15 (Girls)	11v11	Maximum 16

New Players

New players are always welcome at our club. Allocation to a particular team will depend on and the needs of that team player numbers, the player's ability or development which in turn may affect other team structures, balance, competitiveness or dynamics.

Whilst new players are always welcome at WH, in the event two players are equal in ability, an existing player of the club that has positively contributed to the team and the club shall be selected over a newer player.

Movement Within Age Groups

Occasions will arise when players shall play higher than their true age group. This is a decision which is based on player development in mind and shall occur in consultation with the player and the player's parent.

Parental Requests

Should a parent request their child play up a level from their true age group, they will be required to complete the request form provided by the club clearly stating a valid reason why this should occur. The club's Junior Coordinator in conjunction with the parent and incumbent team coach (true level) will discuss and confirm the approval of the move up. Only after approval from the Junior Coordinator will the player be able to take the field at the requested level. Should the move up not be approved, valid reason will be given to the parent.

Assisting with team numbers

If numbers are short at any age group, fill-in players must be drawn from the immediate lower grade only (if under 14s are short, players from the under 13 group will be sought). In the interests of safety, players should be ideally of fair physical size and ability. Permission from the incumbent coach must firstly be obtained and the parent will give permission. The Junior Coordinator is then to be notified. Only after these requirements are met will the player be allowed to take the field.

Player Development

As part of our coaching program the club will at times ask some players to play up a level to enhance their development as footballers. Permission from the incumbent coach must firstly be

obtained and the parent will need to give permission (this may require AWFA approval). They are to be adhered to at all times.

Team Selection Notifications

Once the selection of players in teams has been determined, the players will be notified of their team details for the coming season by email.

Coaches are to adhere to this requirement.

UNSUCCESSFUL players

The WH Coaching team shall endeavour to finalise squads as soon as possible before the season commencements to give unsuccessful players every opportunity to register at another Club. These players will be notified by the coach by email.

Selection Enquiries

All enquiries relating to team selections must be submitted in writing to WH, which will be answered at the earliest possible time after investigation. The investigation will include talking to the individuals involved in the selection process.

Grounds of appeal

The sole grounds for any appeal are that this policy was not properly followed and/or implemented. Grounds of appeal include that “not sufficient notice was provided”

Appeals

Appeals will be heard by WH, which will consist of a panel of three individuals consisting of the Junior Coaching Co-ordinator, a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) and a member of the WH Executive Committee. All decisions made by the panel will be by a majority vote and will be final.

All notices of appeals are to be made in writing to WH within 48 hours of final team announcements. All appeals will be responded to at the earliest possible time after investigation.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Please note that this is a general policy and may need to be adapted to suit specific circumstances or requirements. It's also important to ensure that the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

Updates to this Policy

This Policy was last updated on: Wednesday 22 January 2025

PLAYER SELECTION CRITERIA - INFORMATION SHEET

1. Purpose of the information sheet

Wodonga Heart FC is committed to ensuring that all players are provided a fair opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and be provided valuable feedback at the completion.

This information sheet is to provide players and parents the expectation for the upcoming selection trials. Wodonga Heart FC is committed to ensuring a well organised, transparent and fair conduct of the trials.

2. Notification of trial dates and times

For all relevant information and the latest trial updates, players and parents should regularly check the Wodonga Heart FC Web / Facebook pages.

No less than 7 days' notice shall be provided for upcoming trial periods.

Each team will have a minimum of three trial dates. There is no rule on how many trials a player must attend, but those who attend all three trials will obviously have more opportunities to demonstrate their skills and capabilities.

3. Player Application forms

Players seeking selection must complete an application form providing information relevant to the team composition such as preferred playing positions, availability for training and contact information.

Parents must provide an email address that the club shall use to communicate the selection result.

The parents of junior players seeking selection must also acknowledge that parents are required to volunteer their time to both club and team activities.

Parents of players are required to provide information as to how they will contribute to the management of the team.

4. Attendance

Players must be punctual in their attendance and have completed their warm up procedure. The coaches will start the sessions with a 10 minute final preparation warm up, but the basic range of movement exercises and dynamic stretches should already have been completed before working with the coaches.

5. Observation sheets

To assist the coaches and selectors, the our club's technical director has identified seven key skills that must be observed during the trials (as detailed below). In addition, coaches and selectors will have the opportunity to add other comments which will form the basis of the player feedback. On completion of each trial, the members of the selection panel must complete and retain their "observation sheet".

6. Notification of selection

The players will be informed, by the WH FC committee via email, of their selection or non-selection within five days of the final trial for that age group.

Seven key areas of observation

Generally, the players are assessed on their ability to play competitive junior soccer at the AWFA level for that age group.

The ability of the player is assessed against the other players seeking team selection.

All of the seven key areas are assessed on the following:

1. Fitness – ability to run at pace and move for the duration of the game
2. Ball control - receiving and moving with the ball
3. Ability to pass the ball
4. Ability to strike the ball towards the goals
5. Ability to follow coaching directions
6. Positional awareness
7. Support of team mates during the game

Goalkeepers, will be assessed in the following areas:

1. Positional awareness – Does the GK take up a suitable position to provide a positive outcome in his/her/team favour.
2. Distribution – Does the GK deliver the ball with his/her feet / throw, allowing players to maintain possession?
3. Presence – Does the GK control the penalty area?
4. Communication – is the GK a good communicator
5. Technique – does the GK use appropriate techniques of catching and diving?