

## Flinders Netball Club Grading Policy

This policy will ensure that:

1. For grading purposes, every player is treated as an individual club member, irrespective of previous team or grade.
2. Every player has an equal opportunity.



Grading is influenced by the number and ages of players registered with the Flinders Netball Club. Grading will aim to achieve teams that have a balanced group of players in playing positions and ability levels.

- Players aged 7-10 years playing in the modified, non-competitive competition (Net Set Go; herein referred to as NSG) are not graded. Requests to play with friends will be accommodated where possible, depending on overall registrations in that age/year group.
- Players turning 10 in this calendar, that and have also completed 2 years of NSG and would like to play divisional can be considered. They must attend a practical grading day and be assessed by independent graders. SCNA in turn assess the players at the SCNA grading days. Attendance at all grading days is compulsory in order to be considered for divisional play.
- All Junior players aged 11 years and above must attend a practical grading day. This is a compulsory requirement of our club. Failure to attend may result in disappointment, as positions will not be held for absent players without prior warning.
- If a player is unable to attend practical grading, the player or parent/guardian must notify the Club Committee prior to grading. Placement into a team for this player will be based upon paper grading.
- Playing with friends. Requests from **both** players need to be in writing at time of registration stating reasons and will be considered by the committee providing they are of a similar ability. Stronger players always enjoy the challenge of harder, faster competition and do not develop to their potential if graded lower to be kept with a friend.

## **GRADING PROCESS**

Grading is the process of establishing the number and composition of Flinders Netball Club teams to compete in the Sunshine Coast Netball Association (SCNA) competition, and which divisions of competition to request for each team. The following approach ensures selections run smoothly and utilises a variety of information to inform grading decisions:

- **Coach's Evaluation**  
At the end of the season, each coach provides feedback of each player's positions played, ability, attendance at training and games, attitude etc. All feedback remains confidential.
- **Individual Player Assessments** - During the season, Graders may observe player's skill levels during games or receive reports from other sources e.g. other Executive Committee members
- **Paper Grading** - Prior to practical grading, Graders assess the above reports and place players into teams for the grading session
- **Practical Grading** - Each Practical Grading session shall be watched by at least two (2) independent Graders. If a player cannot attend, we cannot guarantee the same grading outcome had they attended and participated.

## **GRADING CONSIDERATIONS:**

The grading considerations and policy is designed to address several player and club needs, some of which invariably conflict. The following may be just some of the factors considered:

### **Ability and Skill Level**

Playing with people of similar ability ensures skills are developed at the correct pace, playing is enjoyable for all players and playing is safer for all players (as playing with like-skilled individuals reduces injury potential).

Experience tells us:

#### A player of lower-skill in a team of higher-skill may:

- Feel inadequate at their inability to match their team-mates
- Spend more time on the side-line than more skilled team-mates
- Lose interest

#### A player of higher-skill in a team of lower-skill may:

- Feel frustrated by the inability of team-mates to perform at the same level
- Not play to their full ability
- Lose conditioning and interest

To not grade players based on ability would take away the opportunity for some to ultimately progress to representative netball. However, we do understand that not every player would like to pursue this path. If you would like your child to play at a less competitive level, please ask the Club President if your child can be placed in a lower division prior to the grading process commencing at the start of the season. This may or may not be possible based on other considerations.

### **Availability for both training and playing**

Reasons for missing training and/or playing may include: holidays, parties, other special occasions, conflicting commitments, ability to be punctual, sickness, injury, or several other factors. Each player's availability from the previous season is taken into consideration.

### **Sportsmanship**

Behavioural factors also have an impact on team cohesion. Please Refer to the "Guidelines for Parents" and "Codes of Behaviour" for both players and their families (spectators) as attitudes, interactions and communications with others can have a strong impact on team cohesion.

### **Coachability and Focus**

How players and their parents respond to coaching and feedback is a strong indicator of a player's ability to improve their playing in the following season.

### **External Grading**

If a player is joining Flinders from another club, we are required to grade the player at a similar level to their previous club if the grading took place within the past 3 years.

### **Balancing Team Numbers**

Players may be placed in any divisional teams at the discretion of the Graders and in consultation with the player and their parents based on the number and ages of players registered with the club. Balancing of team numbers in the first few weeks directly after grading is also sometimes required for various reasons.

### **Familiar Faces**

The club recognises that for some players, having a friend or 'familiar face' in a team can be comforting. On some occasions, requests to play with friends may be considered. However, not where it will undermine the grading process.

While there are some advantages in forming teams based on friendships (versus gradings) this soon becomes an issue in several ways. Please see "Ability and Skill Level" for the likely resulting scenarios.

In our club's experience, children at this age tend to make new friends quickly and this also means that they extend their circle of friends; Flinders Netball is a community club and we see it as a positive for children and parents to extend their circle and meet others within our local community.

***We hope that players and parents understand the complexities of grading and the difficulties that the Graders have in achieving teams that have a balanced group of players in different playing positions.***

### **APPEALS:**

Player and parent expectations may differ with the Grading decisions. If a player or parent is not happy with the Grading decision, based on playing skills, they may request a review of the Grading decision.

Please note the following:

- The club will not enter debate about a player's ability or individual gradings
- The club will not participate in a discussion comparing players
- The club will consider an appeal based on a player being placed into a team with friends

Appeals will be heard by a committee made up of at least three (3) of the following positions:  
President, Secretary, Treasurer, Club Head Coach, Club Selector, Junior Team Co-ordinator,

Please forward your request for review outlining the reasoning to our club President by email at [flindersnetballclub@gmail.com](mailto:flindersnetballclub@gmail.com)

We do not recommend contacting Graders, Executive Committee Members and other contacts regarding your query. These contacts cannot overturn a decision. They will redirect you to the Club President. Equally, we discourage outlining your appeal to your team's Coach and/or Team Manager. These contacts are volunteers planning the season ahead, and need to focus on organising training times etc. These recommendations are in the spirit of Sportsmanship.

You will receive a decision within two (2) weeks whilst your concerns are investigated, and this decision will be final.