



## St Pauls Uniting Sporting Club Inc

### Equal Playing Time For Junior Competitions Policy

St Pauls Uniting Sporting Club Inc (the Association) has a strong focus on player development rather than a 'win-at-all-cost' approach to the game. In keeping with this philosophy, **equal playing time for all junior players is strongly advocated.**

#### Under 6 to Under 8 age groups

For Under 6 to Under 8 age groups, coaches and managers are urged to ensure that all players receive equal playing time **for each and every game.** There may be exceptions such as when a child is injured or does not want to play for whatever reason.

All players are to be encouraged to rotate through the Goalkeeper position as well as all other field positions.

#### Under 9 to Under 15/16/17 age groups

For players in Under 9 to Under 15/16/17 age groups, equal playing time is very important however, not necessarily for each and every game.

In some games, due to the superiority of the opposition, one or two players may struggle to compete which could lead to a loss of confidence or, worse still, a risk of injury. This may cause the coach to give greater time to some players for these games with the time being made-up for the others against weaker opposition. **The nett result over the entire season should be equal playing time for all players in the team.**

There are other exceptions to the equal playing time rule as follows:

- Some players may be given extra playing time because they are prepared to play positions the rest of the team are not interested in eg goalkeeper or defence.
- Coaches may give less playing time to players who miss training without a valid reason or do not make a concerted effort while training (Under 11s and up). The coach must communicate these reasons to the player and where possible, to the parent or guardian also.
- Players are not available for one or more games throughout the season.

Every player listed on the team sheet must receive some playing time. No player is to sit on the bench for the entire game. A player's self-confidence and self-image can be harmed if this occurs.

#### Finals – Under 9s to Under 15/16/17 age groups

The philosophy of player development should be continued throughout the finals. It is all too easy for the focus to change to a win-at-all-cost mentality. The bigger picture is the life lessons that are taught and learnt through playing team sport – playing as a team and supporting each other. These are much more important to the development of the player and to their development as a person, than winning or losing a game.

#### General – for ALL teams

It is very important that at the very start of the season, coaches make the players and parents aware of how the equal playing time rule will be managed throughout the season in their team as it is often the greatest source of frustration and disappointment for players and parents alike.