
Team and Selection Policy

Purpose and Principles

Baulkham Hills Hawks Australian Football Club (BHAFC) is committed to fairness, transparency and equity in team selection and player management across all age groups. The Club recognises teams vary in size, skill and ability, and seeks to ensure all players are treated fairly while teams are managed to be competitive, consistent with AFL Sydney Juniors and AFL National Junior Rules.

Under 8 & Under 9

- Emphasis is on participation, enjoyment and skill acquisition.
- No grading or official scoring; the focus is on equal involvement for all players.
- Teams are formed after registration, generally with consideration to school groupings to support social connection.
- If large numbers come from one school, players may be divided into multiple teams to avoid dominance.
- Teams should have equal player numbers to maximise playing opportunities.

Under 10

- Teams are formed after registration with consideration to school groupings.
- Competition formats and ground sizes follow AFL Junior Rules for the age group.
- Teams should maintain equal player numbers to ensure equitable playing time.

Under 11 to Under 14

- Where possible, the Club will field two or more teams in an age group.
- Players may be selected based on skills, size, confidence and football maturity, to align with appropriate divisions.
- Teams operate independently (i.e., no “reserve” team), and coaches are expected to collaborate across squads and share players if numbers are low.
- The Club will endeavour to place equal numbers of players in each team.

Formation Process

- Pre-season try-out sessions will be conducted to observe all players. Match simulation will also take place with grading matches where required.
- Coaches consider prior-season assessments and may liaise with former coaches.
- The GM – Football (or delegate) will work with coaches to agree on team compositions, following independent assessment via grading matches.
- Proposed team lists are forwarded to the Committee for approval.
- Team compositions are not to be disclosed to players or parents until Committee approval.
- Coaches will develop player assessment guidelines, approved by the Executive Committee, and make them available before try-outs.
- Players should attend the majority of sessions to be considered for higher-graded teams.

Under 15 to Under 17

- The Club aims to field at least one team per age group. Where numbers permit, multiple teams may be formed based on skills, size, confidence and maturity.
- Teams operate independently; coaches should train together where practical and cooperate in sharing players when short.
- Players must attend at least two try-outs to be considered for higher-graded teams. Exceptional circumstances may be approved by the Executive Committee (e.g., talent program commitments).
- For top age U17 players given permission to play senior football with a pathway club, finals qualification for their junior team must take precedence. Team management must liaise with the pathway club to ensure that this is managed appropriately.
- Should the club enter into an alliance with another Club (or Clubs) all players, regardless of club should be treated in the same manner.

Game Time

- All selected players should, as far as practicable, play a minimum of three (3) quarters in home-and-away matches.
- In finals, all selected players will play a minimum of two (2) quarters in every match, including the grand final.
- Coaches will manage rotations to balance development, welfare and competitiveness.

End-of-Season Assessments

- Coaches will provide confidential player assessments covering size, skills (kicking, marking, handball), positioning/reading of play, confidence and football maturity.
- Assessments are for internal use only to assist future team selection and are not released to players or parents.

Review and Appeals

- Selection recommendations are submitted by appointed selectors to the Committee for consideration.
- Parents seeking review must submit a written request to the GM – Football outlining concerns.
- The Committee retains discretion to modify team compositions where necessary, guided by the Club's values and policies.

Team Size

- Team sizes will comply with AFL Sydney Juniors rules and ground-size recommendations.
- The Club will endeavour to keep team sizes to be less than or the same as the league maximum for the relevant age group.

Rotation for Squads Over league maximum

- Deliberate omissions (rostered sits) are only used when full team lists are available.
- Injury, school or family commitments causing missed games do not count towards rostered omissions if exceeding two games.
- Byes do not count toward omissions; if a player was rostered to sit during a bye, they will sit in a later match.

- No player will miss two (2) games before every player has missed at least one (1) game; no player will miss more than two (2) games including finals.
- Coaches must maintain a weekly rotation spreadsheet, outlining omissions, reasons and rounds, submitted with match reports.
- A pre-season roster of missed games for the home-and-away season will be circulated before Round 1 and updated every three (3) weeks.
- If finals are likely by Round 13, players will be notified who may miss finals.
- Players may swap rostered sits via the coach/team manager provided the “no second omission before all have one” rule is maintained.
- Finals selection criteria must be measurable and published by Round 10 (after Committee ratification) if finals are likely.

Alignment with AFL Sydney Juniors & AFL National Policies

- Age-appropriate formats, progressive contact/tackling, ground sizes, and team numbers will follow AFL Junior Rules.
- Lowest age groups do not record scores or ladders to prioritise enjoyment and participation.
- Mercy Rule: When a lead becomes unassailable (e.g., ~60 points), coaches should implement measures that reduce further score blowouts and maintain a positive environment.
- Player Welfare: From U14 upwards, players approaching approximately 25 total games in a season across club, school, and talent pathways will be closely monitored, and their training and playing loads managed to reduce injury risk. Wherever possible, players should avoid participating in more than two games per week.
- Compliance: The Club abides by AFL Sydney Juniors by-laws, including permits, interchange, age dispensation, safeguarding children & young people, concussion management and codes of conduct.

References

- **AFL Sydney Juniors – Rules, Policies & Forms:** <https://aflsj.com.au/resources/by-laws-policies/>
- **AFL – Junior Rules (National):** <https://play.afl/junior-rules>
- **AFL Sydney – Rules, Regulations and Policies:** <https://sydneyafl.com.au/resources/by-laws-regulations-and-policies/>