



KENMORE DISTRICTS RUGBY CLUB GRADING (U10-17) DOCUMENT

Last modified 19th January, 2014



Introduction:

As all are no doubt aware, the development of a rugby player undergoes many stages from the little packs of under 6s chasing the ball through to the senior game. The act of young boys celebrating birthdays marks not only a development of their physical and mental development but also the arrival at a further transition point towards the senior game. For under 10s, for example, this transition includes the 6 man opposed scrum, opposed lineouts and the 12 man game with greater attacking options with a larger field and ball.

As part of the softening of this transition, and to be consistent across age groups, the Club is embarking on a strategy of player education clinic followed by grading of all U10 and upward players which, for the reasons outlined below, the Club considers is in the best interests of guiding young men along their journey to the senior game.

The Club asks that you trust our ability and honesty in selections. The aim of the Club is to grade the players as fairly as possible. Some parents place undue pressure on their children by expecting them to always be in the top team. The Club suggests that parents help their children through the grading process by being supportive. Our request is, in cases where a parent is in disagreement with the end result, that they accept the final decision of the Club officials.

It is important to note that juniors differ in their ability to acquire skills and move through the various stages of development. The Club encourages parents and players not to focus on which team a player is in, rather on the player's own rugby development.

Grading is basically an opinion. Some players will pick themselves, they will stand out, and this is usually due to an early physical or personal skill development.

It is the policy of this Club to re-grade players every season, so every junior player has the opportunity to progress. i.e. players in a particular team in 2014 are NOT guaranteed the same team in subsequent years.

Each age group will have an Age Group Coordinator who, along with the coaches in the age group, will decide on placing players in teams.

Philosophy:

This Policy provides an opportunity for all Kenmore Junior Rugby Club (KJRC) participants to compete at a level which promotes both enjoyment and excellence. The process of determining the appropriate division for teams across an age group is based on the principles of competency and safety.

The Brisbane Junior Rugby Union (BJRU) ultimately decides which division a team will play in. The Club's role is to ensure that players and teams have the opportunity to compete within an appropriate grade, as best as possible, so that matches provide players the chance to enjoy the game through a balanced competition.

Players are assessed as a year-by year propositions.



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Purpose:

Grading of individual players will provide a culture and set of systems whereby players have the opportunity to develop their skills according to potential and commitment.

Grading will match players of similar skill and commitment levels into teams in order to:

- Ensure player safety and maximum enjoyment by matching teams and all players within these teams to the most appropriate division.
- Maximise players game time each week with all players at similar skill levels.
- Allow the Club to create a balance between competitive and social aspects of the game.
- Assist with the transition to the senior game with a clear pathway to encourage players to continue playing for Kenmore in the older age groups.

The Grading Program:

In 2014, there will be greater input from coaches and greater accountability in the selection of graded sides. Four age groups will be graded in 2014 – U10, U11, U12, and U13 (the latter will depend on numbers).

A four-week training program will be held in February 2014 for U10, U11, U12, and U13 coaches (see attachment). This program will be facilitated by Rugbytek but driven by the Coaching staff, and will have two important objectives:

- Firstly, the program will assist coaches by providing new ideas and approaches to improving the presentation and execution of drills; and
- Secondly, the program will help coaches in each age group to assess and evaluate their players across the four weeks, supporting them in mastering the basic skills they will be expected to demonstrate at grading.

To commence this program, a “welcome back” function for all coaches will be held on the evening of 31st January 2014. At this function, the four-week coach training program will be explained to the U10, U11, U12, and U13 coaches, and any questions will be answered on the night.

At grading, teams will have been selected by coaches (random, balanced, and interchangeable), allowing for players to perform and move in their chosen positions. Each player will be encouraged to nominate for a maximum of two (2) positions (if needed). These nominated positions will be specified by parents on the grading forms which will be available at sign-on days.

A number of mini-games will be used as part of the selection process and an independent assessor(s) will assist the coaches to assess, evaluate, and grade players. Grading will be conducted on the 1st, 2nd, 8th, and 9th of March 2014 only.

Grading for these four age groups will be compulsory unless parents complete an opt-out form. After the grading process is completed and players are assigned to teams, your son will be allocated to a preliminary team for which his skills and abilities appear to be best suited.

Once the grading process has been finalised, a combination of the resulting assessment document, including the four-week training program, the team selection notes of coaches, and the independent assessor's findings will be used to select the teams. However, these will not necessarily be the final teams, as there will also be three trial matches against other clubs, beginning in mid-March 2014. These trial matches form part of the BJRU program used to assist in assigning teams to the correct Divisions. For two of the three weeks, these teams will be



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known as the Polar Bears, Sun Bears, Brown Bears, and Grizzly Bears. During these trial matches, players may be moved between teams at the coaches' absolute discretion. By the third week, the teams will be finalised and players assigned under this process to either the Red, Black, Blue, or Green teams.

Once a player has been placed into a higher division team, he cannot be moved down (in accordance with Rule 5.10 in the BJRU 2013 Competition Rules). However, a player in a lower division team may be moved up into a higher division team if both teams' coaches and the Director of Coaching are in agreement regarding the move.

If a player cannot attend on the specified grading day, he will be assessed as follows:

1. The Director of Coaching will receive the assessment document from his coach for review and evaluation;
2. The Director of Coaching will review the assessment of the player's performance against the identified skill areas for that player's age group during the four (4) week training program;
3. The Director of Coaching will review the player's coach assessment report for the two trial matches.

The team coach, in consultation with the Director of Coaching, will make a decision based on each player's assessment reports and playing performance to arrive at an appropriate result. In the event that a player needs to be excused from grading (eg: due to illness), it is the responsibility of the player's parent to contact the Director of Coaching to advise of their son's non-attendance.

New players who join the Club and who have missed grading will be entitled to play in the two trial matches where they will be assessed for grading purposes. The Director of Coaching will appoint the team coach and/or a committee member to conduct an assessment of the player's performance and provide the Director of Coaching with a recommendation concerning their assessment.

A new player joining the Club after the trial matches will be placed into a team deemed most appropriate to assist with the balance of the age group and teams.

A Coaching Kids' Rugby/Smart Rugby course will be held on the morning of the 15th of February 2014. It is mandatory that all coaches be Smart Rugby compliant and certified through the ARU protocol. Therefore, if you have not attended this course, or if your accreditation has lapsed or will soon lapse, please ensure that you schedule to attend this course.

Administration:

- The Club strongly advocates an Age Group Coordinator for each age group, and this person would preferably be **neither** a coach nor manager. They would act as a primary conduit for flow of information between teams, identify concerns or issues, and lobby on behalf of players, parents and teams to the Committee.
- All coaches will be provided by the Director of Coaching with a set of key drills that should be used. This will allow players to more easily adjust to a new team, should they be required to act as reserve of even play up an age group.
- Players will be advised of their team either directly or through the Coach or team management in advance of season commencement.



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Player Game Time:

The Club has a policy that wherever possible all players are given equal game time. This is in the context of across the season, and coach/manager has discretion to manage individual games as they see fit.

Conclusion:

Whilst the outcome of grading is unlikely to result in all players being satisfied, it is a requirement to ensure the safety and development of players. In creating the current policy, the Club has thought carefully about how best to cater for all players. Foremost in our thinking was the need to promote both enjoyment and opportunity for all players through balanced competition.