

Junior Development and Team Placement Policy

1. Overview

Forestville Hockey Club is proud of its history (established in 1905 and the oldest continuing hockey club in Australia), and of its commitment to be family and community orientated. Junior players are the future of our club and we are committed to supporting and developing them in the best way that we can. This policy is intended to guide that development.

2. Placement of players into junior teams

- 2.1. The first priority is to ensure that players are placed in teams appropriate to their age and skill levels to ensure player enjoyment, development and safety.
- 2.2. In general, players will not be placed in a grade that is more than one year above their age group. Exceptions may be made for state representatives or family issues where older siblings need to play in the same team for logistical reasons. But exceptions will only be made where this complies with Hockey SA guidelines and with agreement from the player's parents or guardians and the coaches of the two teams, who know the players, that they can be safe and manage the older grade.
- 2.3. Where there is more than one team per age group in the same grade, teams will be structured so they are as even in ability as possible, while also accommodating friendship groups and family wishes re siblings in same or different teams.
- 2.4. In mixed grades (Under 11 and Under 9) all teams will have as close to equal mix of genders as possible.
- 2.5. Girls can only play in boys' teams if no girls teams exist in that grade or if the boys' teams are short of players.

3. Juniors playing seniors

- 3.1. Junior players of at least 14 years of age or older will be encouraged and supported to play in senior grades as well as junior grades if they and their parents/guardians agree.
- 3.2. Players in their final year of junior eligibility will be particularly encouraged so they are comfortable to play seniors the next year.
- 3.3. Players wishing to be considered for PL/M1 squads should complete pre-season training.
- 3.4. PL/M1 coaches will assess all junior players who wish to play seniors and place them in teams appropriate to their skills/age/size/strength. Junior coaches and the relevant senior team coach if not PL/M1 **must** be consulted in this process and parental permission must be obtained by the senior coach talking in person or via the phone with the parent/guardian before any junior player is named to play in a senior grade for the first time that season.

- 3.5. Junior players will be placed in senior teams in a way that ensures they receive adequate support and mentoring from experienced senior players to promote their development.
- 3.6. It would be expected that no more than four junior players are likely to be playing on the pitch in a senior game at any one time and thus junior players will be allocated across teams rather than clustered in one team.
- 3.7. The safety and development of junior players is of paramount importance when placing them in senior teams.
- 3.8. Juniors regularly playing seniors pay a fee equal to student concession fees.

4. Junior coaches and junior team managers

- 4.1. All junior coaches will be supported to obtain their Level 1 coaching qualification as a minimum standard.
- 4.2. All junior coaches and team managers will comply with Hockey SA rules at all times and with the Code of Behaviour described in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy (linked to the club website).
- 4.3. All junior coaches and team managers will be required to obtain police checks (submitted through Hockey SA) if they do not already have them OR must sign the Member Protection Declaration form in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy (linked to the club website). The junior committee will maintain a register of submitted forms or police checks.
- 4.4. Mentor coaches will be provided where possible to all new coaches.
- 4.5. Coaches are expected to provide constructive feedback to develop junior players.

5. Development of junior players

- 5.1. The club will provide ongoing opportunities for player and skill development through regular training sessions, specific skills sessions, focused presentations e.g. on nutrition, warm-up techniques etc.
- 5.2. Players will be supported and encouraged to go to state, zone, SASSSA and SAPSASA trials and nominate for Hockey SA Development programs.

6. Umpiring

- 6.1. All junior players are encouraged to learn how to umpire.
- 6.2. Under 9 and 11 players will be provided with umpiring opportunities during scratch matches at training.
- 6.3. Under 14 and 18 players are encouraged to umpire younger age junior matches and will be provided with mentor/shadow umpires to assist them while they are learning.

- 6.4. All players in senior grades are rostered to undertake umpiring in lower grades. However, juniors playing in senior grades will not be expected to umpire senior games but will fulfil their required umpiring commitments in junior games below their own age groups.
- 6.5. All umpires will comply with Hockey SA rules at all times and with the Code of Behaviour described in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy (linked to the club website).

7. Expectations of junior players

- 7.1. All juniors are expected to attend training and matches regularly and will notify their coaches/managers as early as possible if they can not attend.
- 7.2. Juniors who are also playing with senior teams are expected to attend junior training unless a negotiated variation has been agreed between their junior and senior coaches.
- 7.3. All players will comply with Hockey SA rules at all times and with the Code of Behaviour described in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy (linked to the club website).

8. Expectations of junior parents/guardians

- 8.1. All parents/guardians will comply with Hockey SA rules at all times and with the Code of Behaviour described in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy (linked to the club website).
- 8.2. All roles at the hockey club are undertaken on a voluntary basis including coaches and managers, and hence parent/guardian support of these volunteers is expected.
- 8.3. Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in the club on both a social basis as well as in volunteer roles such as coaches, team managers, assisting with BBQ's, social events, ground set up, at training, on the junior committee etc. All help is welcomed.

9. Approval

- 9.1. Version 1.0 considered and approved by Committee, 8th July 2015
- 9.2. Version 2.0 considered and approved by Committee, 19th July 2016