

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. Expectations of junior players

- 2.1. All juniors are expected to attend training and matches regularly and will notify their coaches/managers as early as possible if they cannot attend.
- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. All players will comply with Hockey SA rules at all times and with the Hockey SA Code of Behaviour and the Code of Behaviour described in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy (linked to the club and Hockey SA websites).

3. Expectations of junior parents/guardians

- 3.1. All parents/guardians will comply with Hockey SA rules at all times, with the Code of Behaviour described in the current version of the Hockey Australia Member Protection Policy and the Play by the Rules Guidelines (all linked to the club website).
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.

4. Development of junior players

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. Players will be supported and encouraged to go to state, zone, SASSSA and SAPSASA trials and nominate for Hockey SA Development programs.

5. Placement of players into junior teams

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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 or to ensure sufficient player numbers in exceptional circumstances. 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, to ensure that they can be safe and manage the older grade.
- 5.3. Where there is more than one team per age group in Under 9 or Under 11, 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.
- 5.4. Where there is more than one team per age group in Under 13/15 or 18 grades, an A and B grade team will be nominated. Selection trials will be held a couple of weeks before the season starts to place players in A or B grade. Selectors will be the team coaches and an independent third selector (e.g. a coach from a different age group). Feedback will be provided to players on request, but the selectors' decisions will be final. Players will remain in those teams for the season, unless a player in A grade needs to be replaced due to long term injury or absence.
- 5.5. During the season, for age groups where an A and B team have been nominated, priority must always go to filling the top team, in accordance with Hockey SA rules that the lowest team in a club or age group must be the one that forfeits if short of players. Where the A team is short of players in any week, the coach of that team may select players from the B team to appropriately fill their team. Consideration will be given to ladder position and the strength of the opposition in each grade that week, but the A team remains the priority. It is important that players on the borderline for selection to the A team are also given the opportunity to play in a higher grade to support their development, and this process will provide them with that opportunity.
- 5.6. In mixed grades (Under 11 and Under 9) all teams will have as close to equal mix of genders as possible.
- 5.7. Girls can only play in boys' teams if no girls teams exist in that grade or if the boys' teams are short of players and the girls' teams have adequate numbers.

6. Juniors playing seniors

- 6.1. Junior players of approximately 14 years of age or older will be encouraged and supported to play in senior grades as well as junior grades, depending on their physical size and hockey ability, if they and their parents/guardians agree.
- 6.2. Players in their final year of junior eligibility will be particularly encouraged to do this so they are comfortable to play seniors the next year.
- 6.3. Players wishing to be considered for PL/M1 squads should complete pre-season training with those squads.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. 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.
- 6.6. 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.
- 6.7. The safety and development of junior players is of paramount importance when placing them in senior teams.
- 6.8. Juniors regularly playing seniors pay a fee equal to student concession fees.

7. Junior coaches and junior team managers

- 7.1. All junior coaches will be supported to obtain their Level 1 coaching qualification as a minimum standard.
- 7.2. 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).
- 7.3. All junior coaches and team managers will be required to obtain Working With Children Checks (WWCC) from the Department of Human Services. This will be facilitated through the club.
- 7.4. Mentor coaches will be provided where possible to all new coaches.
- 7.5. Coaches are expected to provide constructive feedback to develop junior players.

8. Umpiring

- 8.1. All junior players are encouraged to learn how to umpire.
- 8.2. All players will be provided with umpiring opportunities during scratch matches at training.

- 8.3. Under 13 to 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.
- 8.4. 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.
- 8.5. 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).

9. Policy Review and Approval

- 9.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Junior Committee and then approved by the Management Committee.
- 9.2. This version was reviewed by the Junior committee on 8th March 2019 and approved by the Management Committee on 20th March 2019