



**MIRANDA MAGPIES
FOOTBALL CLUB**

Non Competition team Grading Policy

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Grading Policy

Grading Guidelines

Objective:

The fundamentals of the grading policy are designed to ensure that:

- All players have the maximum opportunity to play in a competitive environment, appropriate to their skill and ability.
- Players learn from their peers and develop an appreciation and love of the game.
- Players, coaches and parents alike, have FUN, enjoy the season, and return to the club year after year.

The following guidelines have been developed for players, parents and coaches to inform them of the grading policies of the Club. We hope this information will help explain the sometimes hard task that coaches and administrators have. The policies of Miranda Magpies FC are designed around the Club philosophy of developing players to their full potential. Our Club takes pride in the fact that we provide a pathway for talented juniors to fulfilling their football dreams. We also take pride in the fact that Miranda Magpies FC provides a broad social environment for young players who wish to participate at every level from Under 6's to senior men's and senior ladies.

With the responsibility of placing our players into teams and grades the Club will show a commitment to promote fairness, consistency and transparency in the selection process.

Generally:

We ask that you trust our ability and honesty in selections.

The word grading is used in reference to:

- a) Placement of players into "like skilled" groups, that is where they are comfortable to play in.
- b) Registering Miranda Magpies teams into Divisions with Sutherland Shire Football Association, where they can compete at a level where they will be competitive and enjoy. Grading, unfortunately, must take place in a very short window of time, approximately two weeks. Parents can help by encouraging players and their friends to register early (by the first registration session in each year – dates confirmed on the Miranda Magpies FC web-site) and by having players attend all grading sessions.

If a player does not attend grading, they will be graded based on their previous year performance (returning players only).

If a new player does not attend grading, they will automatically be graded into the lowest grade.

Grading dates and times will be given out during the registration process and are listed on the club's web-site.

Grading Decisions:

Grading is basically an opinion - some players will 'pick themselves' as 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 year, so every junior player has the opportunity to progress.

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 football development. Each age group will have an Age Coordinator/s who will decide on placing players in teams. In competitive age groups, the Coordinator/s may wish to

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keep training with several more players than the team requires so making his final selections as fair as possible.

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. We can suggest that parents help their children through the grading process by being supportive. Our request is that, in cases where a parent is in disagreement with the end result that they accept the final decision of the Club officials.

Small Sided Football (SSF) (all 'non competition' age groups):

Small Sided Football (SSF) is a term given to a modified football game designed to foster development of young players from 5 to 10 years of age. This game has been recommended by Football Federation Australia (FFA) and follows the guidelines of the National Junior Sport Policy written by the Australian Government.

It is the policy of the Club that all Small Sided Football (SSF) players have equal amounts of time on the field, unless otherwise requested by the parents of the player.

Under 6, 7, 8 & 9

Juniors may start playing football and training as soon as they turn five years old. Miranda Magpies FC offers teams in the Under 6 up to Under 9 age groups which play a 'round robin' format. The age groups are separate as motor skills and physical size vary significantly in these age groups. Some flexibility is permitted in these age groups, however we **strongly** encourage playing children in their correct age groups to enable each child to progress with team mates through ages.

Note: Sutherland Shire Football Association requires any player that seeks registration must attain the age of five years or older between 1st January and 31st December of that current year.

Sutherland Shire Football Association and Miranda Magpies FC take the position that all children should play in their respective age groups unless there are special circumstances that may prevail. Miranda Magpies FC requires that any parent whose child does have special circumstances advises the Age Coordinator at the time of registration. The Club will make the final decision.

All players shall be eligible for selection in their applicable age group as defined by competition birth dates for SSFA Rules.

From time to time an age group may have an imbalance of player numbers in which case the club may require players to play above their age group. Players may also request to play above their age group. If such a request is made, the following is to apply:-

- a) The Grading Coordinator and Executive Committee may refuse a player from playing up if they are of the opinion it will be detrimental to the player's performance or development, or to the team's performance or development.
- b) Players requesting to play up do so on the clear understanding that the following year they may return to their appropriate age group.

There is no grading as such in the U6 and U7 age groups - the players are placed in teams according to social groups. Apart from the obvious advantages of physical activity, it is important that young players enjoy football at this early age, a game, which helps to develop self-confidence, co-operative and concentration skills.

Miranda Magpies FC has taken the position that from the **U8** age group, the 'top' team will be graded according to player's ability. This is to allow the more advanced players an opportunity to play the highest grade.

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Miranda Magpies FC has also taken the position that from **U9** up, all 'non competition' teams will be graded to ensure that all players are given the opportunity to strive for the opportunity to play the highest grade, and to ensure that all players are given an equal opportunity to participate equally in game play.

Under 6 through to U10 are termed 'small-sided' games. This change commenced a number of seasons ago and was a strategy taken by Football Federation Australia to improve *grass roots* football in Australia. The format for these age groups is modified from the traditional football format and is a 'work in progress'.

Further information on small sided games (SSG) can be found on the Football Federation Australia website www.footballaustralia.com.au (FFA's website).

Under 10

A points table is kept for the U10 age group as a basis for assigning divisions the following year in Under 11. This age group is 'non competition', however Miranda Magpies FC grade this age group to obtain the best possible divisions for the Under 11 year when full field competitive football begins. This will involve assessing individual skills for placement in like-skilled teams, or identifying the overall skill level of the team as a whole.

Miranda Magpies FC grading of competitive teams into divisions is to endeavour to place teams in the highest division possible according to the skills of the players in the team. That is, not to hold the team down a division to try to win a championship or make the season easy, but rather to play in the spirit of competition and in the best interests of all our junior players and their football development.

Concerns about Grading

Any concerns about grading/team allocation will be firstly directed to the Age Group Coordinator. If there are further concerns, the matter will be referred to the Grading Coordinator. In the case of Under 10, the Grading Coordinator will, if necessary, refer to the Director of Coaching. All unresolved disputes will be reviewed and determined by the Miranda Magpies FC Executive Committee.

It is essential that any concerns with the grading of a player are raised as soon as possible with the Age Coordinator.

Miranda Magpies FC takes seriously any concerns with the grading process of all players especially those involved in the Small Sided Football format. The club is there for the benefit and enjoyment of all players and strives to make the grading process as fair and equitable for all players.

How Grading is done

Season end

The grading process begins at the completion of each season. All coaches will be required to complete a team analysis. This confidential assessment is to be used to evaluate the individual skills and abilities of all players within their team.

Key elements of the assessment are:

- Confirm if the coach intends to return to Miranda Magpies and coach again in the following season.
- Confirm if each player intends to return to Miranda Magpies for the following season.
- Assess the player's performance throughout the year, against a range of predefined criteria.

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- Identify players whom the coach considers to be the nucleus or core of the team. Where possible, core players will be placed in the same team in the following season. However this cannot be at the expense of a player from a lower grade or a new player who is of greater ability.
- Identify whether the grade the player is currently participating in, is appropriate for his or her level of skill and ability, or if they would benefit from playing in a different grade.

Confidentiality is recognised at all times. The only discussion held regarding the assessment of any individual player is with that player and their parents, or in the process of grading players and respective teams.

All completed assessments are forwarded to the Grading Coordinator for use in the grading process the following year.

Season start

At the start of the new season, all players must participate in the grading process. The grading process shall commence as soon as:

- The Management Committee has completed registrations and the likely number of teams in each age group has been determined.
- As soon as Miranda Magpies FC has access to the grounds.
- All players must be graded and play in the age group in which they fall.

The only exception is:

- If the age group has a surplus number of players beyond the coach's requirements, and
- The age group above can accommodate those players.
- If in the previous season, a player was granted permission to play up an age group, that player may elect to do the same the following season. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Age Coordinator, Grading Coordinator and Executive Committee, in consultation with the players and their parents.

Grading criteria

Grading is based on a player's performance during a small sided game and any associated drills, and on their performance in the previous season (returning players only).

On grading day, graders assess the player on the following criteria, and assign the player a grading level of A, B or C (A=Advanced, B=Intermediate, C=Beginner).

Graders look for the following attributes:

- Ball control: dribbling, trapping, passing, shooting, shielding
- Speed, fitness & coordination
- Defending and tackling ability
- Positional sense

No new player to the club is to be guaranteed a position in any specific team, until the entire grading process has been completed.