

## **Club Policy On Miniros and Junior Player Selection – 2023**

The Northern Falcons FC are an ambitious, competitive community club. Our mission is to deliver an enjoyable and rewarding experience to our football community with programs offering opportunities to players of all ages and skill levels that fosters participation, enjoyment, and development.



A key challenge for any community club is how to best provide for different players with different needs, and to do this within the available resource of the club. The aim of this document is to clearly articulate the club's response to this key challenge

First and foremost, we are a footballing community. We want to improve the football experience for everyone involved with the club and always keep what's best for the club and game in mind. We acknowledge that no policy is going to be perfect for everyone.

### **Age groups**

A player's appropriate age group is based on the age they will turn in the playing season. For example, if a player turns 8 in January or 8 in December, they are in both instances classed as U8.

The club believes that for the development and enjoyment of young players, players should play in their correct age group unless approval is sought from the coach and technical director. The club will not allow players to play in a team at a lower age group. The club will allow players to play in an older age group where it is appropriate for the players level of development and enjoyment of the game.

### **Friends**

Requests for a single pair of friends to be kept together are accommodated, if possible, up to the U11 age group. If there is a skills difference between the players, they will be ranked in a team suited to the less skilled player. One sided requests will not be considered. These requests will need to be included in the designated area within the Expression of Interest form.

### **Coaches/Coaching**

Our coaches are the heartbeat of this club. Without them we cannot form our teams and without these teams we cease to exist as a club.

Our capacity issues extend to striving for even greater quality coaching for each team, regardless of how the team is graded. The club is committed to having coaches complete relevant coaching qualifications before the season begins and will support any new member that would like to consider coaching with appropriate training and support from the TD and coaching sub-committee

Where we don't have a coach in place by four weeks prior to the beginning of the regular season, then we may have to disband the team and refund any registration fees paid in full. Alternatively, we may try to find a suitable coaching candidate amongst our older junior players.

A major aim of our strategic plan was to engage a Technical Director (TD) in a paid position that will help educate and assist our coaches with a view to integrate all our teams' playing styles. Fortunately, we have been able to engage Troy Pennycooke-Morgan who is a well credentialed TD having looked after the junior setup at Banyule Utd SC at State League 1 level for the last few years.

## **Multiple teams at each age group**

A key element of our strategic plan is for the club to have at least two teams in each age group, which allows for appropriate grouping of players based on their stage of football development. It also means that we can better manage coaches (and coaching techniques) for each team.

### **Miniroos team structure**

*For teams U9 and below, the club policy is to mix teams to balance across skills and friendship groups.*

The aim for these age groups is to encourage player growth through enjoyment, confidence building, meeting new people and playing different positions across the game. Where there is the possibility of making two teams, we will endeavor to put one in each of the Wallabies and Joeys leagues. These teams will be chosen dependent on the stage of development, experience, physical maturity and other factors such as family logistics and siblings etc.

### **Teams will be formed based on football maturity from U/10 and up.**

Splitting teams by abilities is important for player engagement, development and greatly assists coaches in providing the best experience and tuition at the right level across the entire playing group. This will only occur where there is a clear difference in player needs across the group (for example where there is opportunity for a wallabies and joeys' team). The technical director and coaches will make this decision.

Teams will NOT be referred to as 'Advanced' or 'Development'. They will in the first instance, be based on the club colors of 'Green' and 'Black' (further teams will be given a random color) and players will remain in that team for the entire season. As usual, some 'filling in' may be required, but only after discussions between the coach, Technical Director (TD), and parents/guardian.

There may be instances, particularly in the short term, where we have too many players for one team, but not enough for two. Where numbers are not quite enough for two teams, we will promote and advertise both internally and externally with the aim of finding those players.

Should there still not be adequate numbers at the start of the season for two teams:

- Returning, registered Falcon's players receive priority over any new players from other clubs
- If there are not enough returning players, the first new players to register then pay, receive priority for the remaining places
- Once a single team is full, additional EOIs will be placed on a waitlist should numbers grow before the season starts.
- **There are NO trials for any age group from under 11's and below** although grading of players may be used to determine final team composition if there are enough players for two teams.

### **Juniors team structure**

By the time players are twelve they are starting to prepare for life on the big pitch and have been playing for points for an entire year. The competitiveness lifts, as do the demands on them and the coaches. There's also the development pathway to senior football which becomes very real at 15-16 years of age with the step up to our senior development squad.

## **Trials**

Trials will only be held for team's U/12 and over:

- Trials will be run by experienced club coaches, Technical Director and the team coach
- Anyone can trial from any age group if they want to play up an age group
- Trials will be held regardless of how many returning Falcon's players there are
- The best players will be picked for the team, regardless of their previous club registration

### *How are Trials conducted?*

Trials will be held over two sessions and structured by the club and run by the TD, the club coaching sub-committee, experienced junior coaches and members of the senior coaching staff. There will be a minimum of four club representatives (and the team's coach) casting an eye over the trials and comparing notes. The focus will be on the new players, but all existing players need to be in attendance and engaged. The team manager or coach will need to know if a player cannot attend one or both sessions.

## **Team Balance**

In the interests of the enjoyment of the players, the club may sometimes mix teams that have a balance of skill and athletic attributes and in older age groups, the ability to play a particular position. It is important to understand that the more constraints/restrictions there are for your child, (e.g., training availability, friend request) the less opportunities for your child to be placed in a team matched to their ability.

Finally, we will continue to provide an all-inclusive footballing community, but we have constraints: finite facilities, capacity issues and coaching acquisition/retention issues resulting in a need to manage player numbers carefully.

We are not (and don't want to be) an NPL club that just selects the best players available at every age group. We want everyone to play but that is unfortunately not realistic. We recognize the need to create clear policies supporting a number of key scenarios and we hope we have done that through this document.

Regards

Northern Falcons FC