

Club Policy On Junior Player Selection – 2022

The Northern Falcons FC are an ambitious, competitive non-NPL club. We will continue to provide an inclusive footballing community, but we have constraints: finite facilities, capacity issues and a need to manage player numbers are significant issues.



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 recognise the need to create clear policies around situations

where we can't accommodate everyone. And we have to do it being mindful of the stage-of-life and stage-of-football-development of our young players.

A key element of Project '22 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. But what if we have too many players for one team, but not enough for two? What if we have too many for two teams, but not enough for three? How do we deal with new players and families that want to join the club if numbers are tight?

First and foremost, we are a footballing community. We want to improve the football experience for everyone involved with the club and keep what's best for the club and game in mind at all times. We acknowledge that no policy is going to be perfect for everyone and understand the difficulties associated with this common situation across each age group.

1. *We will strive for at least two teams per age group*

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.

2. *Where there are still not enough players for two teams*

U/13 and below

- 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
- There are NO trials for any age group from under 13s and below

U/14 and up

- Trials will only be held for teams U/14 and over
- The best players will be picked for the team, regardless of the their previous club registration
- 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

3. *Where there are two or more teams*

- Teams will be formed based on football ability from U/10 and up
- All teams will NOT be referred to as 'Advanced' or 'Development'. They will in the first instance, be based on the club colours of 'Green' and 'Black' (further teams will be given a random colour) and players will remain in that team for the entire season. As usual, some 'filling in' will be likely, but only on approval of the coach, player and family.

- If it is agreed by the coaches and families for teams from U/9 and below to be split by ability (as the U/8s and mini-Roos girls were in 2019) then that can continue. Though this is not a club policy and splitting players to play with friends or other siblings is the default at the start of the season. If the teams are split by abilities then this will take place after five training sessions in pre-season and teams communicated to parents prior to the beginning of the regular season.

Why are these policies important (age groups)?

By the time players are 13 they have had a year on the big pitch and have been playing for points for two years. The competitiveness lifts, as do the demands on them and the coaches.

Grading becomes important from U/10s as children step up a pitch size, with greater emphasis on positions, strategy and footballing decision-making.

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.

How are Trials conducted

Trials will be held over two sessions in mid-November. These sessions will be structured by the club and run by the club coaching sub-committee, experience 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.

[see *Trials Information* for more]

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 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 will dissolve the team and refund any registration fees paid in full.

A major aim of project '22 is to find a Club Coaching Coordinator (CCC), and we are still hunting! This will be a paid position that will help educate and assist our coaches with a view to integrate all our teams playing styles. We are still striving to find and appoint a Club Coach Coordinator, but in the meantime if there are any questions, please contact northernfalconsfc@gmail.com