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PLAYER GRADING POLICY

Introduction.

Before the commencement of competition, Hills Knights FC will conduct grading sessions for junior players if required. The grading process will give players the opportunity to demonstrate their talents in front of neutral selectors.

Players, regardless of the team they played in the previous season will be given the opportunity to try out for the Club's highest graded team.

Each player is entitled to attend the formal grading session which will determine whether a player has the ability to play in the top division teams. As the skill set of a player can improve dramatically over a season we feel it is important all children be given the opportunity to improve the division in which they play.

Where a player chooses not to play in a purely graded team they are expected to attend the informal grading session. The Club fully supports the position that many players want to play with their friends, (Play with your Mates). These players will be graded separately so that the team is placed in an appropriate division that best caters for the teams combined skill set.

Please note; it is the club that enters teams into the competition not the individual, therefore, although the committee will try to cater to the needs of as many people as possible it will be done within the philosophy of what is best for the greater good of the club.

Philosophy.

The grading policy is designed to address the player and club needs which at times can be conflicting. With this in mind grading will be designed to:

- be a transparent process that caters for both new players to the club and existing players.
- the appointment of a grading committee that will in all attempts try to eliminate bias.
- The club can field a competitive 1st division team.
- There is a clear pathway for players to progress through the different levels of the game.
- Support a culture that ensures players, parents and coaches enjoy a fun experience as well as play at a level which is both challenging and rewarding.

Levels of Attainment.

Non-Competition Teams (U5-U7).

Children at this age are learning the game and the emphasis should not be placed on winning, rather participation, social development as well as the development of motor skills and footballing disciplines.

Children at this age are very impressionable so the behaviour of coaches and parents are crucial to the child's physical and mental wellbeing.

At this age group, the club employs professional coaches who run sessions that are aimed to promote enjoyment of the game and to promote and develop skills. Children will also play mini matches where the **results are not recorded**.

Competition Teams (U8+).

These teams will consist of graded players for both the top division and the (Play with your Mates) teams. In all cases the club will attempt to put these teams in a division where they are competitive. In the event that a team has been placed in a division where they are not competitive, after 4 weeks of competition an application to Hills Football Association will be made to have these teams reallocated to a division which is more suitable to their abilities.

Please note: It is expected that although these matches are part of a competition, all players who attend training on a regular basis should get a fair and just amount of playing time.

The Grading Process.

Club Coach

The club coach is responsible for the co-ordination of the grading days.

The allocation process of players to teams and teams to divisions is a process which is undertaken by the Grading committee as a whole. This process will involve the inclusion of Club Registrars, Age Managers and consultation with the Coaches of relevant teams.

Where possible any member of the grading committee will not be involved in grading his or her child.

Hills Knights FC will not undertake or take into consideration any undertaking given by a coach or official to guarantee a place for any player or parent that their child will be put into a team before the grading process has been completed. Requests of this nature should be put to the club at or immediately after registration and before the grading process and team allocations are finalised.

Anyone involved in the grading process will not discuss the results of a child's grading with any other parent other than that of the coaching staff and officials involved in the process.

Should parents be unhappy with the grading decision a complaint may be lodged in writing to the Hills Knights FC Committee with 48 hours of the teams being announced.

A response will be given within 7 days of the complaint being received.

The Grading Committee

The Grading Committee will be determined by the Hills Knights Committee. This process will involve the recruitment of impartial people who will be invited to help organise, run and collate the results of the grading days.

The Graders

As we are a club based on a network of volunteers, it is not always possible to have graders that have a professional background in the sport. In the event that we cannot have professional graders, in all situations the Grading Committee will attempt to recruit the most experienced coaches and players in the club to conduct the grading sessions.

The grading procedure will ensure that the ratio of graders to players will fall into line with national guidelines.

Please note that to ensure transparency, the coaches of the age groups being graded will be welcome to attend the day but where possible will not be graders. Their opinion will be sort within the process of team formation and team allocation to the competition proper.

Exceptions to the Process.

Hills Knights FC want players, parents and coaches to enjoy their experience at the club.

Hills Knights FC accepts that any grading process is not an exact science. With that in mind there are exceptions where a person can ask for clarification on how the grading process can accommodate their individual needs. A few examples of these circumstances are listed below:

- Any new player who registers with the club after grading has been finalised will be graded and placed with other players in a team with a similar skills set.
- If the age group is full and there are no positions left in the existing teams a player may be granted permission to play up an age group if their skills set are adequate to do so.
- Where there are no positions left in an age group and player may be granted dispensation by the association to play in an age group below them.
- Where a player has an infirmity that may hinder them playing in their age group they may receive dispensation by the association to play in an age group below them.
- A family need may require a player has to play in a certain team.

Teams will be announced at the end of the grading process and coaches allocated and providing field allocations are sorted coaches will be invited to commence training for the year.