



Team Allocation & Grading Policy

Purpose

Pearcedale Baxter Junior Football Club ('PBJFC') is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable sporting environment for all children. PBJFC acknowledges that in addition to developing football skills, building self-esteem, encouraging fair play and teamwork are key parts of a child's sporting development.

This policy establishes a consistent and transparent approach to the allocation and grading of players where PBJFC has two or more teams in an age group. The approach recognises that the considerations relevant to team allocation differ across non-competitive, competitive and graded age groups.

Scope

This policy applies to all players registered with PBJFC where two or more teams are entered into a particular age group.

Grading procedures apply only to Under 13 and above players registered.

This policy was implemented commencing the 2026 season. Teams who were not previously graded as a result of this policy not having been implemented will not be graded in subsequent years.

Registration

Registered player numbers determine the number and size of teams that PBJFC can enter. Players should be registered by 30 November in the year prior to the season to assist PBJFC to assess player numbers, the viability of individual teams, and whether a grading process is required.

PBJFC cannot guarantee a place in a team for players who register after 30 November. Late registrations may be accepted where a place is available.

Where grading is to be undertaken (see 'Graded Age Groups' below) players registered after 30 November, but before the conclusion of the grading process, will not be eligible for grading and will be placed in the lower graded team.

Players applying for registration after the conclusion of the grading period will be placed based on the needs of the graded teams, as determined by the PBJFC Executive.

Team Allocation Principles – Under 8s to Under 12s

Where two or more teams are entered into a particular age group players will be allocated to a team with consideration to the following:

- Player numbers and the need to maintain viable team sizes
- School and friendship groups
- Player football experience and development needs
- The balance, composition, and equitable distribution of players
- Player welfare, inclusion and individual circumstances known to the club
- Previous team allocations and established player relationships, where relevant; and
- Any other circumstances considered relevant.

In accordance with League bylaws, once a player is allocated to a team, they will ordinarily remain in that team from season to season until grading can occur, or the teams are combined.

Any movement of a player between teams prior to Under 13 is governed solely by the League by-laws and is not at the discretion of the club.

Parents may make reasonable requests regarding team allocation when commencing with the club. PBJFC will do its best to accommodate those requests; however, requests cannot be guaranteed.

PBJFC retains final discretion over team allocations to ensure team viability, appropriate player numbers and the broader needs of the club.

Graded Age Groups – Under 13 and Above

In line with competition recommendations, PBJFC may implement grading from the Under 13 age group where player numbers permit. Where an age group has previously been graded, grading will ordinarily continue in subsequent seasons where two or more teams are formed.

Grading is intended to place players in an environment appropriate to their football development and to assist the club to field competitive and viable teams.

Grading will be conducted with an External Provider engaged by PBJFC at the commencement of the playing year. A grading sub-committee will be formed each year to work with the external provider and act as a liaison with club members.

Generally, Grading will take place over multiple sessions, however, may be subject to change based on external provider recommendations or specific needs of the players or club.

Grading decisions will consider:

- Player performance
- Skills
- Football understanding
- Attitude
- Effort
- Team balance; and
- Any other relevant consideration identified through the grading process.

A player may opt out of the grading process. Where the player does not participate in grading, they will automatically be allocated to the lower graded team.

Graded Age Groups – Registered Player Numbers

Registered Player Numbers determine the number and size of teams that PBJFC can enter. The following is a guide for graded age groups based on registered player numbers; however, final team numbers/allocations may change at the discretion of the External Grader, Grading Sub-Committee and the PBJFC Executive having regard to the competition requirements, player availability, team viability and recommendations of the external grader.

33 or Less	One team with the maximum number of players permitted on the team sheet. Where registrations exceed the number of positions PBJFC can accommodate, the club may be unable to offer every player a place.
34 to 40	Top Graded Team will have a minimum of 20 players, with the remaining players to make up the Lower Graded Team. The final structure will depend on whether both teams can be fielded sustainably.
40 or More	Numbers will generally be distributed as evenly as practicable between teams, subject to grading outcomes, team balance and competition requirements. Where there is an odd number, the additional player will be allocated based on team needs.

We note that if players choose to leave the club following team allocation or grading, adjustments may be necessary. This may affect team composition and, in some circumstances, whether PBJFC can continue to offer multiple teams in the age group.

Where PBJFC is unable to offer a player a position as a result of registered player numbers or team viability, PBJFC will provide reasonable assistance to the player and family, including, where appropriate, liaising with alternate clubs regarding playing opportunities.

Girls' Teams

The formation, grading (where relevant) and allocation of players to girl's teams is at the sole discretion of the PBJFC Executive Committee.

Consistent with league recommendations, where there are sufficient registered players within an age group to form two girls' teams, the teams will ordinarily be formed on a top-age and bottom-age basis, rather than through ability-based grading.

The Executive Committee may depart from a top-age and bottom-age allocation where it determines that exceptional circumstances exist. In making such a determination, the Executive Committee may have regard to:

- Player numbers and age distribution of registered players;
- Team viability;
- Player safety and development;
- League requirements or recommendations;
- Competitive balance; and
- Any other circumstances considered relevant.

Where a top-age and bottom-age structure is implemented, the Executive Committee will determine the appropriate allocation of players having regard to their eligible age group and the requirements of the relevant competition.

No player has an entitlement to placement in a particular team on the basis of age, previous team allocation or any other factor. Final team composition remains at the discretion of the PBJFC Executive Committee.

This approach is not intended to treat girls' teams differently, but recognises the current structure and development of the girls' competition. The Club's priority is to support the continued growth of girls' football through a participation-focused model that promotes development, enjoyment and player retention.

Grading Outcomes & Final Decisions

The External Provider will provide recommendations regarding player grading and team composition.

Allocation of competition divisions for each team will be determined by the relevant league in accordance with its competition and grading procedures.

PBJFC will seek to apply this policy consistently and fairly, individual preferences or requested outcomes cannot be guaranteed. Decisions made by the PBJFC Executive regarding team allocations are final.

Further Information

Questions or requests for further information about this Policy should be directed to the PBJFC Committee.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and approved every two years, as a minimum, by the PBJFC Committee. The review will incorporate feedback from the PBJFC Community and changes to league or competition requirements.

Last Review: July 2026.

Next Review: July 2028.