

# SHFC GRADING POLICY

JANUARY 2021



## Guidance & Intent

SHFC aims to develop every player regardless of natural ability to be the best that they can be.

Grading players so that they play in teams of similar ability provides a far better opportunity for every player to develop their love for the game, and improve their skills and ability.

It is noted that not every player will have the skills or the ability to play in the 'A' grade, however at SHFC we aim to develop the passion so that every player aspires to play at the highest level possible.

## Why do we do grading?

Grading is done so that players are with other players of similar ability. It is done for the same reasons grading and exams are conducted at school. There are advantages for doing grading that we believe outweigh the disadvantages.

### Development:

- If you put an 'A' player in a 'D' team they will shine, however they will not develop as they are not being challenged. Similarly the rest of the team will become reliant on this player and will become lost if they don't play.
- Going the other way if you put a 'D' grade player in an 'A' grade team, they will rarely touch the ball and quickly become discouraged. Often this can result in the less skilful player leaving soccer in search of another sport.

### Peer pressure:

- Other players will soon let their feelings be known when it comes down to ability. Our experience is that this often does more damage than any ill feelings resulting from the grading itself.

### Exodus of talented players:

- Players of above average skills and their parents will become frustrated and eventually leave looking for a different team in the hope their child is put into a better team. The player's development will also stagnate because they are not being challenged to improve.
- We have found frequently some parents come to us with the view "The team wants to stay together" yet the better players and parents are looking to move onwards.

### Disadvantages in Grading:

- Grading can move children from team to team both as they grow and develop. This can affect friendships forged in 1 season. At times this can also mean siblings play in different teams.
- Affects the social groups of parents

## **SHFC Club Philosophy**

The SHFC stands by its history of grading. We endeavour to do it the right way for the right reasons.

To not grade the children based on ability would impact the opportunity for some to progress to representative soccer at a later stage.

Frequently it is difficult for coaches and the grading committee to decide between several players of near equal ability knowing that some will be separated from their friends from last year. Experience tells us that children at this age tend to make new friends quickly and this also means that they extend their circle of friends.

An integral part of the SHFC grading is the information available about the player from his or her coach in the previous year. The grading committee seek input from previous coaches regarding player attributes and playing ability.

## **Grading Mini Roo Teams (U6-U7)**

Mini Roo players in their early years will not be graded on ability, but will instead be graded generally on a social basis. We want these first years playing soccer to be fun and allow the children to learn the basics and develop a love of the game.

The predominant condition will be that of who they are friends with, or which area they come from, or which school they attend. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly the children and their parents generally want the child to play with their friends, particularly new school friends. Secondly, grading is not undertaken on an ability basis in order to get an even spread of greater and lesser talented players in each team, so that those of greater ability encourage those of lesser ability, improving the skill level of both the lesser and greater ability player. Where all lesser ability players are grouped into 1 team, these teams tend to flounder, and the players are more likely to leave the sport.

## **Grading Mini Roo Teams (U8-U11)**

As the children grow into their football journey it is time to start changing teams and grading players on ability.

At SHFC we commence grading from the U8s onwards.

## **Grading Junior Teams (U12-15), Boys and Girls; competition**

Teams from U12 play competition soccer, and as such will be graded on ability. Grading of each age group will be carried out by the SHFC Grading Committee in conjunction with the SHFC Grading Panel. The SHFC Grading Committee may consult with the coaches of the age group being graded to help finalise their decision. The Grading Committee members and panel will not grade their own children, if playing for SHFC.

## **Grading Senior Teams (Male and Female All age, U16-U21, O35 & O45)**

U16 to U21, all age, over 35, 45 and any other senior teams generally comprise groups of friends, and as such are not subject to player grading.

## **Team Grading**

Once players are placed into teams, the grade of that team taken as a whole will be undertaken by the grading committee, in consultation with the team coach. This is then used to request the grade for the team. The SSFA will review and frequently change grades to make competitions.

Factors considered will include:

- The coach's requested grading
- The team's ability and skill level
- The team's competition results from the previous year
- The ability, skill level, and previous years grading of new players
- The ability and skill level of any players lost from the team from the previous season.
- The ability of the team to borrow from or be borrowed from other teams in the club, in line with the Associations rules on borrowing of players.

## Playing Up An Age group

SHFC understands that one of the biggest reasons that children play sport is to have fun and socialise with their friends. Players may want to be considered for a team in a higher age group.

SHFC believes players should play in their correct age group unless there is a good reason to play up. The **play football** online registration system defaults to register each player in their DOB age group. Players may be asked to attend grading for their actual age group and their requested age group.

Some reasons for playing up an age group are

- The player has a friend(s) in a higher age group
- The player has a sibling(s) in a higher age group
- The players ability is beyond the scope of their own age group and they need to play up to be sufficiently challenged.
- To manage team size and team makeup
- It makes sense to group players by age when the players are of a similar standard but when the ability of one or two individuals is obviously much better than the rest of the group, it would make sense to play them in an older age group.

The Club reserve the right to move people between age groups as needed to form teams if there is an age group number imbalance.

A request to play up an age group will be looked at on a case by case basis via the SHFC Grading Committee. When making each determination the Grading Committee will take into account the players: physical size, strength, maturity, and fitness.

**Any questions please email : [secretary@sylvaniaheightssoccer.org.au](mailto:secretary@sylvaniaheightssoccer.org.au)**