

# Lindfield Football Club Grading and Squad Selection Policy

Effective Date  
Sep 2022

## Super League/Diamond League and SAP Squads

### Overview

This policy outlines the guidelines and principles followed by Lindfield FC when selecting players for our SL/DL/SAP and development squads. The policy is to be followed by all coaches involved in squad selection and is available for parents to review.

### Details

#### 1) Attendance and Trials

All players wishing to be considered for selection in a SL/DL/SAP or Dev squad must attend all trials. Exceptions will be considered if requested from the club for good reasons e.g. sickness, injury, family commitment, sporting clash.

*Attendance at trials allows all players to be fairly assessed against each other and provides an alternate view of skill level that complements a coach report (if one exists)*

#### 2) Use of Coaching Reports

Coach reports are completed by LFC Coaches for all players that play in a SL/DL/SAP or Dev squads and are reviewed by the Head Coach for each area. The coach report considers a player's skill level, areas of strength and improvement, attitude and commitment. The coach report is the primary tool for selection of players into SL/DL/SAP and Dev squads.

*The report considers the skills, attitude, work rate and commitment of a player over a whole season (and prior seasons) so is a more accurate assessment of a player. Where there are significant changes in the assessment of a player from one season to the next these will be explored by the Head Coach for that area and any mitigating circumstances will be considered when finalising the team selection. Parents are encouraged to make these known to the club before coaching reports are written at the end of a season and at least prior to trials.*

#### 3) Criteria used to guide player selection

When selecting players into squads, equal weighting is given to skill level, attitude, work rate and commitment.

*As a community football club our priority is to create an enjoyable football experience (first), develop our players (second) and achieve success (third which comes from the first two). An equal focus on skill, attitude, work rate and commitment best achieves these outcomes.*

#### 4) Forming squads – squad balance

When finalising teams (in SL/DL only) consideration is given to the balance of the squad. This considers both a player's preferred position and alternate positions that the coaches believe could suit a player.

*Balance means achieving a balance of attack, defence and midfield minded players. Our preference is to play the strongest players (skill, attitude, work rate and commitment) in the top squads even if that means that some players are asked to play outside of their preferred position. Playing outside a preferred position often has a development upside for that player.*

*The number of players in each squad is specified by the Head Coach / Technical Director.*

#### 5) Use of Grading Scores

Grading scores from trials are used to assist in the placement of players in squads under the following circumstances: -

- a) Where a player is new to the club;
- b) Where there is no coaching report; and
- c) Where the coaching report does not sufficiently differentiate between players.

*The trials are a valuable tool use to assess a player's core skills and game intelligence. The trial process however provides only a limited view of a player's skills (due to the environment and short assessment period). The focus of the trials is therefore more on players that meet the above criteria. The assessment is a relative one, with assessed players being compared against players of a known skill level.*

#### 6) Player Retention

The club does not communicate the likelihood of players being retained in a squad prior to the trials *In the interests of fairness and consistency for all players, we want all players to attend trials with the same mindset and attitude and give 100% at the trial.*

#### 7) Playing Up

Only in exceptional circumstances i.e when the player(s) is/are an exceptional talent, will the club consider playing a player or squad up an age group and only where the club feels that this is in the best interests of the squad or player (*this principle is applied differently in DL due to many age groups have combined ages – see below for more details*). This decision to allow a player or squad to play up rests with the Coaching or Technical Director on the advice of the Head Coach. Playing up for social reasons is not regarded as a basis for playing outside an age group. In the younger age groups, players may be allowed to play down an age group based on physical development criteria specified by FNSW.

#### 8) Other Considerations

Where players have been assessed as having similar skills, attitude and commitment and where the squad balance allows, then players that have played together in the previous season will be kept together if it retains a positive culture.

*The social aspects of the team sport are important but our selection policy considers skills, attitude, work rate and motivation & team balance first, to create the strongest possible squad. Putting players of a similar skill, attitude and motivation together will lead to a positive squad culture and enjoyable season. Where there is nothing to differentiate, we will keep players from the previous season together. Friendship teams are supported by the club outside the SL/DL/SAP/Dev squad program.*

*When there is no significant difference between a player who has a history of involvement with Lindfield and a player who is new to the club, the former player will generally be favoured over the new player in the selection process.*

#### 9) Communication

Trials for all SL/DL, SAP & selected development squads will be completed in November. Following completion of these trials, provisional squads will be published on the club website. Players in these squads will be invited to an information session regarding expectations and costs in early December. Players are required to accept their spot with the payment of a deposit by the end of December. Remaining squads will be finalised by the end of February following a similar process to the above.

#### 10) Private Academy Relationships

Across the coaching team, LFC has coaches (from Peak, Vision and others) that provide coaching to players outside of the LFC programs. This creates a risk that parents will perceive favouritism to these players in the selection process. To mitigate this risk, coaches are required to flag with the Head of SL, DL or SAP, prior to grading, any players with who they have a private (non LFC sponsored) coaching relationship. The selection recommendations by these coaches, for players they coach, will be reviewed to ensure consistency and alignment with reports and grading scores by other coaches.

#### 11) Age Coordinator Role

Age Coordinators should be consulted by the lead grader for each age group, regarding the finalisation of each squad. The purpose of this is to ensure that no significant errors have been made in the process e.g. a player coaching report not reviewed or exceptional circumstances not considered. This also allows the age coordinator to be more informed on the reasons for selection / non selection when discussing with parents.

Note that the final decision on squad selection rests with the coaching team and ultimately, the Technical Director and Coaching Director.

#### 12) Exceptions and Escalation

Exceptions to this policy can only be made with the approval of the Technical Director or Coaching Director and should be notified to the Executive Committee.

Parents who have any concerns with the selection process, regarding their child, may contact the Technical Director, Coaching Director or LFC President.

### **Girls Diamond League & Dev Squad Selection**

The following grading policy applies to selections for the following age groups/squads: -

- G8/9/10 – one or two development squads in each age group
- G11/12 - two Diamond League squads and one development squad
- G13 – one Diamond League squad and one development squads
- G14 – two Diamond League squads and one development squad
- G16 – two Diamond League squads
- G18 – one/two Diamond League squads

### **Age Group Banding**

In all age groups, LFC applies a two-year banding for selection trials. These bandings are G9&G10, G11&G12, G13&G14, G15&16 and G17&18 i.e. girls who are in the G11 and G12 age groups will attend the G11/12 trials and will be allocated to a squad as per the process outlined below.

This approach has proven effective over a number of years and allows us to provide the best balance of:-

- Girls playing with other girls in their peer group;
- Ensuring girls are able to play at a level that is best for their development;
- Aligning our strongest squads with NSFA development leagues and other competitions e.g. Bathurst, State Cup, CofC and Kanga Cup; and

- Allowing the strongest G13 girls (9 aside format) to progress to 11 aside one year earlier.

For each banded age group, the following selection process will apply :-

- 1) The strongest girls will be placed in the A squad, based on coaching reports and grading assessment (irrespective of their age) i.e. in G13/14 this may mean some G13 girls are placed in the G14A squad.
- 2) The remaining players will be allocated to a DL or development squad based on their age and skill level e.g. for G12s, girls will be placed in the G12B/C squad if they are G12s or in the G11A squad if they are G11s.

### **Exceptions - Girls playing outside of their age bands.**

The club may consider allowing a girl to play in an age group above their band i.e. allowing a G12 girl to play up in the G13 age group. This will only be considered for girls of exceptional skill level who may benefit from the extra challenge. For this to be considered, the girl must have already played two years in the prior age group DLA squad.

## **Social and Friendship Teams**

### **Overview**

Social and Friendship teams cover all teams other than SL/DL/SAP and development Squads. For Social and Friendship teams, the focus is on enjoyment of the sport as well as continuing to develop player's skill levels.

### **Details**

#### 1) Attendance / Non-attendance at trials

To ensure that all players have an enjoyable football experience, all players (for all age groups except U6/U7) are encouraged to attend at least one grading (Back to Football morning) so that they can be placed in an appropriate team (with players of a similar skill level) and for friendship teams so that the team can be placed in the appropriate division. Players in the U6/U7 age groups need only attend grading if they wish to be considered in one of the development focused squads. All players in the U6/U7 age group are encouraged to attend the Welcome to Football mornings held in February each year.

#### 2) Use of Grading Scores

During the trials, players will be assessed using a variety of games and drills against four core skills so that they can be placed in an appropriate team with players of a similar ability. The four core skills align with the FFA national football curriculum and are 1<sup>st</sup> touch, 1v1, Striking the ball (which include passing and shooting) and Running with the Ball). For competition age groups, we may also schedule a full field game so that we can assess other positional specific skills and overall game awareness and contribution. The scores are used to rank players for consideration in forming teams.

#### 3) Forming Teams

For social teams, teams are formed considering the grading scores so that teams comprise players of similar ability. Where scores are similar, we try and place players in teams who have previously played together.

Where a friendship request has been received, those players will be kept together to form a full team or part of a team.

Following the trial period, the club will make recommendations to NSFA on the appropriate division for a team based on grading results and the prior seasons results (where available). NSFA takes this into consideration in the final divisional allocations but does not guarantee that all our requests will be honoured.

In certain circumstances, players may be asked to play up or down an age group to ensure that all teams have an appropriate number of players. In circumstances where this is considered, the club will discuss the options available with the respective player's parents before any such arrangement is put in place.

The club has guidelines for the min and max numbers of players in a squad.

#### 4) Communication

Provisional teams in age groups will be published on the club website on a specified date at the end of late February/early March. These teams may change based on late withdrawals or late registrations and, in exceptional circumstances only, based on a player's performance in pre-season games. Final teams are confirmed during March.

#### **Exceptions**

Where parents have concerns regarding the placement of their child in a team, they should approach their age coordinator in the first instance. The age coordinator can then work with the appropriate Head Coach to have the concern addressed.