WFFC TEAMS FORMATION POLICY

October 2026

Wentworth Falls Football Club (WFFC, The Club) creates teams for each season based on this Teams Formation policy.

Our policy is designed to help our team formation committee make properly informed decisions about player placements for the upcoming season and covers not just their skill on the field, but also their own desired outcomes and attitude towards contributing to their team on and off the field.

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Introduction

Wentworth Falls Football Club has 2 main objectives regarding player development:

1. To provide a safe, fun, and social environment for learning and playing football.
2. To provide an opportunity for players to develop their skills and to provide a pathway to elite football clubs in a fashion that could lead to a career in football.

Up until Under 12s both goals are achieved mainly through point number 1. Nepean Football Association (The Association, NFA) maintains a non-competitive stance up until the U13 age group to improve the chances of an enjoyable football experience for all younger players. This includes the Association's decision not to publish results in these age groups

The Association does however track results in these age groups so that teams may be grouped with teams of similar ability, and clubs are required to nominate an overall team skill level for every team U8 and over during the nomination process for each season.

From the Under 13 age group and up NFA introduces a competitive scoring and league table system, with playoffs, promotions and relegations at the end of each season. The Association sees this as an appropriate age to introduce the competitive nature of adult football.

WFFC Team Formation Methodology

Since 2023 WFFC has utilised a team formation committee at the beginning of each season to place players in appropriate teams. This committee is comprised of committee members, coaches and volunteers who work together to consider players', parents' and coaches' requests for placements of players for the season. They also rely on information from grading sessions to finalise teams in age groups with numbers to fill more than one team.

As children leave the discovery phase of football and enter the Skill Acquisition Phase (U10–U12) it is important for both their learning and enjoyment to be placed with players of similar ability. This helps our coaches ensure sessions run at an appropriate level for all players. It also means developing players spend more time on the ball rather than in the shadow of stronger teammates, which is where skill, confidence and on-field leadership are built.

From the 2027 season, the Club will offer a voluntary opt-in selective process for the U10, U11 and U12 age groups, replacing the previous soft grading arrangement. It allows families to choose whether their child will be trying for a selected team, while ensuring placements rest on an observed, documented process. The process is set out in full below.

From Under 13 and above The Club will run try-out sessions for all age groups when enrolled player numbers are sufficient for 2 or more teams. Aligning with our second objective for our player development we wish to offer players further opportunity to challenge their learning of the competitive game. From U13, children are moving from primary to high school and friendship groups are changing in a way that makes sense to mix players between teams within the club.

This also aligns with the Football Federation Australia (FFA) delineation of the start of the Game Training Phase (GTP) following the Skills Acquisition Phase (SAP). Whilst SAP is focussed on individual skill development the GTP focus is on team play. As such the club feels it is obliged to place players in teams that specifically suit the levels at which they play to support the FFA goals for player development.

The club will strive to recruit enough players to nominate 2 teams for each age group U13 and above, in both male and female competitions. The ideal outcome is to field 1x competitive team squad and 1x social team squad, that can support each other whilst still providing challenges appropriate to all player's skill level, as guided by the coaches.

In cases where there are not enough players to fill 2 complete teams, the club reserves its right to select the team and its nature by the process of team selection outlined here. The aim of the team selection process is to provide each player with a fair and honest appraisal of their skill level and potential as a footballer and to guide them into teams which will suitably challenge their development, as well as provide them ongoing enjoyment of the game.

The WFFC Team Selection Process

The process is overseen by the coaching co-ordinator, with support from the team formation committee. The coaching co-ordinator initiates the process each season, schedules sessions, convenes the panel and communicates outcomes. Players requests are taken into consideration

The aims of the selection process are:

- To appraise a player confidentially and objectively on their skill level and potential as a footballer and to guide them into teams which will suitably challenge their development, as well as provide them ongoing enjoyment of the game.
- To identify which division or ranking nomination might best suit each team to optimise the balance of challenge and enjoyment.

The Selection Panel should be made up of experienced coaches/footballer and team formation committee members from within the club. It should comprise at least 3 people with suitable football qualifications, preferably where possible - based on availability and resources - a C-Diploma or Foundation of Football Diploma.

The Panel may consult with previous year's coaches before making a final decision to make sure that placement takes into account coaches' feedback.

Voluntary Selective Team(s) for U10–U12

As players enter the U10–U12 age groups, the club recognises the need to group them with teammates of similar ability for their development and enjoyment. At the same time, the Club understands that playing with friends is one of the best parts of junior football, and that not every family is looking for a higher level of competition at this age.

Voluntary Selective Team(s) answers both. Participating in a selective process in these age groups is entirely optional. It is not about identifying a top team at the expense of everyone else. It gives players who want to be challenged the chance to be placed accordingly, and every other player a team where the football is enjoyable and the games are competitive.

How Placement in a Voluntary Selective Team works

1. **Opt in at registration.** Players register as normal through PlayFootball and indicate at registration whether they wish to take try-out for a selective team. The Club may set an early cut-off date for opt-in registrations. Players must be registered before attending the try-outs.
2. **Selective sessions.** Sessions are held in the second week of February, on weeknights after school hours. Families who have opted in will be notified of dates and times by email.
3. **Assessment.** Players are assessed through try-outs carried out by a Selection Panel in a similar manner than those organised for age groups U13-U17 (see paragraph below). Players preassigned a numbered bib. The Panel assesses each player using the WFFC Assessment Sheet, recording observations against the bib number rather than the name. Activities should include small-sided games, training exercises demonstrating individual skill, and a larger game. The panel also consults the previous season's coaches, so a single session is never the only basis for a placement. If players can't attend the try-outs session they must notify the Club in writing prior to the commencement of the try-out sessions at coaching@wentworthfallsfc.com.au, explaining the reason for not attending. If the reason is deemed justified, the panel may still consider them for the selective team based on coaches' feedback and previous football experience.
4. **Team formation.** The Panel then meets with the coaching co-ordinator to compare assessments and form teams, consulting the previous season's coach further on any player they are unsure about. Recommended teams go to the Team Formation Committee for approval, and each team is nominated for the appropriate grade, division or ranking.
5. **Players who do not opt in.** These players will, where possible, be placed with their friends and/or players of similar ability, using coach feedback and the Committee's knowledge of the player. Choosing not to participate in a selective session does not affect a player's chances of a place in a team.

If numbers are too low

Where not enough players opt in to form the selective teams, the Team Formation Committee will still run with the selective session with the available players and will then complete the selective team(s) using the

previous season's groupings, coach feedback, and its assessment of who is well suited to the teams in question. Families will be advised of the placement and the reason for it.

Team Selection in Competitive Age Groups U13–U17

The selection process in these age groups is not voluntary. All registered players in age groups with more than one team are expected to attend at least one try-out session.

Activities should be run where possible on 2 consecutive weeknights as summer sport commitments may interfere with players' ability to attend weekend sessions.

Try-out sessions should be run for age groups with numbers for more than 1 team.

We ask these 2 questions to the player directly when they attend a grading session:

- Their preferred position
- Whether they prefer to play in a social team, a competitive team or either

Numbered bibs are to be used to gather objective feedback from the panel and provide anonymous suggestions to the coaches for choosing their team. These are assigned at the start of the session.

Using preferred position information, they can be assigned a coloured bib which places them in a particular team for that evening, taking care to distribute positions evenly between the teams.

The try-out session activities should include:

- Small 4v4 or 5v5 games.
- Some training exercises to demonstrate individual skill.
- A full field game.

The selection panel should take notes on all players during the session, using the WFFC assessment sheet and using the numbered bibs to identify players.

These notes are provided to panel’s members who can draft a team from the anonymous bib numbers.

Team selections from anonymous bib numbers will then be matched to the actual players for final consolidated teams’ placement, and after previous year’s coaches’ consultation - particularly on borderline cases - submitted to the team formation committee for approval. Attitude, effort and coachability are considered elements that hold weight during consultation with previous year’s coaches. While the selection panel can decide to consult with previous year’s coaches, the final placement recommendations stay entirely with the Selection Panel.

If players can’t attend the try-out sessions, they must notify the Club in writing prior to the commencement of the try-out sessions at coaching@wentworthfallsfc.com.au, explaining the reason for not attending. If the reason is deemed justified, the panel may still consider them for the more competitive team based on coaches’ feedback and previous playing experience.

Non-attendance without notice. A registered player who attends no try-out session and has not notified the Club in writing beforehand will be placed in the lowest ranked team for that age group, regardless of previous seasons. This keeps the selection process meaningful for those who attend, and ensures a place in the higher ranked team is earned through the same process by every player each year. Players who register after the selective window closes, including those new to the Club or the area, are not treated as non-attenders and will be assessed on their previous playing experience.

Try-out days and times will be on weeknights after school hours. Try-outs for these age groups will be scheduled in the same February window as per age groups U10-U12, and the dates published in the Club's season calendar. Registered players will be notified of the dates by email.

Age groups with numbers for only one team

Where an age group has numbers for only one team, no try-out session is required, as there is no placement decision to be made.

Where such an age group has more registered players than can be accommodated in a single squad, the Club – in agreement with players and parents - must still decide which players are able to be offered a place. In that situation the Team Formation Committee will:

1. Set and publish the maximum squad size for the age group before the season commences.
2. Assess the registered players against the criteria set out under *How Players Should Be Assessed*, drawing on coaches' feedback, pre-season attendance, playing history for WFFC, and, where a try-out session has been held, panel observations.
3. Consult the affected families to identify the best available solution, including playing up an age group where a player is capable and comfortable doing so.
4. Record the decision and its reasons in writing and communicate it to each affected family directly.

Where a player cannot be offered a place, the Club will make all possible efforts to help that player find a place at a neighbouring club so that they are still able to play.

Team Selection in Senior Football (U18s and above)

Team Selection, as set out in this policy, does not apply to senior football in the same way it applies to junior age groups.

In senior age groups, team allocation is generally self-managed by coaches and players. Players typically nominate as an existing group, or are placed by mutual agreement between the players and the relevant coaches. This is particularly the case for social teams, where continuity of the playing group and enjoyment of the game take priority over competitive placement.

Where the Club is able to enter teams in elite divisions (for example, Ruby League or Waratah League), the Club may - in agreement with the coaches of the teams concerned - run try-out sessions in a similar format to one for junior football to select and form those teams. Where try-outs are held, the Club will:
(a) advertise the sessions to all registered and prospective senior players in that age group;
(b) confirm in advance which teams and divisions the try-outs relate to; and
(c) communicate outcomes to all participants, including those not selected, together with information about other teams available to them at the Club.

After The Selection Process

Prior to team nominations there should be a full sized 11v11 game organised to test the team allocations and to allow final movement of players between squads. This will usually happen during the WFFC Pre-season social game day.

How Players Should Be Assessed

Players shall be assessed on 3 main categories:

1. Their ability to execute the core footballing skills
2. Their on-field awareness and decision-making ability
3. Their attitude, effort and coachability

In the GTP, a player which chooses the right skill but cannot execute it has a similar problem to a player that can execute skills perfectly but cannot select the appropriate skill to use in a game situation.

As such due consideration of category 2 should be given in regard to:

- general awareness and decisions made on the field (regardless of the execution)
- Communication
- Positioning
- Gamesmanship

Category 1 covers the following core skills, and each player should be assessed on the ability to execute the 4 core attacking skills (Ball Possession, BP):

- Striking the ball
- First touch
- Running with the ball
- 1v1

And the 4 core defensive skills (Ball Possession Opponent, BPO):

- Tackling
- Pressing
- Marking
- Intercepting

Category 3 reflects the Club's stated intention to consider not just skill on the field but a player's attitude towards contributing to their team on and off it. It should be assessed in regard to:

- Effort and application during the session
- Response to coaching and instruction
- Conduct towards teammates, opponents and officials

A player who trains hard, listens and lifts those around them is a different prospect from one of equal raw ability who does not. Category 3 also gives due weight to players without access to outside coaching, and to those developing later than their peers.

The WFFC Assessment Sheet is attached for reference at the end of this document.

In graded age groups where numbers allow only one complete team to be entered, the club may need to decide whether the focus is as a social team or as a competitive team, and as such select players on the basis of the ability of the majority as opposed to first in best dressed.

The club will make all possible efforts to assist players in finding a place outside of the club to play football if an appropriate team cannot be made at WFFC.

What To Expect

All registered players in U13–U17 age groups with more than one team should attend at least one try-out session. Attendance at Voluntary Selective sessions for U10–U12 is optional and by opt-in at registration.

Players will be asked to nominate a preferred position and also if they are interested in playing in a high grade team, or a more social level team. A player unable to attend try-out sessions must notify the Club in writing before the first session, in which case the Team Formation Committee will place them on the basis of their previous playing experience. In U13–U17 age groups, a player who neither attends nor notifies will be placed in the lowest ranked team for that age group.

For age groups with a number of registered players allowing 3 or more teams, players wishing to be considered for the first team (ideally a Division 1 team) are requested to attend all try-out sessions; this may involve independent assessment from the rest of the age group. Any absences from sessions by a player trialling for a place in the first team must be notified in writing via email to coaching@wentworthfallsfc.com.au. Note that absences may have an effect on the final placement of a player into a team.

The Club understands that a single session does not tell the whole story, and that a player may have an off day. Try-outs are one part of the process only; previous year's coaches feedback and other observations may also considered when forming teams. Please note though while that the selection panel may dec final

Throughout attendance at the selection process, players are not permitted to wear any representative attire or any training attire that identifies them as belonging to a particular team. Note: This is consistent with FNSW Policy.

Please note that during any try-outs sessions parents are not permitted to instruct or approach their child, nor stand around the areas where the sessions are being conducted.

Player Requests

Players may request to play above their age group, in a specific team or with friends. Reasonable endeavours will be made to accommodate such requests. Requests must be emailed to coaching@wentworthfallsfc.com.au before try-outs commences.

If such a request is made, the following is to apply:

1. The Team Formation Committee will only consider placing a player in a lower division, another age group or specific team if it does not impact upon the team, division or age group for which the player would have played (for example leaving insufficient numbers to form a team).
2. Team balance (in terms of goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders and attackers).
3. The Team Formation Committee may refuse a player from playing above his/her age group or in a requested team if it is the opinion of the Team Formation Committee that it would be detrimental to the player's performance or development, or to the team's performance or development.
4. Players requesting to play above their age group do so on the clear understanding that the following year they may be required to return to their appropriate age group.
5. If the request is seen as detrimental to a player's performance or development, or to a team's performance or development, the Team Formation Committee may refuse the request.

Grievance Procedure

If any player or parent is not satisfied with the placement the player receives, they can make a submission in writing to the Team Formation Committee requesting a review of the player's placement, within a week from the placement notification, outlining why they think the grading is not correct. The Team Formation Committee will consider this submission in consultation with the Club's Executive Committee to make a final decision on whether or not to change the player's grading.

Should a player not accept this decision and decide to withdraw from WFFC, paid registration fees will be refunded, less a reasonable administration fee (to be determined prior to the commencement of each season's grading).

WFFC GRADING ASSESMENT SHEET

Rank Each Category 1-3: (1) Needs Improvement (2) Average of the group (3) Standout

Core Skills BP: Striking the Ball, First Touch, Running with the Ball, 1v1 - how well are they executed?

Core Skills BP: Tackling, Marking, Pressing, Intercepting - how well are they executed?

Awareness: Communication, Positioning, Decision Making, Gamesmanship - How well do they understand the game?

Attitude: Effort, Coachability, Character towards teammates - how well do they apply themselves and contribute?

Bib Colour	Number	Core Skills BP	Core Skills BPO	Awareness	**Total**	Comments / observations / suggested position