



Club Team Creation/Selection

Within Clubs – After Registration

Overview:

The key intentions of this policy are:

- To maximise child involvement in games
- Reduce/remove anxiety around make up of teams when multiple teams exist in clubs

Guideline:

General Team Creation

Teams within a club are selected based on the following:

- WRFU Weight/Age Grade Chart
- Sufficient numbers to support a team. Grade team size plus a couple of reserves.

If there are insufficient players for a team, consider

- Recruiting more players (ask players to invite friends)
- Combine with a neighbouring club to form a joint team.

Once a team is selected, look to identify coaching / manager candidates. Approach them and once confirmed, the teams can be published, and players/parents advised.

Selection of Multiple Teams within a Grade at a Club

Having sufficient player depth at a club to form multiple teams within a grade brings its own set of issues and there is often heightened player and parent anxiety about the make up of teams to get a fair deal. It is a leading cause of players leaving a club and even rugby.

Players register with and for a club, generally not a specific team or coach.

Players (and their parents/guardians etc.) register with the understanding that their registration and payment of fees is respected and that they can expect fair and equal treatment and access (over time) to the best resources the club is able to offer.

Clubs must therefore, when making up teams and assigning coaches and resources to those teams, consider first of all, the best interests of ALL players ahead of the wishes of coaches and/or parents.

Parents naturally enough want to stay with other parents they have become acquainted with from previous seasons but if this gets in the way of creating even teams within a grade, then the parents must abide by the decision of the club and not hold it hostage to their own feelings or anxieties. They need to be able to make new friends. If not mixed up, cliques can evolve, and it becomes unhealthy for the club and counter to the one club ethos.

Also, Junior Rugby is all about getting kids to develop healthy active interests, to create a love of the game. A thin gangly passive 7-year-old not wanted by a coach may end up being an All Black lock when his body and mind develop during the teenage and early adult years. The aim is to keep kids in the game and loving it.

Considerations to be considered when creating multiple teams within a grade at a club:

- WRFU Age/Weight grade rules
- Players being able to play with 2-3 friends
- Playing with 2-3 others from the same school – but otherwise good to mix parents up across school boundaries.
- Team squad size. The general rule is that it is better to have thinner teams than large squads with many players on the sideline watching and waiting for their turn on the field. This is consistent with the NZR/WRFU policy of maximising time on field and minimising time on the sidelines. It is especially the case with the younger grades.
- Similar squad sizes for all teams within a grade at a club – multiple teams within a grade at a club should have the same numbers of players plus or minus 1. The club should not allow one team of 19 and another of 27 players (this has happened).
- Even team ability – both teams should have approximately the same team ability, and player leaders. Such that the result of when they play should be close with both teams playing the best players and the results on Saturdays against other teams should be relatively similar. See the following section about even teams within a grade:
 - players with leadership ability in each team, rather than all the best leaders in a single super team
 - each team having experience and skill in “key” playing positions, rather than all the best players in a single super team
 - It can be healthy to mix teams from time to time a team that stays together will be unlikely to:
 - Try players in other positions for player development and enrichment of the player experience. Who knows what position a player might end up playing, they should be able to experience a range of positions?
 - Overcome weaknesses, they will just compensate for them.

Examples:

An U7 team size is 7 players. If a club has 28 players registered, it is better to have 3 teams of 7 and one of 8 rather than 2 teams of 9 and one of 10.

It does get harder as you get to 15 aside teams where you can end up with 26 registered players. For these grades, most clubs only have 1-2 teams. For this scenario, options include:

- Having two thin teams of 13 each and rely on fill-ins from opposition teams. The net result that more kids are getting greater game time.
- Work with other clubs to see if a combined team could be formed for the second team
- See if any underweight players want to play down a grade or capable heavier players play up a grade on the basis that they will get more game time and thus reducing the squad number.
- Recruit more from player friends.

When the difference in player numbers for a game between two teams is one or more and one of the teams does not have sufficient players to field a ‘full’ team as set out in the rules for that grade there is little point in a player standing on the sideline as a reserve when they could be playing:

- Players must be swapped between teams,
- The onus is on the coach with the great players number to offer the loan of players,
- Once an offer of loan players has been made it must be accepted,
- In swapping players between teams, both coaches must consider the relative strengths of the two playing sides,
- Coaches are encouraged to ask children to only play one half of the game for the opposition team and make other players available for the second half.